PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

SIXTH SERIES—VOLUME 134

HOUSE OF COMMONS

OFFICIAL REPORT

FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTIETH PARLIAMENT
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND
THIRTY-SEVENTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SESSION 1987-88

COMPRISING PERIOD
23 MAY—10 JUNE 1988

LONDON
HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE
£65 net

ISBN 0 10 681134 7

HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

(FORMED BY THE RT. HON. MARGARET THATCHER, MP, JUNE 1987)

PRIME MINISTER, FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY AND MINISTER FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE—
The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS—The Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC, MP
CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER—The Rt. Hon. Nigel Lawson, MP
LORD CHANCELLOR—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mackay of Clashfern
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT—The Rt. Hon. Douglas Hurd, CBE, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WALES—The Rt. Hon. Peter Walker, MBE, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE—The Rt. Hon. George Younger, TD, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EMPLOYMENT—The Rt. Hon. Norman Fowler, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND—The Rt. Hon. Tom King, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT—The Rt. Hon. Nicholas Ridley, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY AND PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE—
The Rt. Hon. The Lord Young of Graffham
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SCIENCE—The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Baker, MP
CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER AND MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY—
The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Clarke, QC, MP
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD—The Rt. Hon. John MacGregor, OBE, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND—The Rt. Hon. Malcolm Rifkind, QC, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT—The Rt. Hon. Paul Channon, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOCIAL SERVICES—The Rt. Hon. John Moore, MP
LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—The Rt. Hon. John Wakeham, MP
LORD PRIVY SEAL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Belstead
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENERGY—The Rt. Hon. Cecil Parkinson, MP
CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. John Major, MP

LAW OFFICERS

ATTORNEY-GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Sir Patrick Mayhew, QC, MP
LORD ADVOCATE—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Cameron of Lochbroom, QC
SOLICITOR-GENERAL—Sir Nicholas Lyell, QC, MP
SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND—Peter Fraser, Esq, QC

MINISTERS NOT IN THE CABINET

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. David Waddington, QC, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE, (MINISTER FOR THE ARTS)—The Rt. Hon. Richard Luce, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE—
The Rt. Hon. Lynda Chalker, MP
Minister for Overseas Development—Christopher Patten, Esq, MP
David Mellor, Esq, QC, MP
The Lord Glenarthur
PAYMASTER GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Peter Brooke, MP
FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. Norman Lamont, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, HOME OFFICE—
The Rt. Hon. The Earl Ferrers
John Patten, Esq, MP
Tim Renton, Esq, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, WELSH OFFICE—Wyn Roberts, Esq, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, MINISTRY OF DEFENCE—
Minister of State for the Armed Forces—Ian Stewart, Esq, RD, MP
Minister of State for Defence Procurement—The Lord Trefgarne
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT—John Cope, Esq, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE—The Rt. Hon. John Stanley, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT—
Minister for Housing and Planning—The Hon. William Waldegrave, MP
Minister for Environment, Countryside and Water—The Earl of Caithness
Minister for Local Government—Michael Howard, Esq, QC, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY—
Minister for Trade—The Hon. Alan Clark, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE—Mrs. Angela Rumbold, CBE, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD—The Rt. Hon. John Gummer, MP

MINISTERS OF STATE, SCOTTISH OFFICE—
Ian Lang, Esq, MP
The Lord Sanderson of Bowden
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT—
Minister for Public Transport—David Mitchell, Esq, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY—
Minister for Health—The Rt. Hon. Antony Newton, OBE, MP
Minister for Social Security and the Disabled—Nicholas Scott, Esq, MBE, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY—The Hon. Peter Morrison, MP

DEPARTMENTS OF STATE AND MINISTERS

Agriculture, Fisheries and Food—
MINISTER—The Rt. Hon. John MacGregor, OBE, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. John Gummer, MP
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES—
The Baroness Trumpington
Donald Thompson, Esq, MP

Arts and Libraries, Office of—
MINISTER FOR THE ARTS—The Rt. Hon. Richard Luce, MP

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister of Trade and Industry—
The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Clarke, QC, MP

Civil Service, Office of the Minister for the—
PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE—The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE (MINISTER FOR THE ARTS)—The Rt. Hon. Richard Luce, MP

Defence—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. George Younger, TD, MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR THE ARMED FORCES—Ian Stewart, Esq, RD, MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE PROCUREMENT—The Lord Trefgarne
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ARMED FORCES—Roger Freeman, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE PROCUREMENT—The Hon. Tim Sainsbury, MP

Education and Science—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Baker, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—Mrs. Angela Rumbold, CBE, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Robert Dunn, Esq, MP
The Baroness Hooper
Robert Jackson, Esq, MP

Employment—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Norman Fowler, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—John Cope, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
John Lee, Esq, MP
Patrick Nicholls, Esq, MP

Energy—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Cecil Parkinson, Esq, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—The Hon. Peter Morrison, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE—Michael Spicer, Esq, MP

Environment—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Nicholas Ridley, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
Minister for Housing and Planning—The Hon. William Waldegrave, MP
Minister for Environment, Countryside and Water—The Earl of Caithness
Minister for Local Government—Michael Howard, Esq, QC, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
David Trippier, Esq, RD, MP
Christopher Chope, Esq, OBE, MP
Mrs. Marion Roe, MP
The Hon. Colin Moynihan, MP (Minister for Sport)

Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
The Rt. Hon. Lynda Chalker, MP
Minister for Overseas Development—Christopher Patten, Esq, MP
David Mellor, Esq, QC, MP
The Lord Glenarthur
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE—Timothy Eggar, Esq, MP

Health and Social Security—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOCIAL SERVICES—The Rt. Hon. John Moore, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
Minister for Health—The Rt. Hon. Antony Newton, OBE, MP
Minister for Social Security and the Disabled—Nicholas Scott, Esq, MBE, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
The Lord Skelmersdale
Mrs. Edwina Currie, MP
Michael Portillo, Esq, MP

Home Office—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT—The Rt. Hon. Douglas Hurd, CBE, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
The Rt. Hon. The Earl Ferrers
John Patten, Esq, MP
Tim Renton, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE—The Hon. Douglas Hogg, MP

Law Officers' Department—
ATTORNEY-GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Sir Patrick Mayhew, QC, MP
SOLICITOR-GENERAL—Sir Nicholas Lyell, QC, MP

Lord Advocate's Department—
LORD-ADVOCATE—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Cameron of Lochbroom, QC
SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND—Peter Fraser, Esq, QC,

Lord Chancellor—
The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mackay of Clashfern

Northern Ireland Office—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND—The Rt. Hon. Tom King, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. John Stanley, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
The Lord Lyell
Richard Needham, Esq, MP
Dr. Brian Mawhinney, MP
Peter Viggers, Esq, MP

Paymaster General—
The Rt. Hon. Peter Brooke, MP

Privy Council Office—
LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—The Rt. Hon. John Wakeham, MP
LORD PRIVY SEAL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Belstead
MINISTER OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Richard Luce, MP

Scottish Office—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND—The Rt. Hon. Malcolm Rifkind, QC, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
Ian Lang, Esq, MP
The Lord Sanderson of Bowden
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Lord James Douglas-Hamilton, MP
Michael Forsyth, Esq, MP

Trade and Industry—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY AND PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE—
The Rt. Hon. The Lord Young of Graffham
CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER AND MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY—
The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Clarke, QC, MP
MINISTER OF STATE
Minister for Trade—The Hon. Alan Clark, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDUSTRY—Robert Atkins, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR CORPORATE AFFAIRS—The Hon. Francis Maude, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDUSTRY AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS—John Butcher, Esq, MP

Transport—

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT—The Rt. Hon. Paul Channon, MP
MINISTER OF STATE
Minister for Public Transport—David Mitchell, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Minister for Roads and Traffic—Peter Bottomley, Esq, MP
Minister for Aviation and Shipping—The Lord Brabazon of Tara

Treasury—

PRIME MINISTER, FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY AND MINISTER FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE—
The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP
CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER—The Rt. Hon. Nigel Lawson, MP
CHIEF SECRETARY—The Rt. Hon. John Major, MP
PAYMASTER GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Peter Brooke, MP
FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. Norman Lamont, MP
ECONOMIC SECRETARY—Peter Lilley, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. David Waddington, QC, MP
LORDS COMMISSIONERS—
Michael Neubert, Esq, MP
Tony Durant, Esq, MP
Peter Lloyd, Esq, MP
The Hon. Mark Lennox-Boyd, MP
David Lightbown, Esq, MP
ASSISTANT WHIPS—
Richard Ryder, Esq, OBE, MP
Kenneth Carlisle, Esq MP
Alan Howarth, Esq MP
David Maclean, Esq, MP
Stephen Dorrell, Esq, MP

Welsh Office—

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WALES—The Rt. Hon. Peter Walker, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—Wyn Roberts, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE—Ian Grist, Esq, MP

Her Majesty's Household—

LORD CHAMBERLAIN—The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Airlie, GCVO
LORD STEWARD—The Rt. Hon. The Duke of Northumberland, KG, TD
MASTER OF THE HORSE—The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Westmorland, KCVO
TREASURER—David Hunt, Esq, MBE, MP
COMPTROLLER—The Hon. Robert Boscawen, MC, MP
VICE-CHAMBERLAIN—Tristan Garel-Jones, Esq, MP
CAPTAIN OF THE HONOURABLE CORPS OF GENTLEMEN-AT-ARMS—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Denham
CAPTAIN OF THE QUEEN'S BODYGUARD OF THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD—The Viscount Davidson
LORDS IN WAITING—The Viscount Long, The Lord Beaverbrook, The Lord Hesketh, The Earl of Dundee, The Earl of Arran

---

SECOND CHURCH ESTATES COMMISSIONER, REPRESENTING CHURCH COMMISSIONERS—The Rt. Hon. Michael Alison, MP

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

THE SPEAKER—Rt. Hon. Bernard Weatherill, MP

CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—Rt. Hon. Harold Walker, MP

FIRST DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—Sir Paul Dean, MP
SECOND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—Miss Betty Boothroyd, MP

CHAIRMEN'S PANEL

Donald Coleman, Esq, MP, Patrick Cormack, Esq, MP, Stan Crowther, Esq, MP, Miss Janet Fookes, MP, Geraint Howells, Esq, MP, John Hunt, Esq, MP, David Knox, Esq, MP, James Lamond, Esq, MP, Michael Latham, Esq, MP, Ted Leadbitter, Esq, MP, Geoffrey Lofthouse, Esq, MP, John McWilliam, Esq, MP, Michael J. Martin, Esq, MP, Sir Anthony Meyer, MP, Michael Morris, Esq, MP, Robert Rhodes James, Esq, MP, Sir Michael Shaw, MP, Michael Shersby, Esq, MP, Sir John Stradling Thomas, MP, Nicholas Winterton, Esq, MP

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION—

Rt. Hon. The Speaker (Chairman), Alan Beith, Esq, MP, Frank Dobson, Esq, MP, Rt. Hon. Sir Barney Hayhoe, MP, Rt. Hon. Peter Shore, MP, Rt. Hon. John Wakeham, MP

SECRETARY TO THE COMMISSION—W. A. Proctor

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT—

C. J. Boulton, CB (Chairman), Sir Victor Le Fanu, KCVO, D. Menhennet, D. Phil., A. C. J. Poole, K. S. Morgan, W. J. J. Smillie, FHCIMA, FCFA, ACF

SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT—G. A. Roberts

OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

SPEAKER'S SECRETARY—P. J. Kitcatt, CB

SPEAKER'S COUNSEL—H. Knorpel, CB, QC, G. E. Gammie, CB

SPEAKER'S CHAPLAIN—Rev. Canon D. C. Gray, TD, PhD

TRAINBEARER—D. J. Lord

DEPUTY TRAINBEARER—P. L. Warwick

HEO (ADMINISTRATION/DIARY)—Mrs. S. Norvell

ASSISTANT TO SPEAKER'S COUNSEL—P. Harvey, CB

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS

SECRETARY TO THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—R. I. S. Phillips

DEPARTMENT OF THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—C. J. Boulton, CB

CLERK ASSISTANT—J. F. Sweetman, TD

CLERK OF COMMITTEES—M. T. Ryle

PRINCIPAL CLERKS—

H. M. Barclay (Public Bills)
D. W. Limon (Table Office)
W. R. McKay (Journal Office)
C. B. Winnifrith (Select Committees)
R. B. Sands (Overseas Office)
G. Cubie (Financial Committees)
A. J. Hastings (Select Committees)
J. R. Rose (Standing Committees)
R. J. Willoughby (Private Bills)

DEPUTY PRINCIPAL CLERKS—S. A. L. Panton, M. R. Jack, PhD, D. G. Millar, Mrs. J. Sharpe, Ms. A. Milner-Barry, R. W. G. Wilson, W. A. Proctor, F. A. Cranmer, R. J. Rogers, C. R. M. Ward, PhD, Ms. H. E. Irwin, D. W. N. Doig, A. Sandall, MLitt, D. L. Natzler, E. P. Silk

SENIOR CLERKS—Mrs. S. A. de Ste. Croix, A. R. Kennon, D. W. Robson, L. C. Laurence Smyth, A. R. Gren, S. J. Patrick, D. J. Gerhold, C. J. Poyser, D. F. Harrison, S. J. Priestley, A. H. Doherty, P. A. Evans, R. I. S. Phillips, R. G. James, Miss E. J. Baker, Miss P. A. Helme, J. B. Ingram (acting), I. G. Gilbert (acting), J. Darling (acting), J. M. Hope (acting)

CLERK OF SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEES—K. J. Brown

ASSISTANT CLERKS—D. R. Lloyd, R. A. Lambert, B. M. Hutton, J. S. Benger, Ms. E. C. Samson, P. A. Hibbert, N. P. Walker, M. D. Hamlyn

SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—G. E. Clayton, Miss R. J. Challis, P. G. Moon

HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—L. L. Kaye, A. P. Hubner, Miss S. J. Fox, Mrs. P. Fisher, F. McShane, J. D. Whatley, S. D. Barrett, M. Clark, Miss A. M. Loader, Mrs. S. M. Barrett, Miss F. L. Allingham, Mrs. L. M. Nugent, J. A. L. Dresner (temporary)

SPECIALIST ASSISTANTS—Ms. H. C. Beaumont, M. P. Hillyard, M. J. Cremin, Ms. A. S. Frost, Dr. L. M. Rosborough, Dr. S. A. Harvey

EDITORIAL SUPERVISOR OF THE VOTE—G. H. Bright, DEPUTY—B. Tidball, ASSISTANTS—Miss B. Balcomb, Miss L. Lewis, J. Puricelli, K. B. Wood, P. D. Howlett, Miss J. M. Williams

EXAMINERS OF PETITIONS FOR PRIVATE BILLS—R. J. Willoughby, M. G. Pownall

REGISTRAR OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS—A. J. Hastings

TAXING OFFICER—R. J. Willoughby

CHIEF OFFICE CLERKS—R. A. Broomfield, Mrs. K. J. Rodger, Miss D. Symes (temporary), M. P. Oxborough (temporary)

DEPARTMENT OF THE SERJEANT AT ARMS

SERJEANT AT ARMS—Sir Victor Le Fanu, KCVO

DEPUTY SERJEANT AT ARMS—P. N. W. Jennings

ASSISTANT SERJEANT AT ARMS—M. J. A. Cummins

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SERJEANTS AT ARMS—P. A. J. Wright, J. F. Collins

CLERK IN CHARGE—Miss M. Frampton, MBE

ADMISSION ORDER OFFICE—E. D. Palfrey, A. Chipperfield, BEM, Mrs. S. J. Warren

PRINCIPAL DOORKEEPER—G. H. Sargeant

SECOND PRINCIPAL DOORKEEPER—R. T. Warboys

SENIOR DOORKEEPERS—H. D. Bloxham, S. E. R. Skinner, R. A. F. Chapman, J. D. Garnett, R. H. Usher, C. Gray

HEAD OFFICE KEEPER—W. H. Hazard, MBE

SENIOR OFFICE KEEPERS—M. Bryant, K. R. Kemp, K. R. Dickason

NURSING SISTER—Miss E. Needham

DEPARTMENT OF THE LIBRARY

LIBRARIAN—D. Menhennet, DPhil

DEPUTY LIBRARIAN—D. J. T. Englefield

LIBRARY AND RESEARCH—

ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS (Heads of Division)—G. F. Lock, Miss J. B. Tanfield

DEPUTY ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS (Heads of Section)—J. B. Poole, PhD, S. Z. Young, Mrs. H. R. Coates, Miss P. J. Baines, BLitt, K. G. Cuninghame, Mrs. J. M. Wainwright, FI InfSc, C. C. Pond, Ph.D, Mrs. C. B. Andrews, R. C. Clements

SENIOR LIBRARY CLERKS—Mrs. J. M. Lourie, Ms. F. Poole, Mrs. J. M. Fiddick, C. R. Barclay, Mrs. C. M. Gillie, Miss C. E. Nield, R. J. Ware, DPhil, Ms. D. Gore, PhD, R. J. Twigger, B. K. Winetrobe, T. N. Edmonds, R. J. Cracknell, Miss O. M. Gay, Miss E. M. McInnes, Mrs. G. Allen

ASSISTANT LIBRARY CLERKS—Miss C. J. Gilmour, PhD, Miss M. Baber, C. M. Bowlby, Miss A. J. Saville, A. D. Lyall, Mrs. P. Carling (temporary)

SENIOR LIBRARY EXECUTIVES—Mrs. S. M. Withers, ALA, Mrs. H. V. Holden, ALA, Miss J. Seaton, FLA, K. N. H. Parry, ALA, Ms. A. Muir

EDUCATION OFFICER—Mrs. E. R. Stones

HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—Mrs. P A. Bozdan, S. A. Wise

HIGHER LIBRARY EXECUTIVES—J. A. Prince, MLS, Mrs. P. V. Wiles, Mrs. D. W. Clark, Miss C. E. Fretten, ALA, Miss M. H. Fletcher, Mrs. G. C. Brown, Ms. V. R. Cattell, Mrs. P. E. Cook, ALA, Miss I. O. White, ALA, Ms. H. Armstrong, Miss E. J. Jones, ALA, Mrs. J. A. P. Skipworth, ALA, G. Haig, Miss B. Mee, MIInfSc, Miss G. L. Cooper

SUPERINTENDING CLERK—J. R. Hutson

LIBRARY EXECUTIVES—Mrs. M. A. Azim, ALA, Miss S. Holland, LLA, Mrs. F. M. Ward, A. D. Parker, ALA, Ruth Bacon, ALA, Mrs. E. H. Riley, ALA, Ms. J. B. Hall, ALA, R. Freebury, T. Holmes, P. M. Ward, Ms. F. Whittle, Mrs. J. M. Smith, ALA

CHIEF OFFICE CLERKS—D. J. Plowright, Miss N. Harland

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—P. R. Davis, J. S. Came, Mrs. J. MacDonald, Miss B. A. Rowlands, ALA, D. B. Inns, E. M. Duncan, BEM (Head Library Attendant), Mrs. A. J. H. Mara, D. A. Brown

VOTE OFFICE—

DELIVERER OF THE VOTE—G. R. Russell

DEPUTY DELIVERER OF THE VOTE—H. C. Foster

ASSISTANT DELIVERER OF THE VOTE—O. B. T. Sweeney

SUPERINTENDING CLERKS—C. D. Lister, Mrs. S. Fuzio

VOTE OFFICE ASSISTANTS—T. S. Wilson, B. G. Underwood, G. Howard, C. P. Williams

SALE OFFICE—SUPERINTENDING CLERK—C. C. Clarke, MBE

ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT—A. C. J. Poole

FEES OFFICE—

ACCOUNTANT—J. L. G. Dobson

DEPUTY ACCOUNTANT—A. J. Lewis

SENIOR ASSISTANT ACCOUNTANT—G. P. Brown

ASSISTANT ACCOUNTANTS—F. W. Brewer, A. R. Marskell, M. J. Barram, Miss M. M. McColl

SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER—K. E. Walton

HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—R. Gunn, M. J. H. Caswell, Mrs. P. D. Page, Mrs. N. Norman, Mrs. G. Crowther, Mrs. P. M. Lowther, Mrs. D. Hill, Miss P. Hurford, Mrs. J. S. Peach

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—Miss D. E. Johnson, D. M. Allen, Miss L. J. F. Clay, E. Sankey, Mrs. D. K. Euesden, D. J. D. Woods, Ms. M. R. Morris, Miss A. C. Cooper, Miss R. Harrison, G. L. Turner, Miss P. R. Mills, Mrs. J. D. Mead, Miss D. A. Murrell, Mrs. J. C. Ponting, Miss G. Bauman, P. F. Dawson

ESTABLISHMENTS OFFICE—

HEAD OF OFFICE—G. A. Roberts

DEPUTY HEAD OF OFFICE—J. A. Robb

SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—Miss R. A. Cole, V. H. Stocker

HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICER—N.P. Crawley

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—P. C. Kingsley, R. S. Harrison, Miss J. Bremner, M. Page

COMPUTER OFFICE—

COMPUTER OFFICER—R. S. Morgan, FBCS, FIInfSc, ASSISTANT COMPUTER OFFICERS—Mrs. G. S. P. Smith, Mrs. S. C. White

INTERNAL AUDITOR—A. A. Cameron

STAFF INSPECTOR—R. C. Collins

WELFARE OFFICER—Miss L. Hunt

DEPARTMENT OF THE OFFICIAL REPORT

EDITOR—K. S. Morgan

DEPUTY EDITOR—I. D. Church

PRINCIPAL ASSISTANT EDITORS—R. V. Hadlow, J. Gourley, F. G. Brotherston, OBE, J. Withers

ASSISTANT EDITORS—P. Walker, E. Holland, W. G. Garland, Vee Grainger

COMMITTEE SUB-EDITORS—J. Ledgerwood, D. Crosswell, Miss V. A. A. Clarke, Mrs. A. Roberts, Miss H. A. Hales, Miss L. Sutherland, S. M. Hutchinson, Miss V. A. Widgery, C. Fogarty, Miss H. Thompson, Miss M. Babington, Mrs. A. Street, L. Gilmore

REPORTERS—Mrs. E. J. Gregory, Ms. G. Hardgrave, P. Oglethorpe, P. Hadlow, Miss C. Hanly, Miss J. A. Bradshaw, M. Watson, Miss K. Stewart, Miss E. Morris, Miss E. Watt, Mrs. J. Martin, J. Ransley, Miss J. Goodman

PRINCIPAL TRANSCRIBER—D. N. Harrington, MBE

DEPUTY PRINCIPAL TRANSCRIBERS—Mrs. E. M. Bangay, Mrs. M. J. Harding

PRINCIPAL HANSARD ASSISTANT—D. J. Lawler

SENIOR HANSARD ASSISTANT—Miss R. Washington

ANNUNCIATOR SUPERINTENDENT—H. J. Wellings

REFRESHMENT DEPARTMENT

GENERAL MANAGER—W. J. J. Smillie, FHCIMA, FCFA, ACF

DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER—E. J. Nash, MCFA

PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATOR—Mrs. S. Nicholls

PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO GENERAL MANAGER—Mrs. A. G. Lunn

BANQUETING MANAGER—C. J. Griffiths

CATERING ACCOUNTANT—D. R. W. Wood, FCA

ASSISTANT CATERING ACCOUNTANT—Mrs. B. A. Langley

EXECUTIVE CHEF—I. Gabay

HEAD CELLARMAN—D. Balcombe

HEAD STOREMAN—A. E. Edmond

SHORTHAND WRITER TO THE HOUSE—Mrs. E. M. C. Holland

PARLIAMENTARY WORKS OFFICER (PSA)—B. C. Sewell

HEAD OF SECURITY—Chief Superintendent A. J. Coxon

COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER—Mrs. J. Garbutt

POSTMASTER—J. Arnold

TRANSPORT MANAGER—R. H. Hyde

THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

IN THE FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTIETH PARLIAMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND
[WHICH OPENED 25 JUNE 1987]

THIRTY-SEVENTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SIXTH SERIES **VOLUME 134**

SEVENTEENTH VOLUME OF SESSION 1987-88

House of Commons

Monday 23 May 1988

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

WALES

County Council Roads

2. **Sir Anthony Meyer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether he will consider designating as trunk roads those county council roads which are essential for industrial or tourist development.

The Minister of State, Welsh Office (Mr. Wyn Roberts): Motorways and trunk roads are designated because of their importance for long-distance through traffic. It would not be appropriate to add to the network on the grounds suggested.

Sir Anthony Meyer: In view of Clwyd county council's diligence in providing proper access roads to important industrial developments such as Kinmell park estate and vital tourist areas such as Rhyl and Prestatyn, will my hon. Friend reconsider whether there should be an extension of the powers of the Welsh Office, which, in this respect, have been satisfactorily carried out?

Mr. Roberts: I understand that Clwyd county council has plans to improve the A525 between the A55 and Rhyl and Prestatyn. The priority that it gives to the scheme is a matter for the council. We recently wrote to the local authority agreeing to the provision of white on brown tourism signs at the A55-A525 junction. A meeting will be held shortly to finalise the wording and symbols to be used.

Mr. Livsey: Will the Minister reconsider the situation vis-a-vis the A44, which we in mid-Wales would like to see designated as a trunk road? I understand that one of the formulae applied involves the volume of traffic, which inevitably is light. None the less, it is a very important link road. Will the Welsh Office negotiate with the Secretary of State for Transport on that issue?

Mr. Roberts: We have examined the argument for trunking the A44 between Rhayader and the English border. The hon. Gentleman is quite right about this being related to the volume of traffic. The adjoining length of road in England is not trunked. That is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport.

Mr. Raffan: Will my hon. Friend reconsider the reply that he gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Clwyd, North-West (Sir A. Meyer)? To realise the full potential of the A55 and the Government's massive investment of £160 million in dualling it, it is essential that link roads are constructed between the expressway and industrial estates such as the Delyn enterprise zone and Greenfield business park. Contrary to what the Minister has said, Clwyd county council shows no sign of developing such a link road strategy. Will my hon. Friend take a leaf out of the book of the previous Secretary of State for Wales, who was prepared to consider designating short link roads as trunk roads?

Mr. Roberts: I agree that those roads are important in order to derive the best possible benefit from trunk roads such as the A55. However, I must stress once again that the local highway authority has responsibility for those roads.

Rating Reform

3. **Mr. Murphy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what measures he will be taking to help Welsh local authorities in defraying the administrative costs of implementing the community charge.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Ian Grist): The Government have made it clear that additional resources will be made available to help local authorities with the extra capital and revenue costs of setting up the new system. We are discussing those matters with the associations.

Mr. Murphy: Is the Minister aware that his Conservative colleague, the chairman of the Association of District Councils in Britain as a whole, recently visited Cardiff and told Welsh local authorities that the cost of implementing the poll tax would be £10 million and that it would cost £17 million to run? That is far in excess of the amount that the Government originally intended. Does he agree that that is yet another example of an unnecessary burden on the Welsh people?

Mr. Grist: We do not have to go to an English Conservative, because the Committee of Welsh District Councils is looking into the matter, although we do not expect to have its estimates until next month. The Government have commissioned a firm of management consultants to survey a sample of local authorities in England and Wales to report on the cost of implementation and operation to assist us in our considerations. That report is due soon.

Mr. Gwilym Jones: Will my hon. Friend make every effort to arrange for the tightest controls lest local councils use the community charge as an excuse for a spending spree? Surely that much simpler and fairer tax will involve less cost per person because it will not involve the complex calculations for which the anachronistic formula for rates presently calls.

Mr. Grist: My hon. Friend is right. Costs will be incurred in setting up the system, but once it is running it will not be more expensive than the present one.

Mr. Flynn: The Minister says that he does not need an English Conservative to make his calculations. It is notable that in Newport, East the Tory party turned to English Conservatives to ride their candidates twice in constituency elections. It is one of those Conservatives who has given us these figures.

Can the Minister tell the House which local authorities will take part in the Welsh estimate? Does he realise that there will be an enormous increase in the burden of work? It has been estimated that in one county council the number of accounts will increase from 140,000 to 375,000, that the number paying by instalments will increase ninefold, that the number of distress warrants will increase tenfold, and that the number of payments will increase from 500,000 to 3·5 million. Is it not time for Welsh Office Ministers to protect Wales from this Tory tax, which is unfair and unnecessary?

Mr. Grist: The hon. Gentleman is yet again using guesstimates in an attempt to scare people away from what will be a thoroughly fair and easily understood tax. The Opposition are clearly afraid of it because it will show up the wasteful expenditure for which so many members of the Labour party are guilty in local government.

Welsh Rivers Authority

4. **Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has received pressing for a Welsh rivers authority; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Grist: The Government's consultation paper proposing a National Rivers Authority was published in July 1987. Nine of the 51 responses received in Wales suggested a separate authority for Wales.

Mr. Davies: Given that the Secretary of State is a party to the appointment of Lord Crickhowell as chairman of the National Rivers Authority, I am surprised that he did not answer my question. Nevertheless, how can the public have confidence in the integrity and independence of Lord Crickhowell, who is a paid representative of the multinational mining corporation Rio-Tinto-Zinc, in his capacity of chairman of the National Rivers Authority? Given also that the incidence of river pollution is now at a record level of 2,500 cases annually, only one in 28 of which results in prosecution, is not Lord Crickhowell just a Tory ex-politician—a Tory placeman—appointed to preside over the lowering of water quality standards in Wales?

Mr. Grist: Lowering standards have been well illustrated by the hon. Gentleman's approach this afternoon. I thought that his was a disgraceful contribution.

My noble Friend Lord Crickhowell has made a notable and extremely beneficent contribution to Welsh affairs. Opposition Members should welcome the fact that a person in his position, with his love and knowledge of Wales, is there to protect our interests.

Sir Raymond Gower: Is it not a fact that legislation governing the purity of water is still in force and has in no way been altered? Is it not a fact also that where there has been an increase in pollution, it is largely due to new treatments of agricultural land, and that a major step is now being taken to improve matters in that respect?

Mr. Grist: As is so often the case, my hon. Friend is absolutely right.

Valleys Initiative

5. **Mr. Livsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on his Valleys initiative.

The Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Peter Walker): I have had the benefit of consultations with the local authorities, the health authorities, housing associations, enterprise agencies, the Wales Tourist Board, a number of voluntary organisations, the CBI, the TUC, and a range of commercial and industrial firms. A range of constructive and positive proposals have been made, all of which are being fully assessed and considered, I will announce a positive plan of action when those considerations have been completed.

Mr. Livsey: When does the Secretary of State hope to announce that initiative, which has been under consideration for some time? Can he give an assurance that there will be new money on the table—not money recycled from elsewhere in the Welsh Office budget—for the initiative, which I welcome?

Mr. Walker: I have always stated that I will make an announcement as soon as the consultation is complete and I have reached conclusions. The programme will affect the Valleys for some years to come, and it is important that the document is carefully constructed. I do not think that the hon. Gentleman will be disappointed with the way in which public expenditure is used to benefit the Valleys.

Mr. Foot: We hope that the Secretary of State will look fully at all the propositions put to him from the Valley towns, and if he takes a bit longer to consider all the representations, none of us can complain. Will he, however, give us an absolute assurance that when he publishes the scheme he will also publish all the financial details, comparing how much is to be spent in the next three or four years in detail with what has been spent over recent years and also with what we have lost in regional aid over that period—which we trust will be refunded in the next two or three years?

Mr. Walker: I should be delighted to publish comparisons—particularly in most of the spheres that affect the Valleys—with the record of the Labour Government of which the right hon. Gentleman was a member.

Dr. Thomas: We have been reading carefully the book that the right hon. Gentleman published recently and noting the kind of partnership that he envisages between the public sector and private capital. What amount of commercial capital does he expect to participate in the Valleys initiative? Is he hopeful that the area will be scheduled for an integrated operations programme for the European Community, which will add substantially to the funds made available?

Mr. Walker: As the hon. Gentleman knows, plans connected with the European Commission are a matter for discussion and detailed negotiation.

As for our relationship with the private sector, I have engaged in many consultations because a range of industries are potential investors in the Valleys in major commercial enterprises and capital investment. The results of those negotiations have been very heartwarming.

Mr. Rowlands: Will the Secretary of State give us an assurance that at least his initiative will include sufficient money to cover the serious under-funding of the health services in our Valley communities, and to deal with the backlog of applications for repair and improvement grants caused by the fact that a large number of individual home owners have been waiting for up to four years for such grants?

Mr. Walker: The Health Service will always face great demands. As the hon. Gentleman knows, the amount now being spent on the Health Service is a substantial improvement, by any comparison, on the amount being spent some years ago. Similarly, a Government who have spent more in one year than the previous Labour Government spent in five years are likely to have a good record on house improvements.

Mr. Alan Williams: Can we at least have some answers from the Secretary of State? Is it not time to end the cruelties, or is it just dither on the right hon. Gentleman's part? Does he realise that he has trailed this so often and for so long that it is in danger of becoming a rather sad parliamentary joke? Will he confirm that the article in the *Western Mail* on 17 March was based on authorised Welsh Office briefing? If not, how does he account for the detailed quotations in it? If it was, does he stand by the figure of £900 million that it quoted?

Finally—this is an important point—when it is eventually announced—if it is—may we have a guarantee that it will be announced first in this Chamber?

Mr. Walker: I shall certainly make an announcement in the Chamber, although I shall also be simultaneously making announcements in the Valleys. I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman will appreciate that.

The only publicity of any scale that has built up about the Valleys initiative is the constant neurosis of the right hon. Gentleman, who mentions it in almost every speech. I am sure that he will be delighted if it is a programme of action with substantial results. We look forward to seeing his smiling face rejoicing at such a programme.

Clywd Structure Plan

6. **Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has received from Clwyd county council on proposed changes in the Clwyd structure plan; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: My right hon. Friend has received no such representations.

Mr. Jones: When the Secretary of State receives representations, will he take into account the needs of the west and south of Clwyd? I am afraid that the county council is not taking any account of the needs of the Vale of Clwyd in its structure plan, and is likely to create a dormitory area for Chester and Deeside in the west of the county.

Mr. Grist: When the structure plan alterations are finally submitted to my right hon. Friend, careful note will be taken of all representations.

Mr. Raffan: Will my hon. Friend also take note of the representations that he will receive from north-east Wales concerning its place in the Clwyd structure plan and the complete lack of any action by Clwyd county council to help the industrial development of that part of Clwyd? It is causing great concern in Delwyn borough council and also in the borough council in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Clwyd, North-West (Sir A. Meyer). We need roads, as was mentioned earlier today. It is not good enough for the Welsh Office to abdicate its responsibilities and transfer them to the county. The Welsh Office is doing nothing.

Mr. Grist: My hon. Friend's support for his constituents and for the people of Clwyd is very well known, and he has well exemplified it this afternoon.

Council House Sales

7. **Mr. Chris Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many council houses and flats have been sold to tenants in Wales since May 1979 under *(a)* the right to buy and *(b)* voluntary provisions.

Mr. Grist: 55,246 council houses and flats have been sold to tenants in Wales under the right to buy. The equivalent figure for voluntary sales is 5,082.

Mr. Butler: Does my hon. Friend agree that this is a great contribution to the liberation of the working man? What hope does he have that this liberation will be extended to those who live in hard-to-sell flats?

Mr. Grist: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. That is the greatest distribution of capital to working people that any hon. Member could have imagined. It was unimaginable by the Labour party, which purports to represent working people. My hon. Friend will be aware of the extra discount for flats that has recently been made available to encourage such sales.

Mr. Coleman: We note with interest the Minister's answer, but hon. Members with Welsh constituencies will want to know how many people in Wales were registered as homeless in 1979, compared with the present figure. When will the receipts from the sales of council houses in Wales be applied to resolving the problem of homelessness amongst our people?

Mr. Grist: The number of registered homeless in 1979 was 4,676. In 1987 the number was 5,300. As I think the hon. Gentleman will agree, that does not show great movement.

Sir Anthony Meyer: As the great majority of those who were interested in buying their council houses under the previous scheme have done so, resulting in immense benefits for them, is the time not coming for another great leap forward in the extension of home ownership?

Mr. Grist: I think that my hon. Friend may not have noticed the additional impetus of the higher discount that has recently been allowed. Nevertheless, he is quite right. We are looking at further ways of spreading home ownership.

Mr. Wigley: Is the Minister aware that one of the causes of tension in rural Wales, in areas such as Gwynedd, is the inability of local people to compete on the open market to buy houses and the reduction in the stock of council houses for letting to them? In these circumstances, will he consider whether it is possible to make a much greater financial allocation that would allow district councils to buy houses from the private sector to let to those who cannot afford to buy them? Will he also look at the possibility of giving to those who want to buy council houses, but who are uncertain as to their job prospects in areas of high unemployment, some guarantee that they will be able to revert to renting accommodation from the local council if they have to foreclose on their mortgages?

Mr. Grist: I take note of the latter part of the hon. Gentleman's suggestion. On the first part of his question, he may be interested to know that we shall be introducing such a measure in the current Housing Bill, which I think he will find helpful.

Mr. Roy Hughes: When will the Government recognise that millions of pounds are lying dormant from the sale of council properties? Is it not a fact that under this Government public expenditure on housing has shown a marked decline compared with that under the previous Labour Government? What about our Valley communities, where thousands of houses are now just about beyond repair? Is it not a fact that homelessness is at record levels in Wales? Mortgage repossessions are seven times higher now than they were in 1979. The hon. Member for Warrington, South (Mr. Butler) represents an English constituency, so perhaps he is not too conversant with our problems in Wales. Is it not time that the Government realised that Welsh housing has reached crisis point?

Mr. Grist: It is astonishing that the hon. Gentleman should talk about the decline of housing in Wales when the Labour party saw that decline but did not lift a finger to do anything about it. I shall remind him of the figures. During the time that the Labour Government were in office expenditure on private housing renovation was £54 million a year. Under this Government it is £414 million. Expenditure on public housing renovation under the Labour Government was £86 million a year. Under this Government it is £339 million a year. We have saved the housing stock, including houses owned in many cases by those who elect Opposition Members.

The hon. Gentleman may be interested to know that Cynon valley council has just produced its housing strategy. In paragraph 29 it encapsulates its new policy, and the first point that it makes is that:

"New Council houses be built only in exceptional circumstances."

That is the change.

Briefing Policy

8. **Mr. John:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is his policy on briefing of outside organisations by officials of his Department.

Mr. Peter Walker: The response to requests for outside briefing depends upon the nature of the briefing required. The main objective is to provided factual background and to preserve the neutrality of the Civil Service.

Mr. John: Has the right hon. Gentleman seen the report —which no doubt is accurate—in the *Western Mail* of 28 April, in which Mr. John Davies, the under-secretary at the Welsh Office, is purported to have told a farming conference, regarding sheep quotas, "I for one will fight the proposal tooth and nail."? Is that not a gross violation of the political neutrality about which the Minister has spoken and without which the Civil Service cannot properly function? Will he therefore ensure that Mr. Davies understands that he is being undesirably partisan and, if the Government make as abrupt an about face on sheep as they did on milk quotas, undesirably foolish as well?

Mr. Walker: I shall certainly look at the quotation mentioned by the hon. Gentleman. The intention of Mr. Davies was to give factual briefing. If he made a remark of that nature, obviously I shall have words with him.

Mr. Alan Williams: Will the Secretary of State confirm that in his latest bout of petulance, unlike other Ministers and shadows, he has instructed his private office to give no replies to any questions from me, except in answer to parliamentary questions or to letters? In view of that, will he given an assurance that in future he will answer the parliamentary questions that are asked, not those that he wished had been asked, and that he will answer them on time, instead of giving holding answers, which happens all too often, even when the eventual substantive belated reply is the single word "No"?

Mr. Walker: In the many years in which I have had the privilege of having numerous shadows, including the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) and others, I have not previously had the experience of the shadow's researchers telephoning staff in my private office and using quotes from civil servants in future political remarks. As a result, I have said that I would prefer to see the replies to the right hon. Gentleman. That will continue. I shall decide on the replies to parliamentary questions. I realise that quite often the replies are not liked by the right hon. Gentleman.

Hospital Waiting Lists

9. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what new initiatives he is planning to reduce hospital waiting lists in *(a)* Gwent and *(b)* Wales.

Mr. Grist: I am pleased to announce that the £1 million of waiting list funding in 1987-88 was associated with additional throughput of some 2,900 in-patients and day cases and 6,600 out-patients on the lists concerned. I congratulate district health authorities on that achievement. In view of that success, I am making available a further £1 million in the current financial year. District health authorities, including Gwent, have now submitted their waiting list action plans and officials of the National Health Service directorate will be monitoring progress towards their implementation.

Mr. Flynn: The whole House will be glad to know that there was a small general improvement in waiting lists throughout Wales, but the increase was small and will take decades to work through. I remind the Minister of his promise less than a year ago that by now no patient would have to wait longer than a month for an urgent operation or longer than a year for a non-urgent operation. We welcome the Minister's announcement, but remind him that instead of there being no patients waiting, as he promised, 8,940 non-urgent cases are still waiting more than a year, and the number of urgent cases has increased, in spite of the £1 million, to 2,360. Does he agree that the great mountain of pain, suffering, anxiety and misery of the 121,000 on the waiting lists deserves greater effort, and not the same again?

Mr. Grist: The hon. Gentleman does not give those who work in the Health Service the credit that he might give them. The number of in-patients treated in Wales has risen by 27 per cent. under this Government, and the number treated in Gwent has risen by 33 per cent. since we came to power. The increase in the number of people treated represents satisfied patients who were not being treated before.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: So that we might have the full picture of Health Service expenditure, can my hon. Friend give us comparative figures showing what was spent on the Health Service in Wales in 1979 and what is being spent this year?

Mr. Grist: I must have those figures somewhere. About £394 million was being spent when we came to power. The figure is more than £1·2 billion now.

Dr. Thomas: While the Minister is thinking about those figures, perhaps he might like to reflect on the effect on hospital waiting lists of closures and the rundown of facilities by Gwynedd health authority and his Department. I appreciate that the Minister is unable to comment on the matter, but is he aware that I represented the Minister of State at the demonstration at Llandudno last Saturday, where hundreds of people made their views clear? Will he assure us that he will take account of public opinion in Gwynedd before he comes to any decision?

Mr. Grist: I assure the hon. Gentleman that all representations, whether from him, his friends or the constituents of my hon. Friend the Minister of State, will be taken great notice of.

Butetown Link Road

10. **Mr. Michael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether he will seek to give the earliest possible decision on South Glamorgan county council's proposed new design for the Butetown link road; and if he will provide the necessary capital allocation for a start to be made as soon as possible, and in any event no later than April 1989.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Our officials received details of the alternative scheme from South Glamorgan on 5 April. Further discussions are taking place with the county council, and I hope to be in a position to give a decision before transport supplementary grant bids for 1989-90 are invited in July.

Mr. Michael: I am grateful to the Minister for that reassurance. Will he assure us that his officials will make every effort to overcome any problems that arise with the timetable? Will he bear in mind the fact that, on the tail of the need to complete access, are longer-term requirements for the improvement of the eastern access to the Cardiff Bay and south Cardiff Bay area?

Mr. Roberts: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his comments. We shall, of course, do our upmost to keep to this fairly tight schedule. I realise the importance of the Butetown link road in connection with the Grangetown link, the central link and the Cogan spur to Penarth, which it is hoped will be completed by the latter part of this year.

Blood Transfusion Service

11. **Mr. Morgan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many operations in National Health Service hospitals will have to be postponed or cancelled in Wales because of staff shortages in the national blood transfusion service; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: The blood transfusion service has taken contingency measures to minimise the effect of the difficulties experienced in recruiting clerk/drivers. The Welsh Office recently issued authority for special payments to be made for four new clerk/drivers. In the meantime, the situation is being closely monitored. Emergency surgery will not be affected.

Mr. Morgan: I thank the Minister for his reply. Does he agree that the Welsh Office has brought about this crisis in the national blood transfusion service in Wales by stubbornly refusing, for much longer than any of the comparable English authorities, to approve a variation order affecting the basic salary of clerks and other administrative staff in the service? Does he further agree that the time has come to see to it that Health Service

administrative and clerical support staff are employed on conditions which provide for low turnover and reasonable wage rates so that job satisfaction can be combined with reasonable remuneration? Should we not do that rather than rely on high turnover and low wages, resulting in a constant attempt to recruit new staff to replace the experienced staff, on whom the service depends?

Mr. Grist: The hon. Gentleman rightly wants a steady and stable supply of staff to carry out this very responsible duty. However, I reject his charge that the Welsh Office is in some way responsible for the present state of affairs. The difficulty has been finding a proper grading policy for clerk/drivers and others in the Health Service. The staff side did not necessarily approve the proposals that were put to it in the Whitley council. It is now in the joint negotiating committee, and we hope to arrive at a conclusion that will end this problem once and for all.

Labour Statistics

12. **Mr. Roy Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what are the latest unadjusted figures for unemployment in *(a)* Newport, *(b)* Gwent and *(c)* Wales; and if he will give the equivalent figures for 1979 on the most nearly comparable basis.

Mr. Peter Walker: On 14 April 1988 the numbers of unemployed claimants in Newport district, Gwent and Wales were 7,774, 22,728 and 140,073 respectively. Unadjusted figures for 1979 are not available on a basis that enables a valid comparision to be made.

Mr. Hughes: Is the Secretary of State aware that the number of people in employment in East Anglia increased by 18·2 per cent. between 1979 and 1987, whereas in Wales the number fell by 14·9 per cent.? Will he confirm that, despite umpteen changes in compiling the statistics, unemployment in Newport, Gwent and Wales is still significantly above the 1979 figure?

Mr. Walker: I am very well aware that East Anglia had no coal or steel closures during that period, and that made a considerable difference to the figures. I am glad to say that many more jobs are being created in a diversity of employments and, with our current positive regional policy, that trend is continuing.

Sir Raymond Gower: Is it not a fact that in East Anglia there has also been a recent improvement in communications, which has resulted in a great improvement in the industrial standing of the region? Will my right hon. Friend confirm that there has been an extremely promising decrease in the number of unemployed in Newport, Gwent and in Wales and a vast increase in the number of notified vacancies?

Mr. Walker: The best indicators of that increase are the local newspapers throughout Wales, which show a large increase in the number of advertisements of vacancies. There is no doubt that in many parts of Wales that trend is continuing, but there is still a long way to go.

Mrs. Clwyd: Will the Secretary of State explain why unemployment in Mid Glamorgan has doubled since 1979, and why, according to the latest figures, there has been a substantial increase in unemployment in that region? In my constituency of Cynon Valley male unemployment is now 28 per cent.—the highest level in Wales. Will he tell his Department that we are sick of glossy brochures such as the one I have here from British Coal Enterprise Ltd., which, despite all the hype, has created only 44 jobs in the Cynon Valley, despite the fact that 2,300 men have lost their jobs in the mining industry?

Mr. Walker: I recognise the problems in the hon. Lady's constituency, but I am sorry if she is suggesting that British Coal Enterprise has not done a good job. Many hon. Members throughout the Principality have expressed their anxiety about what would happen if the activities of that enterprise agency declined. It has helped a lot of new businesses and firms and it has given a lot of advice and money. I hope that that help will continue, and I naturally hope that its activities will continue in the hon. Lady's constituency, and with results.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: The fall in unemployment throughout Wales is most welcome, but will my right hon. Friend bear in mind the problems that are faced by areas such as mine and other more remote rural areas when seeking to attract inward investment? Will he impress upon the Welsh Development Agency the importance of stressing the advantages that exist in rural Wales as well as industrial Wales?

Mr. Walker: Yes. I believe that the Welsh Development Agency has been active throughout the Principality. My hon. Friend will be aware that considerable developments are currently taking place within his constituency as a result of various aid and regional assistance. Perhaps one of the most exciting developments is that in the port area, which could open up important markets in Portugal and Spain. A great deal of help has been given by the Government in such areas.

Benefits

13. **Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what assessment he has made of the impact on individuals and on the provision of services in Wales for which he is responsible of recent changes in housing benefit and other benefit payments in *(a)* Clwyd and *(b)* Wales in general.

Mr. Peter Walker: The hon. Gentleman will be aware that housing benefit and social security changes will be monitored by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services and he will fully confer with the Welsh Office on the results of the changes.

Mr. Jones: May I tell the right hon. Gentleman of the dismay of one of my constituents, a world war 2 veteran, who fought from the Normandy beaches through to Hamburg and who now finds that he will lose housing benefit of £18 per week because he has a British Rail pension? I must tell the right hon. Gentleman that there are many other similar cases throughout Wales. Will he tell his Cabinet colleagues that the regulations are hurtful to vulnerable people, and will he urge the Prime Minister to think again about the harsh effects the regulations are having throughout Britain?

Mr. Walker: When one looks at the total changes, allowances as well as housing benefit, there are, as the hon. Gentleman will be aware, some people who have benefited as well as some people being put at a disadvantage. Perhaps the people who have obtained additional benefit

from the changes had considerable need. As the hon. Gentleman knows, a review has already taken place, with a considerable range of changes. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services has promised that he will examine the effects of the total changes in detail. I am sure that if it is shown that further action may be needed, my right hon. Friend will take such action.

Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons

14. **Mr. Win Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many applications by chronically sick and disabled people in *(a)* Ogwr, *(b)* Mid Glamorgan and *(c)* Wales, were made in 1987 for (i) central heating and (ii) other home adaptations; and how many of these were approved in 1987.

Mr. Grist: Information on the form of assistance given for home adaptations for the disabled and the number of applications made and approved is not collected by the Department. What I can tell the hon. Gentleman is the number of grants that were completed in 1987. For Wales the total was 2,325; of these 333 were in Mid Glamorgan and 96 in the district of Ogwr.

Mr. Griffiths: Is the Minister aware that in the district of Ogwr there are currently 600 chronically sick and disabled people on the waiting list for central heating alone? Will the Minister look at some way of providing more money from the Welsh Office to enable those people to obtain the central heating that is so often essential for the medical conditions from which they are suffering?

Mr. Grist: I am concerned at what the hon. Gentleman has said. Perhaps he will let me have a few more details on the position in his constituency. In general, Welsh district councils appreciate the needs of the disabled, and I understood that such applications were treated with priority by them.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Meetings

28. **Mr. Sackville:** To ask the right hon. Member for Selby, as representing the Church Commissioners, when the Church Commissioners last met; and what subjects were discussed.

Mr. Michael Alison, Second Church Estates Commissioner (Representing Church Commissioners): The commissioners' board of governors and committees meet frequently to regulate all aspects of the commissioners' work. General meetings of the commissioners are held at least once a year to consider the annual report and accounts and the allocation of money. The last general meeting was held on 17 December last year.

Mr. Sackville: Is it not time that the commissioners discussed the abuse of Church property by illegal immigrants for so-called sanctuary? Will my right hon. Friend dissociate himself from the British Council of Churches' recent incitement to its members to indulge in that sort of behaviour, or are we to witness the Church setting out a new immigration policy through a sort of Home Office in Heaven?

Mr. Alison: The Church Commissioners are involved only indirectly through their financial support for parish churches and incumbents in the issues raised by my hon. Friend. He will know that the right of sanctuary was abolished by law in the 17th century and the commissioners would strongly deplore any pressure put upon incumbents or church wardens to break the law of the land as duly placed on the statute book by this democratically elected House.

Mr. Foulkes: If the Church Commissioners had their arms twisted, as did the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, to issue an invitation to the Prime Minister to address the Synod of the Church of England, will the right hon. Gentleman bear in mind the offence that was caused to a large number of members of the Church of Scotland when the Prime Minister said that the love of money is the root of all evil, when we see such evil taking place, particularly in the City of London? Before any such invitation is issued to address the Synod of the Church of England, will the right hon. Gentleman, who has a particular long-standing connection with the Prime Minister, ensure that she practises what she preaches?

Mr. Alison: The hon. Gentleman does less than justice to his fellow countrymen. There are several hundred members of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. To imagine that those Scottish arms are so weak that they can be twisted by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to force them to submit to an address that they did not want is, with due respect, a mockery. My right hon. Friend made a notable contribution to the important topical debate on the interaction of personal faith and civic responsibility and it was well received by the General Assembly.

Income

29. **Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the right hon. Member for Selby, as representing the Church Commissioners, if he will make a statement about the trends in the commissioners' income during the past five years.

30. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the right hon. Member for Selby, as representing the Church Commissioners, what have been the trends in the Church Commissioners' income over the past 12 months.

Mr. Alison: The commissioners' investment income has risen from £69·5 million in 1982 to an estimated £116·9 million in 1987, an increase of 68 per cent., compared with inflation of 25 per cent. over the same period. In the 12 months to December 1987 their income rose by about 17 per cent.

Mr. Marshall: Does my right hon. Friend agree that, welcome as those trends are, they would have been even better if certain Church leaders had given their flock sound spiritual leadership rather than indulging in partisan politics?

Mr. Alison: My hon. Friend will recall that in her recent address to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said:

"Christians will very often genuinely disagree"—

about aspects of secular politics—

"though it is a mark of Christian manners that they will do so with courtesy and mutual respect."

Mr. Banks: May I tell the right hon. Member—[HON. MEMBERS: "No. Question."] Until I heard the Prime Minister give her sermon in Scotland on Saturday I had thought that the Budget was written by St. Nigel, not St. Paul. As the Prime Minister is fond of quoting St. Paul, why did she not use the part of St. Paul's first letter to Timothy, which says that our leaders should be sober, temperate and

"not greedy of filthy lucre"?

Why did she miss that?

Mr. Alison: I am glad that the hon. Gentleman has taken to quoting the Scriptures. We look forward to more of that.

Mr. Banks: I am a very saintly person.

Mr. Alison: If the hon. Gentleman wants to take the letter of the law, or the letter of the word, my right hon. Friend has never hitherto—as far as I am aware—been guilty of insobriety, and she certainly was not when she adressed the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMISSION

Meetings

36. **Mr. Favell:** To ask the Chairman of the Public Accounts Commission when the Public Accounts Commission next expects to meet; and what subjects will be discussed.

39. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Chairman of the Public Accounts Commission when the Public Accounts Commission next expects to meet; and what subjects will be discussed.

Sir Peter Hordern (on behalf of the Public Accounts Commission): Neither the date nor the agenda for the next meeting of the Commission has yet been fixed.

Mr. Favell: When my hon. Friend next meets the Commission, will he ask it to estimate the savings that could be made by moving the National Audit Office to the regions? If he has any problem, I am sure that Stockport council will be only too pleased to assist.

Sir Peter Hordern: The costs of the London headquarters building have been carefully considered in the past, both by the Public Accounts Committee and the Commission. My hon. Friend may wish to know that the National Audit Office currently employs 655 staff in the headquarters building, 65 in other London offices and 176 in other parts of the country and abroad. He and the House may be assured that the Commission will continue to examine closely the costs of maintaining major premises in London, particularly if in future more offices of Government Departments are dispersed to other parts of the country.

Mr. Allen: Will the hon. Gentleman place on the next agenda of the Public Accounts Commission a review of the practices of the Audit Commission, to see whether anything can be learnt about them? It appears that when the Audit Commission discovers even 12 paperclips bought by local authorities that are surplus to requirements, that is front page news. Will he therefore explain why the Ministry of Defence can overspend at will, sometimes by up to £1 billion a project, without being brought fully to account by the House or the Commission?

Sir Peter Hordern: The Public Accounts Commission carefully examines the estimates and the corporate plan of the National Audit Office, but it does not seek to inquire into its findings. That is the task of the Public Accounts Committee, which is so ably chaired by the right hon. Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Mr. Sheldon). May I suggest that the hon. Gentleman draws his right hon. Friend's attention to this point?

Mr. Yeo: Does my hon. Friend agree that the House will probably be relieved to know that the Commission has not yet set a date for a further meeting, in view of the inevitable costs associated with such meetings? Given my hon. Friend's heavy programme of engagements at home and abroad, I am sure that that will be for his convenience as well.

Sir Peter Hordern: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I cannot say that the costs of the Public Accounts Commission are considerable, unlike some other Standing Committees and Select Committees of the House. Unfortunately, the Public Accounts Commission never goes abroad, and I think that the same can be said of the Public Accounts Committee, so, I think that extra costs are unlikely to arise.

37. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Chairman of the Public Accounts Commission when the Public Accounts Commission last met; and what subjects were discussed.

Sir Peter Hordern: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I have just given.

Mr. Dalyell: May I ask the hon. Gentleman a question of which I have given him notice? Will the Public Accounts Commission reflect on the view of Sir Frank Cooper, the former permanent secretary at the Ministry of Defence, as to whether—he said this in the Suntory lecture—the Prime Minister's press secretary should be paid out of public or party funds?

Sir Peter Hordern: I do not think that the Prime Minister's press secretary's salary is a matter for the Public Accounts Commission, but if the hon. Gentleman wishes to raise it, it may be a matter for the Public Accounts Committee. In any event, it is scarcely likely that the press secretary would have high on his list of priorities the activities either of the Public Accounts Commission or of the National Audit Office.

Comptroller and Auditor General (Estimates)

38. **Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Chairman of the Public Accounts Commission what account the Public Accounts Commission takes in examining the estimates submitted for its approval by the Comptroller and Auditor General of his broad priorities for the deployment of his staff to monitor overspending by Government Departments; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Peter Hordern: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I have just given.

Mr. Cohen: Should not the Public Accounts Commission and the Comptroller and Auditor General have as their foremost priority control of defence costs?

Millions of pounds are overspent or wasted. Such events are commonplace. Will the Public Accounts Commission undertake to insist that the Ministry of Defence publishes all overspends of £1 million and over? It refuses to do so at the moment. Should not public money wasted in that way be subject to public scrutiny?

Sir Peter Hordern: The Public Accounts Commission does not look into defence spending, although we approve the estimates of the National Audit Office as a whole. I advise the hon. Gentleman to raise the matter with the right hon. Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Mr. Sheldon), the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, since I recollect from my experience of the PAC that overspending on defence is a matter that is considered frequently by that Committee.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Members' Facilities

40. **Mrs. Clwyd:** To ask the Lord President of the Council what present plans there are to improve facilities for hon. and right hon. Members within the Palace of Westminster.

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham): I understand that the various Sub-Committees of the Services Committee have considered and are considering a number of suggestions put to them by right hon. and hon. Members for improving facilities within the Palace of Westminster. If the hon. Lady has a particular suggestion to make, I shall of course consider it.

Mrs. Clwyd: One of my suggestions would not be for more unisex bathrooms, but for more equal facilities for men and women in the Palace of Westminster. The Lord President will know, because I have had long correspondence with the Services Committee on the matter what I am referring to. Also, we should have better accommodation for hon. Members and their staff. The accommodation here is disgraceful. If we were subject to the health and safety regulations, most of the accommodation in the Palace would be shut down. We should also have basic facilities for the large number of staff working in the Palace, for example, a shop, so that hon. Members, instead of limping to the back of a queue late at night to get a bottle of milk and a bit of bread—*[Interruption]*—can shop for these basic necessities, such as toothpaste, tights and whatever else they may need during the day. Will the Lord President look seriously at the provision of such services, particularly a unisex hairdresser, who can do something for women's hair, rather than simply men's hair?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think that the hon. Lady should apply for an Adjournment debate.

Mr. Wakeham: Provision for a shop is included in the plans for phase 1 of the new building, which is expected to be ready for occupation in 1990. With regard to unisex, or ladies', hairdressing services, and other matters, I have read with great interest the correspondence conducted by the hon. Lady and other hon. Members, which goes back to long before I held this position. The point is well made. The Accommodation and Administration Sub-Committee is considering all those matters and will continue to do so. It hopes to reach the best conclusions for the benefit of the House.

Mr. Squire: Will my right hon. Friend consider improving the facilities for tours? Now that the Palace is becoming ever more popular, the difficulty that Members of Parliament or, in practice their staff, nearly always face is in balancing on the tightrope between hiring guides and arranging for visiting parties. That could be much more easily dealt with if there was one central office dealing with all aspects.

Mr. Wakeham: This was looked at fairly recently, but if my hon. Friend has any suggestions he should in the first instance talk to the Serjeant at Arms.

Mr. Wallace: Can the Lord President help by telling me whether my eyes deceive me or whether there is a door, in the ministerial corridor labelled "The Solicitor-General for Scotland"? Given that the Solicitor-General for Scotland does not sit in this House or the other place, how could a door so labelled be justified? If there is such a door, does the right hon Gentleman not think that the least that he could do in return is to allow some period at Scottish Question Time for Scottish Members to ask questions related to the responsibilities of the Solicitor-General for Scotland?

Mr. Wakeham: I would need notice of the first part of that question. I shall go and have a look for myself. I do not know whether there is a door so marked, but the arrangements for answering Scottish questions have been dealt with on a number of occasions from the Dispatch Box and I think that they are perfectly satisfactory.

Sir Dudley Smith: Is my right hon. Friend aware that it is not so much the facilities of this place that need improving as the conduct of some hon. Members?

Mr. Wakeham: I am responsible for many things, but not for the way in which hon. Members spend their spare time.

Cannon Row Police Station

41. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Lord President of the Council when Cannon Row police station was vacated by police and made available to the House authorities.

Mr. Wakeham: In the summer of 1985.

Mr. Banks: Will the Lord President of the Council tell us when we shall have access to facilities over there? The Lord President knows that many hon. Members are complaining about the appalling working conditions that we have over here. I speak as a person who has just lifted the parliamentary stakhanovite of the year award. My hon. Friend the Member for Brent, East (Mr. Livingstone) would greatly appreciate an office and he could have one at Cannon Row.

Mr. Wakeham: There have been a great many things to do and there have been some difficulties about getting on with that work. Refurbishment is due for completion in the summer of 1989. The allocation of a desk for the hon. Member for Brent, East (Mr. Livingstone) is a matter for the Opposition Whip's office, and I think that there should be a desk available for him somewhere.

Mr. Andrew MacKay: Is my right hon. Friend aware that many of us feel that by and large the office facilities in the Palace of Westminster are perfectly adequate and compare quite favourably with those in the private sector? Will he urge caution on those who would waste taxpayers' money?

Mr. Wakeham: It is nice to hear from a satisfied customer. If there were more of them life would be easier for me. I recognise that there are some legitimate demands for better accommodation, and all those responsible are doing their best to improve matters. We cannot work miracles.

Cancer Screening

42. **Mr. Rooker:** To ask the Lord President of the Council when he expects a cancer screening programme to begin for females working in the Palace of Westminster.

Mr. Wakeham: The House of Commons Commission has recently accepted in principle the recommendation of the Services Committee that on-site cancer screening should be provided for all women working in the House, and has made appropriate budgetary provision for this purpose. I hope that it will be possible to provide the service in the autumn.

Mr. Rooker: Many of the women who have asked for this matter to be dealt with will be truly grateful for that reply. So that there is no misunderstanding outside, will the right hon. Gentleman say whether he is aware of the take-up on the pilot programme in the other place, and can he confirm that treatment was required as a result of that programme?

Mr. Wakeham: Yes. I cannot give exact figures for the take-up, but I know that it was high. The percentage of those who had to be referred to doctors for further investigation and treatment was also high. I think that that was part of the reason for the Services Committee recommending that this service should be brought into the House of Commons.

Mr. Dickens: Is the Lord President of the Council aware that the facilities for women Members are quite disgraceful? Would he be surprised to learn that it is within my knowledge, though certainly not within my sight, that one lady Member has to surreptitiously——

Mr. Speaker: Order. This question is about cancer screening. Was that within the hon. Gentleman's sight?

Mr. Dickens: Added to the lack of these facilities are other facilities for women——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I repeat that this question is about cancer screening.

Mr. Dobson: I take this opportunity to thank the Lord President for his contribution towards getting this cancer screening programme going. I also pay tribute to the efforts of my right hon. Friend the Member for Salford, East (Mr. Orme) and my hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North (Ms. Walley). Can the Lord President confirm that arrangements will be made to ensure that testing done here is properly logged, and that the women concerned are taken on board by their local call and recall schemes?

Mr. Wakeham: The exact details of how the facility will be organised are matters for negotiation with the women's national cancer control campaign, which is likely to provide the service, together with the local health authorities. In answer to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker), 78 women took advantage of the programme in the other place, and the tests of 19 showed that they had problems, so they were referred for further examination. I am grateful for what the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) said and I echo the thanks to the right hon. Member for Salford, East (Mr. Orme), who chaired the Sub-Committee that considered this matter, and to all those who supported it.

Mr. Shersby: What is the cost to public funds of providing these additional facilities?

Mr. Wakeham: I cannot say exactly at this stage, and we shall not know for sure until the scheme has been worked out, but the budgetary provision is £10,000.

Prime Minister's Question Time

43. **Mr. Winnick:** To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will bring forward proposals to extend the time available for Prime Minister's Question Time; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham: I have no such proposals.

Mr. Winnick: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that on average about 200 or more hon. Members table questions to the Prime Minister, and of those at the most five are reached? Bearing in mind that 20 or 25 years ago only about 20 or 25 questions were tabled, is there not a need to extend Prime Minister's Question Time to ensure that Back Benchers have more opportunity to question the Head of Government, especially as the Leader of the Opposition has always used this parliamentary slot as well?

Mr. Wakeham: I would welcome a longer appearance by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister at the Dispatch Box, and I am surprised that the hon. Gentleman has put his question in that way. I know that he has a long record of trying to improve, as he sees it, the way in which Prime Minister's questions are dealt with in the House. We have looked at this a number of times over the years and we always find that the present system is better than all others, although it is a matter that we keep under review.

Points of Order

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I gave notice that I wished to raise, under Standing Order No. 20——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman did not give me notice. I received a telephone call from him. The hon. Gentleman obviously did not get my message.

Mr. Dalyell: On a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I cannot hear it. The hon. Gentleman sent me a telephone message, but I have received no written notification of an application under Standing Order No. 20. My Office sent a message to the hon. Gentleman, but he obviously did not receive it. Mr. Madden.

Mr. Dalyell: Further to that point of order Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: No; I have called Mr. Madden.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wish to raise with you an issue of importance that concerns all hon. Members. It is the refusal of the DHSS to answer, by way of parliamentary questions, questions that we would wish to ask about the operation of the social fund, which is now established for every DHSS office. The Minister for Social Security and the Disabled, in a magazine article in April, made it clear that the DHSS is receiving, through a new computer network, a wide range of information about the operation of the social fund. Therefore, I was disturbed, when I tabled a number of questions on 12 May, to be told that the information was not available. I was further disturbed to be told, in reply to other questions, that the DHSS does not intend to answer any questions about the operation of the social fund and will instead put information in the Library on a monthly basis.

I was told on Friday that the information about the first month's operation would not be available for two weeks. I ask you to reflect on that situation and to consider asking the Department of Health and Social Security to reconsider its policy decision. It is important that all hon. Members should have an opportunity to ask questions about the operation of social funds in their constituencies and should have the right to have those questions answered by the DHSS.

Mr. Speaker: I can understand the hon. Gentleman's concern about this matter, but I am not responsible for Government policy. It is not for me to ask the Government to change their policy. That is a question that the hon. Gentleman should put to the Leader of the House at the appropriate moment, possibly on Thursday.

Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody (Crewe and Nantwich): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Campbell-Savours.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Can I ask you to reflect on the ruling that you have just given to my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) in light of the fact that I have an agreement with your Office—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I do not normally state this in the House, but, for the benefit of the House, may I say that Standing Order No. 20 applications must be raised on the day in question. The hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) sent me a telephone message about an article that appeared last Friday. Today is Monday. No point of order arises.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I have not made my point of order yet.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman asked me to reflect upon the answer that I gave to the hon. Member for Linlithgow. I have done that.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Can I make my point of order?

Mrs. Dunwoody: Further to the ruling that you have given to my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden), the problem facing hon. Members is that we have been told that information that we know is available to the Government is not to be made public to the House of Commons. I understand that you cannot be held responsible for Government policy, but, when we are told that, for example, information about housing benefit cannot be given to hon. Members when we know it exists, it makes it impossible for us as Members of Parliament to carry out our duties. I ask you to reconsider your ruling.

Mr. Speaker: I cannot add anything to what I have already said on this matter, but the Leader of the House and the Government Chief Whip are here and I am sure that the two points that have been raised, which are matters of concern to the House, have been noted by those responsible. I am not responsible for such matters.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. There is a point of genuine concern about the matter. This is not the only example, although it is a bad example, of information which is essential for any hon. Member to carry out his duty being available to Ministers, but not being provided through parliamentary questions. There is another example in the case of poll tax registration in Scotland. I understand that the Government have information about the slowness of registration in the Strathclyde region, but will not give that information to hon. Members. There is a point of principle for you in relation——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman must come to his point of order. I do not think that I can be held responsible for matters of principle, although I am responsible for points of order in the House.

Mr. Foulkes: The point of order is that the Government are responsible to the House and, therefore, you have a responsibility to ensure that questions which are properly tabled and in order are accepted by the Table Office and answered by the Government. You have a duty to protect the interests of Back Benchers. That is the question of order.

Mr. Speaker: Undoubtedly, I have a responsibility for questions that are tabled, but I am not responsible for the answers that are given.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: No. I shall take no further points of order. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will allow me to say that there are 22 hon. Members who wish to take part in the debate. He is not one of them today. Hon. Members are anxious to proceed and, in the interests of the House, we should do that.

The House should understand that applications under Standing Order No. 20 must be received on the day in question and not refer to something that has happened previously.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: You are changing your ruling.

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. My understanding is that it is not possible to raise a Standing Order No. 20 application on a Friday, and consequently my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) did not have an opportunity to make his application then. He and other hon. Members who represent constituencies that are vast distances from this place find it difficult to submit a written application on a Monday. I should be grateful if you would reconsider your ruling, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I apologise to both the hon. Members for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) and for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell). Matters that arise on a Friday can be raised again on a Monday by means of the Standing Order No. 20 procedure. It is clear that, unfortunately, the hon. Gentleman did not receive the message that I sent to him on this matter. He conveyed a telephone message to my Office but in that message he did not specify the subject that he wished to raise. Instead, he drew attention to an article that appeared in the press last Friday.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think that we should move on.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Ordered,

That the draft Antarctic Treaty (Agreed Measures) (No. 2) Order 1988 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments. &c.—*[Mr. Durant.]*

Opposition Day

[12TH ALLOTTED DAY]

Housing

Mr. Speaker: I must announce to the House that I have selected the amendment in the names of the Prime Minister and others. No fewer than 22 hon. Members have sought so far to participate in the debate and I appeal for brief contributions so that as many as possible of them may be called.

3.41 pm

Mr. Clive Soley (Hammersmith): I beg to move,

That this House condemns the housing policies of Her Majesty's Government which have created record levels of homelessness, a dramatic decline in the supply of low cost rented housing, house price inflation and increasing urbanisation of the South East; and therefore calls upon the Government to introduce policies which will end dependence on bed and breakfast accommodation at the earliest possible time and restore a planned programme of house building, repair and renovation, and to introduce a reformed system of housing finance designed to create a genuine and fair choice between renting and buying for people at all levels of income, and an effective system of regulation of development to enhance the rural and urban environment of this country.

One of the hallmarks of a civilised and affluent society is that it finds it possible to provide good, high-standard housing for a large majority of its citizens, if not for all. There is no reason why we in the United Kingdom should not achieve that aim. Housing is vital to the welfare of the nation, for we know that people in poor housing suffer poor health and that some people in inadequate housing achieve less than others in education. We know that families are more likely to disintegrate if housing is inadequate or inappropriate. We know also that the supply of good housing affects the general level of community welfare.

I have pointed out to the Government many times that they will not be able to deal wholly and properly with crime prevention until they deal with homeless young people. Home Office research demonstrates a close and strong link between young people being homeless, drug abuse, alcohol abuse and crime generally. I see the previous Minister with responsibilities for housing wearing his new hat as a Government spokesman on crime prevention. I know that he is out of touch with the problem and he does not understand the nature and extent of crime, especially casual street violence and the rise in alcohol abuse among young people, and crime generally.

The Government have had the blessing of North sea oil to prime the pump of the economy. They have not used it in the way in which we, the Opposition, or many others would have recommended. Instead they have used North sea oil revenues to finance mass unemployment. We have seen the housing crisis growing at an alarming pace.

House price inflation is running at 20 per cent. this year. The Halifax building society states that in the first few months of 1988 the house price inflation rate has been at that level. In real terms, that is greater than the rate which prevailed in the 1970s. The rate in East Anglia is 40 per cent., which is the highest in the country. East Anglia has overtaken both London and the south-east.

The Government would like to raise interest rates to dampen the house boom, but they cannot do so. We saw the trap in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Prime Minister placed themselves, and we are aware also that there is a danger that borrowers will overstretch themselves and that the various financial institutions that are lending them money—many others apart from the building societies and banks—will demand that borrowers repay their debts. If they do not, they will become homeless or get into arrears.

The evidence is clear. In 1985, mortgage defaults were 16,490 for building societies and 570 for local authorities. By 1987, local authorities had been able to reduce the number of defaulters to 490 as a result of good management. In the private sector, the number of mortgage defaults had increased from 16,490 to 22,630. There are now 10,080 families who are homeless because they have defaulted on their mortgages. Many of the people in accommodation for the homeless in places such as the new town of Telford are there because they have not been able to pay their mortgages. The Government blame local authorities for using emergency accommodation. It is significant that the Government are happy to use taxpayers' money to subsidise mortgages, yet somehow when mortgage companies cannot come to an arrangement with those who fall into difficulty—perhaps because of unemployment or ill-health—the ratepayer is expected to provide. There are 64,000 people who are more than six months in arrears on their mortgages, and the numbers are increasing.

This is not the end of the crisis. The repairs bill is frightening. In the public sector, it is estimated to be £19 billion. In the private sector, the repairs bill to maintain housing standards—let alone improve them—is £27·5 billion.

The Government tell us that, although they are willing to subsidise purchase, they must not, in their terms, "over-subsidise" rents. They talk of fair rents and market rents. Between 1979 and 1982, fair rents on unfurnished accommodation increased by 47 per cent. Between 1982 and 1984, they increased by another 18 per cent. and between 1984 and 1986 by another 17 per cent. As everyone recognises, people cannot sensibly afford to choose renting over buying. They are forced into buying, even if they want to rent. A person who cannot afford to get a mortgage has no option but to pay rent, which is often equivalent to mortgage repayments.

Housing benefit has been cut eight times. Despite the £100 million concessions wrung out of the Government, there is still the £500 million cut which was made last April. It is time that we put the meat on the bones of that argument. A 64-year-old pensioner lady suffering from diabetes came to my advice surgery to tell me that she had lost £10·81 per week in housing benefit. Because of the concessions that we wrung out of the Government, that will be reduced—temporarily—to £2·50, unless rates and rents increase, when it will probably be more. The most for which she can hope is that that £2·50 will be held for about a year. After that, she still stands to lose the rest of that money. A 75-year-old couple—the man was disabled in the war—who will lose £7·40 a week heat their home with paraffin. What are we supposed to be doing to such people? How can the Government possibly justify that?

Housing subsidies tell us a lot. Last Thursday, during Environment questions, the Secretary of State made a desperate attempt to evade answering a question about the different forms of subsidy for different tenures. In 1987-88, a local authority tenure attracted a subsidy of £271, compared with £265 in 1981-82. As I pointed out, those figures were misleading. Even on the right hon. Gentleman's figures, that was an increase in subsidy of £6. For the owner-occupier, the increase was £62. The subsidy increased from £514 in 1981-82 to £576 in 1987-88.

But those were not the real figures. These are the real figures: in 1980-81, local authority tenants received subsidy worth £1·393 billion. By 1987-88, that had been cut to its present level of £500 million. That is a cut of nearly two thirds in the subsidy available to public sector tenants—while mortgage income tax relief for owner-occupiers for the same two years started at £2,190 million —about £700 million more in the first instance—and has now rocketed to a massive £5,000 million per annum compared with the £500 million available to local authorities.

It might be instructive now to look at the Government's White Paper issued towards the end of last year. Paragraph 1.10 states:

"These problems have often been compounded by indiscriminate subsidies from the rates to hold down rents."

At the moment, many Conservative-controlled local authorities are increasing rents in the public sector to keep the rates down. It is almost as if they were using an owner-occupier's income to keep taxes down. That would be the alternative if the practice was operated in the owner-occupied sector. The White Paper went on to state that that created dependency among those people. If it creates dependency, the Government had better tell us why dependency is not also created when subsidy is given to owner-occupiers. That is why the Government's housing policy is so fundamentally flawed.

A cut in the subsidy to rent and an increase in the subsidy to buy means that the rented sector will dry up. I have explained that to Conservative Members time and again, and to be fair to some of them, including the hon. Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow), they acknowledged that I was correct about the figures. In Dorset, the price of the average family house is about £90,000 and a manual labourer will receive £80 to £90 a week. If that house becomes vacant, the owner can sell it and put the money in a building society and he will receive nearly £200 a week in interest. Therefore, it is obvious that the market rent will be close to £200 at the very least. How can we expect that manual worker in Dorset to pay £200 a week rent out of his wages of £80 to £90 a week or to buy that house if it costs £90,000? He cannot do that. That is why the Government's housing policy is fundamentally wrong.

In England in 1975, 55 per cent. of people were owner-occupiers, 29 per cent. were local authority tenants and 16 per cent. were in the private rented sector. The Government have long boasted of their intention since they were elected in 1979—and before that—to increase the supply of private rented accommodation. In 1984—these figures have decreased more since then—63 per cent. were owner-occupiers, and that is an increase of 8 per cent. over the 1975 figure; 26 per cent. were local authority tenants, representing a drop of 3 per cent., and 11 per cent. were in the private rented sector, a drop of 5 per cent.

We have told the Government time and time again that the private rented sector will continue to decline unless they do something about housing finance. The Rent Acts are only marginal in that respect. When the Rent Acts were abolished by an equally foolish Conservative Government

[Mr. Clive Soley]

in 1957, we saw the advent of Rachmanism and a dramatic collapse of the private rented sector. More houses were removed from the private rented sector then at any other time. In 1980, the Government tried to get rid of most of the Rent Acts then in force. As the figures that I have referred to show, there was another decline in the private rented sector.

I predict without any hesitation that unless the Government do something about housing finance, they can remove all the Rent Acts, but they will only increase harassment and the activities of some of the worst aspects of landlordism—although that does not involve all the private landlord sector by any means—and a significant minority of private landlords will behave extremely badly. As there will be no adequate supply, there will be no real choice for people who want to go to the public or private sector. They will not have any choice, because people will be keeping their houses empty for sale.

A survey undertaken by the Department of the Environment showed that only about 2·5 per cent. of properties were kept empty because of the Rent Acts. The vast majority of them were kept empty either for repairs or for sale.

I can pray in aid one newspaper that is becoming increasingly supportive to me. I quote none other than *The Daily Telegraph*, which on 17 May commented:

"A prudential restraint on the ratio of home loans to property values is called for: and notice should be served on mortgage interest tax relief before the credit boom turns, as these things do if unattended, into bust. This way too, the need for higher interest rates would be diminished, and the present tensions between Prime Minister and Chancellor resolved."

I am grateful to *The Daily Telegraph* for that supportive evidence.

I make again the offer we have made to the Government several times. We are willing to talk about housing finance reform, but any such reform must be fairer both within and between the rented and purchase sectors. It must also be capable of being introduced in a way that does not cause either mortgage or rent payers economic distress. The last mentioned is particularly important, bearing in mind the increasing number of people being put into accommodation for the homeless because they cannot cope with their mortgages due to unemployment or rising interest rates, or because of the dramatic increase in rents in both local authority and private sector housing brought about by the present Government.

The most shameful and telling figure of all relates to homelessness. In 1978, 53,000 people were registered as homeless in Britain. Despite all the assets of North sea oil and the Government's boasts about an improving economy—although if one examines manufacturing industry, one sees no evidence of that; we must take the Government's word for it—the homeless figure has doubled to 100,000. That is the tip of the iceberg, because many homeless do not register. The youngsters sleeping under bridges in cardboard boxes do not register.

No one has made an accurate assessment of the number of homeless. We only know that the figure has dramatically increased. I emphasise again the enormous consequences of that trend for future generations and for safety on our streets. Young homeless on the streets at night will be exploited, and they will drift into drink, drugs and crime. Although some of them may survive that experience, it is inevitable that a larger number of youngsters are falling into such difficulties than need be the case.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): My hon. Friend refers to the fact that the number of homeless has doubled since 1979 to 100,000. What does he think of the sermon recently given by the Prime Minister when she preached about love of money and said that it was what one did with money that was important? There are an extra 50,000 homeless people. With all the money that this wealthy country of ours has, it is time that the Prime Minister preached about something else.

Mr. Soley: One of the reasons why the Prime Minister gets into so much trouble with the churches is that they have a different perception of what this country's priorities ought to be today: my hon. Friend makes that point very well.

It would be £4,000 per annum cheaper to build more council houses than to keep the homeless in bed-and-breakfast accommodation—yet it appears that the Government are willing to use taxpayers' and ratepayers' money to keep people in bed-and-breakfast accommodation when it would be cheaper to allow local authorities to build houses for them.

The Government try to blame local authorities for homelessness and the numbers in bed-and-breakfast accommodation. They accuse local authorities of owning all the void properties. However, if one examines the figures, something quite frightening emerges concerning the Government's responsibility in this matter. It is not just that they are cutting the money available to local authorities or that they have deliberately attempted to undermine and destroy this country's local authorities. The Government also have a responsibility for the level of voids.

The average level of voids among local authority properties is 2·5 per cent. The figure for housing associations is 3·1 per cent.—slightly higher, but still good. In the private sector, the figure is 4·2 per cent. The worst offender of all, at 6·9 per cent, is Government properties. Last Wednesday, the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment stated that Government properties were sometimes kept empty for "operational reasons". Operational reasons? Is one in five Metropolitan police houses kept empty for operational reasons? Forty-odd flats and houses being knocked down outside Wormwood Scrubs prison for landscaping and car parking and kept empty for nine years in some cases—is that really for operational reasons?

When the Under-Secretary visited Southend, a Conservative borough, its members tried to impress on her that, although they had tried all the initiatives that she had urged them to try, they still could not cope with the basic needs of homeless people without using bed-and-breakfast accommodation. Despite all the initiatives that the Government have urged on local authorities, even their own supporters—the Conservative councils—cannot deliver.

The underlying cause comes down to two figures. In 1977, the figure for building starts for local authority houses was 140,000. By 1979, it had been reduced to about 92,000—a good figure to have maintained at that stage. By 1985, the figure had dropped to 33,000. There has been a dramatic cut in the supply of housing. A Government who

are selling their economic philosophy on the basis of supply and demand do not seem to understand that if supply is deliberately and wantonly cut it will produce an acute crisis in demand. They do not understand their own lectures about the economy.

There is no way in which the private sector can or will ever be able to make up the difference, and the Government know it. Even if they pumped money into the private sector with tax handouts such as the business expansion scheme and the Chancellor's new approach of Rachmanism paid for by the taxpayer, they still would not be able to get the supply back to anywhere near the level of the late 1970s.

Mr. Robin Squire (Hornchurch): I noticed that the hon. Gentleman moved quickly from the figures on council housing to the totality. Would he care to confirm the most recent annual figures for private construction? Are they not the highest for 14 years?

Mr. Soley: As I said, they have gone up, but nowhere near enough. We are talking about a cut from 140,000 to 33,000. The increase in the private sector makes up only a few thousand of that.

Mr. Martin M. Brandon-Bravo (Nottingham, South): I think that the hon. Gentleman would wish to have the complete story, as he referred only to the public sector. My hon. Friend the Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire) tried to get the total figures from him. Perhaps he knows that last year completions totalled just over 201,000, and that in the current year the figure is expected to be 223,000. Those are very large figures. I grant that the majority are in the private sector, but the hon. Gentleman must tell the House the whole story.

Mr. Soley: I have told it, but I will tell it to the hon. Gentleman again. He can add up. He has referred to an increase of 20,000; I mentioned a cut from 140,000 to 33,000. Let the hon. Gentleman work it out. The figure of 20,000 goes into that figure about four times.

Let me quote what was said by the hon. Gentleman's right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine):

"I am far from persuaded that building more and more houses—that fewer and fewer of our children can afford—actually addresses the problem".

The right hon. Member for Henley knows full well that —*[Interruption.]* I shall return to the subject in a moment, so hon. Members need not get excited about it just yet. The right hon. Gentleman knows full well that the number of new houses being built to which the hon. Member for Nottingham, South (Mr. Brandon-Bravo) referred are not for first-time buyers or for low-cost renting. They are being sold for £150,000 and £200,000 in the south-east of England.

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Mr. William Waldegrave): So that we can have the complete picture, will the hon. Gentleman confirm that more than half the new houses built in the last quarter—these are the latest figures that we have—went to first-time buyers?

Mr. Soley: The problem with that is that the amount being borrowed in mortgages is now well over 80 per cent. The Minister knows the message from *The Daily Telegraph* on that. He also knows that it is profoundly dangerous. There need be only a slight decline in the present boom in house prices, and the consequences will be catastrophic for those who have overreached themselves.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): Is my hon. Friend aware of any occasion on which a homeless family in a bed-and-breakfast hotel in London have been able to go to an estate agent and buy one of the new houses which have been built since the Tory Government came to office, and which they have encouraged in the private sector?

Mr. Soley: Precisely. I shall return to the subject of house prices in the south-east in a few moments.

The other figure that adds to my argument is this. Residential construction investment in the United Kingdom has fallen to an all-time low of about 2·1 per cent. For almost all our competitors, it is over 3 per cent., and in places such as West Germany and many other parts of Europe it is about 6 per cent. We are investing less in housing than almost any comparable country in North America or Europe.

The Government say that the answer lies in the Housing Bill, as we see in their rather pathetic amendment. [HON. MEMBERS: "Where is it?"] It is a long-running farce, but we have not seen it yet.

The Association of District Councils, a Conservative-controlled body, does not agree that the answer lies in the Housing Bill. The association thinks that the Bill is a disaster. Nor does that answer please the Conservative-controlled council of Barnet, in the Prime Minister's constituency, which had this to say:

"the Government's White Paper"—

that is, the White Paper that led to the Bill—

"confirms the belief that the legislation is clearly aimed at breaking up the housing stocks of local authorities, rather than to give a clear 'tenant's choice'".

In Southend, a representative of another Conservative council—this time in the constituency of the Secretary of State for Transport—said:

"I have been asked to register with you strongly that the Committee believes that the proposals would without safeguards be likely to reduce the Council's already grossly inadequate ability to meet its minimum statutory obligations to provide accommodation for priority applicants".

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors said:

"it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the pick-a-landlord idea has more to do with political ideology than good management",

and the Royal Institute of British Architects said:

"the general tenor of the proposals is weighted against the local authority, even when it has a good record of housing management".

The Government's answer did not please any of those organisations. Nor did it please the most senior Tory on Gloucester city council, who resigned after 16 years as chair of the housing committee. In his retirement speech, he said:

"I took my decision not to seek re-election while convalescing from a heart operation last year. I am concerned about the future of public housing in this country and especially with the legislation that is going through Parliament at the present time. I do not want to be part of it."

He said that

"on housing the Government had simply got it wrong."

So we know what Conservative councillors think up and down the country. The response to the White Paper from a Conservative-controlled local authority was either neutral or sympathetic; the rest tended to be critical. So much for Conservative support for the White Paper.

Mr. Brandon-Bravo *rose*——

Mr. Soley: I will not give way. I would be impinging on other Members' time.

[Mr. Soley]

Telford and Milton Keynes tell us something very interesting. When tenants in Peterborough new town were asked whether they would prefer a housing association or a council landlord, they voted by 94 per cent. to stay with the council. What are the Government doing? In Telford and Milton Keynes, they have decided to do away with elections for two years. They will transfer them first; then, after a couple of years, they will let the people have a vote —by which time they will have done all that they can to sabotage the ability of the local authority to offer an alternative management. That is why the so-called "tenants' choice" is in fact the landlords' choice. It is the opportunity to pick a tenant. If there were any real choice, it would apply to non-resident landlords in the private sector, so that tenants could genuinely make a choice in either the private or public sector. They are not allowed to do that.

The crisis hurts most for those who are homeless or in bed-and-breakfast accommodation. An article in *The Guardian* last week by Michelle Beauchamp put it very well. She wrote about one individual:

"For three pounds, he got a bed in a room with six other people (three bunk beds and a single bed), a few blankets and a cooked breakfast the next morning."

I assume that that was to escape the provisions of the Rent Acts.

"There was also a television room with 12 beds in it and, at a guess, seven other rooms with between six and 12 people each. In all, there must have been close to 100 people staying there—all young and all homeless."

That would mean a rent of about £300 a week, and that is probably what the landlord would charge. The alternative would be for the landlord to sell the property and put the money into a building society. Without any of the hassle of being a landlord, he would get more money. That is why in my area, a few months ago, I found four people sharing a room, each of whom was paying £70 a week.

The Housing Bill will push up market rents to such a level that either landlords will go to the rich end of the market—to the companies and overseas businesses in London—or they will pack in as many people as possible. If they are really sharp, they will use the business expansion scheme that was introduced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, get a tax return after five years and then evict under the much easier to evict procedure of the Housing Bill in order to sell the property with vacant possession. They will enjoy both a vacant possession sale and a tax handout—all from the Government.

The Centre Point organisation that caters for many homeless people in London points out that it is very difficult for young people to return home. Conservative Members say from time to time that that is what they ought to do, and in her lecture to the Church of Scotland the Prime Minister seemed to think that it is a good idea, too. One quarter of the young people who stay at Centre Point have been in care. A number of them have been sexually abused at home. Are we really saying that they ought to return home? Is that the answer to the housing crisis?

What is happening is desperately serious, and in a funny sort of way it is now coming home to roost among the Conservatives in the south-east of England. The Government have divided the north from the south by using the proceeds from North sea oil to fund the south. They are also building the Channel tunnel. Incidentally and significantly, engineering companies are now advertising that they will pay the mortgages of the engineers that they are recruiting from overseas and in Britain because they will not move to the south-east unless their mortgages are paid. The M25 has also pushed up values. One may argue that all this should happen, but if it happens without sensible planning and without a sensible system for spreading economic wealth throughout the country, the result is a crisis in the south-east.

Last Monday, I said that it was all about boundaries and votes in the south-east. Some Tory Members said that it was not about that at all, but now we have written evidence from the hon. and learned Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence). He wrote a letter to a Conservative councillor but a copy was also sent to another councillor. In his letter the hon. and learned Member for Burton said:

"Burton's structure Plan.

I note that 4,500 new homes are proposed. This means an increase in the number of electors of about 11,000 bringing the overall total to 83,000—some 15,000 above the figure we were warned at the last redistribution (when Burton was saved from fragmentation) would be likely to be acceptable at the next redistribution.

It follows that the building of any more houses on this scale is likely to lead to the dismemberment of the Burton constituency which is likely to reduce"—

this is it—

"my Parliamentary majority—and ensure a Labour majority on the East Staffordshire District Council for most if not all of the time."

I am pleased to see that in the *Burton Mail* the Conservative councillor concerned said:

"I have no wish to be associated with the contents of this letter."

Full marks to him. I note that the hon. and learned Member for Burton said in the *Burton Mail* that this letter was intended only for a Conservative colleague. [HON. MEMBERS: "Surprise, surprise."] If so, I wonder why it is written on House of Commons notepaper. You, Mr. Speaker, will have a view about using House of Commons notepaper for party political purposes.

The truth of the matter, as the right hon. Member for Henley said, is that the introduction of so-called rural villages will change the structure of Conservative voting in the south-east and lead to boundary changes. I said last Monday that I was one of the Labour party Members who suffered last time from boundary changes. This time it will affect the Tory party. That is one of the small morsels of pleasure that I get out of what is otherwise an appalling scene.

Many people in the south-east, as well as some Conservative Back Benchers, are right to be concerned about the unplanned building of houses and housing estates in the south-east. I referred last week to Old Basing, near Basingstoke. The new houses at Old Basing are not for first-time buyers. They are not low-cost accommodation for rent. Those houses will cost a minimum of £150,000. Nobody on low or average incomes will be able to afford them.

The Secretary of State's problem is that he has twigged that the Government will have to do something fast about housing. That led to the introduction of the business expansion scheme. The Government tried to let it rip in the south-east, in the hope that, somehow, the market would meet demand. The Government then found that a number of Conservative Members oppose their plans because they find that their nice, comfortable, cosy little areas will begin

to look like urban parkland. Without sensible planning in Greater London, in the south-east and nationally, we shall not get this right.

Conservative Members believe that the answer lies in more and more home ownership. I accept that home ownership has increased by about 10 per cent., but if they believe that home ownership will solve the problem, I remind them that Switzerland, with one of the best housing records in Europe, has a very low level of home ownership. On the other hand, in Bangladesh, there is about 99 per cent. home ownership. The idea that tenure is the deciding factor is irrelevant.

If the Government are serious about solving the housing crisis, they must give money to local authorities, housing associations and other organisations. They must reform housing finance in such a way that people can choose between renting and buying their homes. They should not feel that they must buy because if they do not they will never be able to afford a decent home. There is no flexibility between renting and buying.

In other countries, one can switch from the rented sector to owner-occupation, and then switch back again without economic hardship. That cannot be done in the United Kingdom. It is impossible for elderly people to rent accommodation because they can no longer look after their own property. The young, those on low incomes and the unemployed cannot become owner-occupiers. They have to rely on rented accommodation. That is what is wrong with this Government's housing policies. What they have done is criminal. They have destroyed what was once an improving housing market, and thereby they have destroyed the lives of many people, particularly the lives of young people who are out there with their cardboard boxes looking for somewhere to live. It is time that this House gave them somewhere to live.

4.17 pm

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Mr. William Waldegrave): I beg to move, to leave out from "House" to the end of the Question and to add instead thereof:

'congratulates the Government on the success of its home ownership policies, enabling more people than ever before to own their own homes; notes with satisfaction the Government's proposals in the Housing Bill to encourage private renting, to expand the role of housing associations, to give council tenants the right to seek a new landlord of their choice, and to establish Housing Action Trusts to improve conditions for tenants in some of the worst council estates; deplores the incompetence displayed by some Labour housing authorities who have on the one hand condemned homeless people to bed and breakfast while they have empty council property, and on the other failed to deal with delays for existing tenants who seek to exercise their right to buy; urges the Government to press ahead with its radical reforms of the rented sector of housing in the interests both of present tenants and the homeless, and to continue to maintain a proper balance between the needs of development and the protection of the environment; and congratulates it on extending and maintaining the protection afforded by green belts round major cities.'.

There is always a ritualistic quality about these debates. The hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) says that everything that is happening is the fault of this Government. If the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) were here, he would include a wide range of subjects: the black death and other matters. If the hon. Member for Tottenham (Mr. Grant) were here, the three-day week would be put down to Thatcherite Britain. That kind of approach is sad. The hon. Member for Hammersmith said nothing that went to the root of the problem.

We know where the Opposition's priorities lie. We were to have this debate last week but, much to my disappointment, it was swept aside so that Opposition Members could support the picketing in a particular industrial dispute; but, their having gone to the aid of those people, the strike rapidly collapsed, as one might have expected.

It is easy enough to apply the ritual in reverse and to show the answer to Opposition Members. A number of my hon. Friends have already pointed to the weaknesses in the arguments of the hon. Member for Hammersmith. The hon. Gentleman ended his speech with a rhetorical flourish about the worsening situation. Let him wait until the English house condition survey comes out. The Welsh house condition survey was published recently and revealed a very encouraging position, with the standard of housing improving. The difficulty for Opposition Members is that any good news is by definition bad news for them. Let us wait and see.

Mr. Rhodri Morgan (Cardiff, West): Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Waldegrave: No. I shall develop my argument a little further and then I shall give way to the hon. Gentleman.

It would be wise for Opposition Members to wait for the results of the English house condition survey. Its preliminary results are reasonably encouraging so they should not attach their flag too firmly to that mast. Since the Opposition left office we have managed to double in real terms improvement grants to the private sector, and investment in the public sector has been increased in the past three years. It will not be surprising if we find that there has been steady improvement in the underlying condition of the housing stock.

As the hon. Gentleman said, there has been a major increase in home ownership in this country. He belittled that and likened it to Bangladesh. I do not see the logic of his argument. It is clear—and every poll has always shown it—that the majority of people wish to own their own homes. I should have thought that hon. Members would agree that it was a good thing that 2·5 million more people own homes now than under the Labour Government. The proportion has gone up from 47 per cent. to 66 per cent. and includes 1 million council tenants. That is no matter for apology.

Mr. Eric S. Heffer (Liverpool, Walton): Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Waldegrave: I shall give way to the hon. Gentleman when I have finished this point.

The hon. Member for Hammersmith talked about first-time buyers. He said that people are building houses and no one will buy them. The hon. Gentleman is wrong. People will buy them. As I have said, in the first quarter of this year more than half the houses sold —285,000—were bought by first-time buyers. Last year, there was a record number of new, first-time buyers. The hon. Member for Hammersmith was quite wrong to say that first-time buyers are excluded from those markets.

Mr. Heffer: The Minister said that surveys and polls show that the majority of people would like to own their

[Mr. Heffer]

own houses. I do not disagree with that one bit. Ordinary people in this country always like to own their own houses, but thousands, if not millions, of people are in no position to buy their own homes. Although some people are getting the opportunity to buy their own homes—incidentally at tremendous cost and with astronomical mortgage repayments—basically, it is the yuppies who are buying new homes, particularly in London and along Canary Wharf which is about to be developed. What about those who cannot buy their own homes? The Government are putting local authorities in such a position that, increasingly, they cannot provide houses for such people. That is the real sadness.

Mr. Waldegrave: I am glad that the hon. Gentleman agrees that it is a good thing that many more people are able to own their own homes under this Government than under the Government that the hon. Gentleman supported. Some 2·5 million more people are now able to own their own homes and I am glad that the hon. Gentleman welcomes that.

There is a variety of ownership. Recently, I had the privilege of visiting the Eldonian co-operative in Liverpool, which the hon. Gentleman will know very well. It was delighted to have escaped from being a tenant of the Liverpool council. It urged us to transfer the freehold of its property to the urban development corporation so that the co-operative could go ahead. We are supporting a variety of different types of ownership.

My hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham, South (Mr. Brandon-Bravo) reminded the hon. Member for Hammersmith that total starts are running at a very good rate. In the first quarter of this year there were 215,000 new starts. The hon. Member for Hammersmith does not realise that when a house is built and sold into the market another house somewhere else is released. Without those 215,000 houses being built, prices would be even higher and first-time buyers would be in real difficulties.

The hon. Gentleman made a moving plea for speeding the planning and building of more houses. I am with him in that so long as he is with us in maintaining our commitment to the green belt, which has doubled, in encouraging and further developing the process which has led to 55 per cent. of all building in the south-east being on recycled land, and in slowing down the rate of the loss of agricultural land from what it was under the Labour Government. It is now running at about a third of what it was in the 1960s and 1970s. Of course we can and will do more in that respect. I am glad that the hon. Gentleman welcomes the direction of policy and therefore the establishment of the urban development corporations, which are helping to bring forward recycled land.

Mr. Morgan: The Minister said that, although houses costing £150,000 may seem out of reach to the first-time buyer, they create a vacancy lower down the system as a well-off person buys a house for £150,000. Does he agree that during a period of intense shortages of carpenters, bricklayers and plasterers, houses built predominantly in the £150,000 to £250,000 price range use the scarce supply of bricklayers and carpenters who might otherwise be building houses for social need? That would be a balanced approach to housing, for which we aim, and for which the Government do not.

Mr. Waldegrave: The hon. Gentleman sings a different tune from that which his party normally sings, which is that we should greatly expand the amount of construction to cut unemployment in the construction industry. Perhaps he should get his act together. Houses costing £150,000 are not being sold to first-time buyers. Houses costing between £30,000 and £40,000 are now being built for first-time buyers and are within their reach.

Mr. Soley *rose*——

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West) *rose*——

Mr. Paul Boateng (Brent, South) *rose*——

Mr. Waldegrave: I promised to give way to the hon. Member for Hammersmith first.

Mr. Soley: The Minister is skating around the problem. I shall give him credit for knowing that the problem in the south-east is the lack of low-cost rented accommodation. He has to address himself to my comments about house prices in Dorset, and to the problem of some villages in north Cornwall, as censuses have revealed that 70 per cent. of those villages are empty for most of the year due to the second homes issue. The Minister talked about rhetoric. I have offered him the opportunity to talk about reforming housing finance, which will go a long way to resolving that problem. Will he accept that offer?

Mr. Waldegrave: The hon. Gentleman must sort out his own ideas. In the past few weeks I have seen a number of corrections by him in newspapers as to what he is proposing. Is he proposing simply an additional £4·5 billion, which is the amount of mortgage interest relief? If he is, the problem mentioned by the hon. Member for Cardiff, West (Mr. Morgan) will become still more acute.

Mr. Tony Banks *rose*——

Mr. Boateng *rose*——

Mr. Waldegrave: I cannot fail to give way to that duo.

Mr. Banks: Both together?

Mr. Speaker: Order. It must be one at a time, but which one?

Mr. Waldegrave: It is a judgment of Solomon. I give way to the ex-Whip.

Mr. Banks: Will the Minister tell me and my hon. Friend the Member for Brent, South (Mr. Boateng) exactly where in the south-east, and London in particular, a new house can be purchased for £30,000 to £40,000?

Mr. Waldegrave: I am well aware that in London such a house would be extremely difficult to find, if it could be found at all. I refer to the average prices nationally. Of course they are very much higher in London.

Mr. Boateng: Will the Minister tell us what proposals he or his Department have to assist local authorities in London with the problems of first-time buyers and to restore the assistance that they were able to provide to first-time buyers prior to 1979 so that people can afford low-cost housing in London, especially at the current high rates of that so-called low-cost housing?

Mr. Waldegrave: I shall come in a moment to the improvements that we might seek in the use of the huge local authority stock in London to bring help to the people

about whom the hon. Member for Brent, South (Mr. Boateng) is concerned. I am delighted that in the constituency of the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) large areas of land are now being brought forward for development by the local authorities and the London Docklands development corporation, on whose land considerable numbers of cheaper and subsidised rented houses are being offered. I shall return to the use of the stock in a moment.

The hon. Member for Hammersmith and I disagree not about whether a minority of our people are being failed by the system but about the right response to that problem. Broadly speaking, the Opposition say that we should deal with the failures of the system—which means that too many people are in bed-and-breakfast accommodation, or homeless—simply by going on with the system as it always was. I do not believe that that is the right response. It is a scandal that we have 10,000 families in bed and breakfast. That is why I have announced today the allocation of the latest tranche of money—I hope that there will be more—to help get some of them out of bed-and-breakfast accommodation.

Are we saying that, although we have 4·5 million council properties, we cannot run the system flexibly and efficiently enough to find those 10,000 families proper homes? I simply do not believe it. There is £9·5 billion-worth of support for poor people's housing. That is more than twice as much as mortgage interest relief. It behoves the House to examine how we use such enormous sums of money.

The London borough of Southwark takes about 24 weeks to let a flat or house. If it reduced that length of time just to the average—if it were no better than the average—the equivalent of another 1,800 properties to let would be produced. I doubt whether the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) will disagree with me about this. That figure just happens to be a little more than Southwark's bed-and-breakfast list. If, therefore, it could manage its property properly, it could solve the problem now. [HON. MEMBERS: "What about repairs?"]. If it collected its rents, Southwark would have plenty of money for repairs.

The Audit Commission recently calculated that if we could achieve a little improvement in the re-let period—not anything dramatic—we would have the equivalent of another 20,000 re-lets annually. There are 100,000 empty council properties, 20,000 of them in London. There is complete chaos in the management of many local authorities, which have the task of helping some of the most vulnerable people.

A puzzled Councillor King—he sounds a reasonable fellow—who is the successor to the hon. Member for Tottenham in Haringey, said recently that, although the housing department there was

"stuffed to the gunwales with party members and sympathetic workers it has proved incapable of tackling the basic problems of 1000s of tenants."

Some of my hon. Friends might think that Councillor King's views show cause and effect.

Tenants' leaders in Lambeth recently looked at that borough's accounts, and said:

"What we have seen from a brief glimpse of the books is akin to lifting the lid on a Pandora's Box of gross inefficiency and mismanagement."

A major survey, which nobody has challenged, has shown that more than half the people who are alleged to be in need of council housing are not.

Mr. Peter Shore (Bethnal Green and Stepney): What has the Minister to say about a council such as Tower Hamlets, which has several hundred homeless families, many of them in bed-and-breakfast accommodation, and which has recently decided that some 50 or more families are intentionally homeless because they came from Bangladesh, leaving property which they had previously occupied there? Does he accept Tower Hamlets council's excuse that it is following this admittedly savage policy in relation to homeless people on the grounds that it is not getting sufficient Government money to convert property and make it available to those families, or does he think that the council is behaving irresponsibly and without regard to its duties as a housing authority?

Mr. Waldegrave: I do not think that. The right hon. Gentleman and I have followed this matter and we have discussed it with people who are interested in the problem. Tower Hamlets borough council has tried to clarify the law through the courts. By chance, my officials are meeting officials of Tower Hamlets this afternoon to discuss what happens next. I am not sure that I think it fair to describe the officers and elected members of that borough as the right hon. Gentleman has described them, although I could detail plenty of improvements that I would like the council to make in its housing management.

Mr. John Battle (Leeds, West): Before the Minister gave way to my right hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore), he claimed that waiting lists are grossly overestimated. He made the same claim some months ago. In Leeds, the figures are collected quarterly and registered daily. How was the evidence behind the Minister's claim put together, or is he simply suggesting that a statistical exercise in his Department is now getting rid of the reality of homelessness in our cities?

Mr. Waldegrave: If the hon. Gentleman has another look at the press notice, he will see that it directs him to a major piece of research, which is in the Library, and which is the first in-depth survey of how waiting lists are managed. It was carried out by people quite independent of my Department, under contract. It was found that a huge range of methods are employed to keep waiting lists. People involved in housing, as the hon. Member has been, will be aware of that fact. The survey found incontrovertible evidence to suggest that the figures do not mean what they seem to mean.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): I sat for eight years on a London borough housing committee. The Labour-controlled council refused during that time to review the waiting list although anybody could put their name on it. At the end of that time, it was reckoned that about 60 per cent. of those who had put their name down did not live in the borough.

Mr. Waldegrave: One thing that the research discovered was that, if a council offered a house or flat to people on the waiting list, some of those people could not be contacted.

All the indicators show that, to the despair of the Opposition, there is a slow but steady improvement in housing and that the great majority of the nation is well housed. The argument between us is whether it is best to deal with those whom the present system has let down

[Mr. Waldegrave]

simply by providing more resources for the organisations that I have just mentioned, or whether we have to develop some new policies.

Conservative Members have been waiting with excitement for the new Labour policies. We are aware that a major operation is going on in terms of reforming Labour policies. Nothing is more convenient for a Government than to have an Opposition which is producing good clothes that we can steal. That is how Governments have always proceeded. We await the work of the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) attentively. I am afraid that our hopes will be set at naught. I am trying as best I can to keep up with the work of the Labour party, and I read recently in the *New Statesman* that its view of the work is that:

"Vacuity, if not a political philosophy, is certainly espoused as a neo-political style".

Unfortunately, the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) seems, after labouring for a year, to have produced a mouse. It seems that we cannot look for much help there.

There is simply no point in piling money into the Councillor Kings and the Lambeth councils of the world, because they could not spend it effectively. We are therefore trying, by agreement with local authorities that will co-operate—through Estate Action and the priority estate programme, for example—to target resources that work well. We are setting in train a range of improvements on some of the worst council estates. I am aware, however, that that type of activity and targeting money on those in crisis most urgently—for whom I have announced money today—will not solve the failures of the system that produces those symptoms. The underlying problem is that we have managed, almost uniquely in Europe, to drive investment out of the private rented sector. That is why we are bringing forward measures in the Housing Bill——

Ms. Mildred Gordon (Bow and Poplar): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Waldegrave: No. I have given way a great deal. Hon. Members will no doubt have an opportunity to make their own speeches.

We are bringing forward reforms to the Rent Acts which will bring back a reasonable private rented sector. With the business expansion scheme, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has done exactly what the hon. Member for Hammersmith argued for—provided some fiscal equality in these matters. That is why we are bringing land back into use via the urban development corporations and why we will direct considerable resources to the housing action trusts to improve some of the worst estates. Often those estates are full of empty properties, even though some of them may be a few hundred yards from the House. Some of those estates have much empty property and that demonstrates a failure in their management and original design to produce tolerable conditions. That is why we shall be directing a large amount of our resources to getting those properties back into use.

The tenants in the subsidised rented sector need far closer involvement in the management, and preferably ownership, of their properties. Otherwise any money that is made available may well go straight down the drain.

Mr. Tony Banks: What about the private sector?

Mr. Waldegrave: There are more voids in the private sector than in the public sector and that is largely as a result of the Rent Acts and their effect on property letting.

We want an expansion in the number of housing associations because we believe that their traditions will make subsidised housing better managed. I am happy to announce today that housing association schemes, supported by local authority loans, will still be eligible for Exchequer grant under the Housing Bill.

Another article in the *New Statesman*—I just happened to be leafing through the copy—said that when it came to management of the countryside

"Notably absent from the play of forces is the Labour Party."

On the basis of the contribution from the hon. Member for Hammersmith, I believe that there is no Opposition thinking in that respect. I am happy to tell the hon. Member for Hammersmith that he should not have to wait too long because, shortly, we shall bring before the House a Housing Bill that goes to the heart of many of the underlying problems——

Mr. Tony Banks: Where is it?

Mr. Boateng: Where is it?

Mr. Waldegrave: The hon. Members on the very Back Benches will have the pleasure of carrying that Bill through its next stage shortly. I am pleased that they are impatient to get on with their proper work. Part of the joy will have gone because the Whip who carried the matter through so efficiently in Committee has unfortunately been compelled to resign.

We recognise the weakness in many of the present systems which are intended to bring help to those who are most vulnerable within the housing sector. We recognise that failure, but the Labour party has learnt nothing and that is why it has little to offer to this debate.

4.41 pm

Mr. Keith Bradley (Manchester, Withington): I shall be brief because I am aware that a number of hon. Members wish to participate in this debate.

I found it odd that the Minister should make jibes about the delay in holding this debate because, yet again, no date has been fixed for bringing back the Housing Bill. Is it true that the confusion that the Government have got into regarding concessions made in Committee has meant that they are unable to bring it back? Are there problems between the Minister and the Secretary of State for the Environment? When are we going to have that Bill back? We would have been pleased if he had announced that today, but we heard nothing.

I spent three and a half months in Committee on the Housing Bill and I am not surprised at the delay because we witnessed the Government's utter confusion regarding housing. The proposals within that Bill have nothing to do with housing need or housing conditions.

I should like to describe the conditions in Manchester. It is a case study of the Government's record on housing people, the conditions that they must live in, and homelessness. It was an absolute surprise, if not shock, to discover in the Housing Bill—it may come back in a different form—that there was no chapter, paragraph or sentence on homelessness. The word "homelessness" did not appear in the Bill. There has been no reference to

homelessness in the Government's second flagship of housing policy. That is a mark of their commitment to housing.

A few facts and figures give a clear picture of the situation in Manchester. In 1987-88, as a result of the fine efforts of the housing department and its management in Manchester—contrary to the Minister's jibes about the efficiency of housing departments—it managed to rehouse 12,694 people compared with 10,882 in 1984-85. It has managed to reduce the waiting list from 38,266 to 32,839 in the same period. Despite the limited resources it receives, that department is trying to make an effort to manage the stock at its disposal efficiently.

The Minister has tried to cook the statistics on waiting lists, and it is important to look behind the rehousing statistics to discover what is happening in Manchester. It is clear that, between 1984 and 1988, the number of homeless families in temporary accommodation has risen from 181 to 433. The number of homeless people who have been rehoused has risen from 907 to 1,341. Other factors that have affected people in temporary accommodation have meant that the number who have been rehoused by the housing department has increased from 379 in 1985 to 1,096 in 1988.

Those rehousing statistics show that the trend is that more and more homeless families are reliant on the local authority to rehouse them. Coupled with the increase in the number of people being rehoused, a massive extra demand for housing has been placed upon the local authorities by homeless families. Manchester is successfully tackling that problem.

In Manchester, however, there are other indicators of unmet social need. The number of households now requiring accommodation has increased, as has the number of second-generation families requiring to be rehoused locally. The number of elderly people requiring decent units of accommodation locally has also increased and that would free their current houses for the second-generation families and others. What has been the Government's response? In this context it is important to consider the private rented sector. A survey undertaken last year by the research section of the Manchester housing department gives a clear picture of the situation. It shows that in the private sector there are 3,150 unfit dwellings, 3,620 dwellings that lack basic amenities and 8,740 properties in urgent need of renovation.

I was absolutely amazed to hear the Minister say that improvement grants have been increased. In Manchester, those grants have been squeezed. The survey showed that there are 3,000 applicants waiting for improvement grant —3,000 families are waiting to do up their properties. They are already aware that the chances of receiving an improvement grant have been minimised.

I am reminded of a public meeting that I attended about the Housing Bill. The leader of the Tories, Councillor Joyce Hill, said that the Housing Bill was about three important issues. First, she said, it intended to ensure that all families had security of tenure. That is wrong; it is about insecurity and about doing away with security of tenure. She said that it would ensure that fair rents would continue in the public and private sectors. That is wrong; fair rents are being abandoned for market rents. She also said that the important thing about the Housing Bill was that it ensured that everyone would have an improvement grant when they needed it. That is wrong; improvement grants are not even mentioned in the Bill. That is what the leader of the Tories in Manchester had to say—she could not even read a brief from Tory Central Office when she was standing on a public platform.

What has been the Government's response to housing need in Manchester? Let us consider the housing investment programme. I was staggered when I thought I heard the Minister say—he can correct me if I am wrong —that housing investment programmes for cities such as Manchester have increased. Let us consider the figures. In 1979, when the Government came to office, the HIP allocation for Manchester was £65 million. Today, that allocation is a miserly £28·8 million.

Mr. Waldegrave: The hon. Gentleman has abused a Conservative councillor for not reading out something right. Would he care to comment on the fact that Manchester city council has spent a lot of ratepayers' money on a leaflet that says that if tenants transfer under the right to transfer, they will lose their right to buy? If those tenants read the Bill, as the hon. Gentleman has done, they will see that that claim is false.

Mr. Bradley: It is rich for a Minister to talk about leaflets being sent out by a city council when the Government are not prepared to answer the question about how much they are spending on political propaganda and on supporting private developers going around cities such as Manchester to try to fiddle people out of their home in advance of the Housing Bill.

In real terms in Manchester, since the Government came into office, the housing investment programme has been cut by a staggering 350 per cent. If in real terms we had the same amount of money available as we had under the previous Labour Government, we should be receiving £129·65 million. Instead, as I have said, we are receiving a paltry £28·8 million and that has to be used to try to bolster the conditions in which people live in Manchester.

Manchester undertook a massive survey of its own stock and produced its housing defects report. It found that it needed a minimum of £600 million to be spent on housing stock just to repair the defects that already exist. If we had a five-year programme in Manchester and the Government committed themselves to properly funding the housing in a city such as Manchester, we would be able to repair the 46,000 traditional dwellings needing improvement and we would be able to spend money on the 12,500 non-traditional dwellings in urgent need of repair.

If we had such a programme, we would be able to spend money on the 118 tower blocks needing re-cladding, re-roofing, heating improvements and security systems. In my constituency of Withington we would be able to undertake a modernisation programme on the 9,000 inter-war houses that desperately need to be modernised so that people can live in decent conditions.

We have estimated that, if the Government would put public money, as they should, into our housing stock, it would not only improve the conditions in which people live, but would create jobs. If we had a five-year rolling programme in Manchester, thousands of jobs would be created not only on building sites and in the construction industry but in related industries. Our survey entitled "Jobs, Homes and a Future" emphasises the need to bring employment into cities such as Manchester and public sector investment would bring that about.

The Government's response has been to cut housing benefit, so reducing the amount of money people can

[Mr. Bradley]

spend on their housing. We estimate that in Manchester over £15 million will be lost in housing benefit to people in desperate need. As a result of the Government's Housing Bill, housing is high on the political agenda. I do not think that it is any coincidence in Manchester that we had sweeping victories in the local elections and for once housing was an issue on people's lips as they went into the polling stations. They see that there is no answer to the housing needs of people in Manchester by selling off their houses to private developers; selling off their needs and their children's needs.

It is no coincidence that, over the period of the Housing Bill, the number of people who have put in right-to-buy applications has increased massively. When we talk to those people about their applications, we find that they have put them in not because they want to become owner-occupiers but because it is the only way they can see of securing a future for their families. They are scared that their rights will be taken away by the Bill and they feel that the only way to protect those rights is to put in a right-to-buy application before that draconian Bill becomes law.

Mr. Squire: Will the hon. Gentleman assure me that, when he meets constituents who express that fear, he points out that as long as each and every one of those people wants to remain a tenant, nothing in the Housing Bill can deprive them of that?

Mr. Bradley: I can assure the hon. Gentleman that we do everything possible to tell applicants exactly what the current position is under the Housing Bill. However, because the Bill has not come back to the House, we do not know exactly what the legislation will be. When the Bill comes back, we will be able to tell them exactly what the facts are.

I should like to give an example of what is happening in Manchester as a result of the Housing Bill. As I have said, people are scared into taking out right-to-buy applications and are being pressurised by unscrupulous property developers who are going around the estates with glossy magazines about what they can offer. Manchester may be trying to counteract that with its leaflet, but that is nothing compared with the millions of pounds that will be invested by private developers.

There is a firm in Manchester called Home Owners which we have caught on video going round offering deals to prospective buyers. It is offering central heating, double glazing and new kitchens and it is offering to consolidate rent arrears. It is offering all that with mortgage tax relief. In order to obtain the package in advance of the Housing Bill, it is offering endowment insurance schemes and giving applicants seven days to make a decision. Those people sign the forms for seven days and, even if they do not go ahead with the purchase of their property, they still have to have the insurance scheme. That is what is happening as a result of the Government's policy. The Government should be looking at the needs of local people.

Mr. Waldegrave: The solution to the problem that the hon. Gentleman has indentified lies in his own hands. It has been created by Manchester city council saying that people would lose their right to buy if their property was transferred under tenants' choice. That is not the case.

Mr. Bradley: Clearly, the Minister has no understanding of what is going on in council estates. I am surprised at that because he went to Manchester—although he did not offer to meet the local Members of Parliament—to discuss housing action trusts with the tenants. I should have thought that he would understand the needs of Manchester a little better now that he has been to see what a tenant looks like and what a council estate in Manchester looks like.

The purpose of our motion is to place some emphasis on the needs of low earners and the needs and rights of people to have a decent home. That is what the Labour party is about.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. I remind the House of Mr. Speaker's appeal for brief speeches.

4.56 pm

Mr. Ken Hargreaves (Hyndburn): I have listened with interest to the speeches. I was always taught not to criticise unless I could do better. If Labour Members used the same criterion, today's short debate would have been even shorter.

The criticisms and condemnations of Government policies made by Labour Members will be greeted with some disbelief in my constituency, where housing is still one of our most serious problems. However, there is recognition of what the Government have achieved. My constituents are aware that in 1978, under a Labour Government, the borough council was able to spend £228,000 per year on improvement grants. Under this Government, we have spent £1,800,000 per year. In an area with 80 per cent. owner-occupation, I would be the first to say that that is still not enough, but it is clearly a vast improvement on the record of the previous Government.

The neighbourhood revitalisation scheme to be launched in Accrington next week is another initiative supported by the Government. It will be of immense help in tackling the housing problems we have faced for so long. We have also seen a welcome increase in the involvement of housing associations, with splendid new developments for old people in Accrington, Oswaldtwistle and Great Harwood. There is also good news for our council estates. We have seen estates such as Huncoat and Fern Gore, neglected and virtually abandoned by Labour Governments and Labour councils, undergo a £1·5 million transformation thanks to a Conservative housing chairman and the Government's priority estates programme and Estate Action projects.

I am well aware that in Hyndburn there is still much to do in private sector housing and on council estates, not least the Fields Bottom estate at Clayton-le-Moors, where there are problems similar to those tackled at Huncoat and Fern Gore. However, I am optimistic that the problems will be dealt with. On two visits to north-east Lancashire, the Minister has impressed even his political opponents with his enthusiasm, knowledge and understanding of all that needs to be done.

Even the editorial in the *Lancashire Evening Telegraph*, which is not usually over-enthusiastic about most aspects of Government policy or about the Ministers involved, felt able to pay a glowing tribute to the Minister

after his recent visit to Blackburn. In Hyndburn, maintaining our 80 per cent. owner-occupation is the major task. I hope that it will be possible to reform and improve the home improvement grant system so that a positive contribution is made to improving our private sector stock. Provision of financial aid is required, not only where it is needed, but where it can most effectively be used. The lessons of the pre-1979 period need to be fully considered before introducing new legislation.

It is pleasing that the Government's policy to extend owner-occupation has been so successful, but that in itself does not improve the condition of housing. With the increase of owner-occupation, it is now more important than ever that information about the repair and maintenance needs of housing should be available and promoted. The National Home Improvement Council has made a significant contribution, but much more needs to be done to get the message across to every householder.

Many home owners cannot afford to keep their houses in good condition, and need assistance. Home improvement grants need to be made available to selected home owners in such a way as to assist householders in need and improve housing stock at the same time.

I welcome the Government's support for the care and repair schemes and the neighbourhood revitalisation services scheme, but those need to be extended, and encouragement must be given to building societies and other financial institutions to develop lending packages to assist owners with repairs, maintenance and improvement.

Although I am concerned about improvement grants for home owners, I am equally concerned about people who do not have a home to improve. In England alone, there are, as we have heard, more than 100,000 families who do not have a home. On 30 March, I introduced the Empty Property and Community Aid Bill, which would require local authorities to take steps to identify empty properties and put them to use. We must act to end the scandal of empty properties in public and private sectors.

To have so many properties empty, often for many years, when so many families are living in bed-and-breakfast accommodation in which family life is impossible is not acceptable. My Bill has the support of hon. Members of all parties and it would make a real contribution to improving the availability of houses for homeless people I hope that the Government will feel able to support it as an extension of their own proposals to deal with empty local authority properties.

St. Augustine once prayed that God would make him pure—but not just yet. I wish the Minister well, and hope that he will move on to higher office—but not just yet; not until he has put into full operation the policies for which he sees a clear need——

Mr. Corbyn *rose*——

Mr. Hargreaves: —to deal with the problems that need tackling in north-east Lancashire. I hope that he will not go until he has introduced policies that will build on the successes that have already been achieved—successes which are self-evident to all who live in my area and which make nonsense of so many of the Opposition's arguments this afternoon.

5.3 pm

Mr. Michael J. Martin (Glasgow, Springburn): The hon. Member for Hyndburn (Mr. Hargreaves) spoke about a great Churchman. As my hon. Friend the Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) said, the Churches seem to be in conflict with the Government these days. He rightly said that they, perhaps, know more about the social problems of the country than the Minister and his right hon. and hon. Friends.

I note that all Scottish hon. Members have been sent a letter by the secretary of the Committee on Church and Nation of the Church of Scotland, telling us that the committee has completed an independent inquiry into Scottish housing. I hope that the Minister and his right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland will take note of that inquiry.

The Minister spoke of the great success of the sale of council houses. His right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland goes on television to tell us that he was right because everyone is now buying council houses. I know of people in Glasgow who go around selling cut-price whisky and no questions are asked about where they got it from. Just because everyone buys that cut-price whisky does not mean that they are right to sell it. The same goes for the deal upon which the Tories are embarking with the sale of council houses. They have dishonestly given people the chance to buy those houses without a thought for the people who are falling behind. A woman came to my surgery and told me that it was ridiculous, but her daughter could not get a council house, and asked me what the Glasgow district council was playing at. I told her that she had bought her council house, as had her sister two doors down—not to mention the neighbour in between. So, I asked, what chance was there for her daughter to obtain a council house if everyone in the area in which she wanted a house had bought one——

Mr. Brandon-Bravo *rose*——

Mr. Martin: I shall not give way; the hon. Gentleman has intervened on several occasions.

It is all very well for the Minister to say that there are empty houses in Glasgow that the young girl I have mentioned could get. But the Minister knows well that that is misleading, because people in Glasgow and other parts of the country rightly want to stay in the communities in which they were brought up—they do not want to move to other parts of the city. I am not against the sale of council houses but the Government policy of not replenishing the housing stock is breaking up communities, and I am against that. The party of law and order should know that law and order was maintained when granny stayed up the next close and auntie was there to watch the child if the mother had to go on a message or was out at work.

I pay tribute to what the voluntary associations are doing for the homeless. I have a brother who works down here in London with the Simon Community and who takes a great deal of interest in the homeless of London. It saddens me every time I go north on the sleeper from Euston to see the many down-and-outs—a sad name—hanging around that station. Many of them are Scots men and women and people from the north who came to this city looking for work. Every time I speak to voluntary associations—the Salvation Army, the Churches and many other organisations that do commendable work which is appreciated by Ministers and Back Benchers alike—their representatives say that they could do with more help from the Government. I hope the Government bear

[Mr. Martin]

that in mind. Every week, every year, that the divide between the wealthy south and the ever-poorer north grows wider, more people will come to the city and live——

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): Is my hon. Friend aware that, whereas the English Housing Bill is apparently in suspended animation and has been out of sight between Committee and Report for some months now, the Housing (Scotland) Bill is through its Report stage and in the House of Lords? We have been given to understand that there is to be some special deal for housing associations in England. Would it not be outrageous if the English housing association movement got concessions from the Government but its Scottish counterpart were deprived of such benefits?

Mr. Martin: I know the work of the Scottish housing associations far better than that of the associations south of the border, and I think that that would be sad.

With a few other hon. Members, I went on a trip down the River Thames last week. The aim of the trip was not to look at housing, but we had an opportunity to see the work being done and the development in the London docklands on both sides of the river. Anyone interested in housing must say that it is a pleasant and impressive development, but it highlights what my hon. Friend the Member for Hammersmith said about the problems of affluence in this city. Perhaps London Members will mention this. I know, looking at the property and the advertisements in *The Times*, that no young couple, even those on the average skilled wage, could afford a flat in that development, which stretches for miles. If the Minister does not address himself to that problem in London——

Mr. Waldegrave: The hon. Gentleman is right. It is a matter of concern. I am sure that he will join me in welcoming the fact that about one fifth of all housing in the docklands area is broadly social, subsidised housing, which is helpful.

Mr. Martin: I am glad to hear the Minister say that. The test of whether that will help the communities in those areas will be if, in four or five years' time, the Minister and I can go back and see the properties still in the hands of the young couples who acquired them through those subsidies.

I have only two other points to make, because I know that colleagues wish to speak. First, I see that the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland who is responsible for housing, the hon. Member for Edinburgh, West (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton), is on the Government Front Bench. I should like to address my remarks to him. I have written to the Secretary of State for Scotland about the rent and rate rebate system. I am appalled at the stories that I am hearing at my surgeries. An elderly gentleman came to see me. Two months ago, with the rebate system, he was paying a total of £9 a month. He has now received a bill for £119 a month. That is related to the fact that he gets a small pension for industrial deafness. It is small wonder that, faced with a bill of £119 a month, he took a shock and had to be taken to hospital.

The average tenant whom I see has to find another £30 a month this month in rent and rates. There is something wrong. I hope that the Minister will examine that. I remember that when the famous Rent Act 1974 was introduced the Tory Government's argument was that anyone in difficult circumstances did not need to worry because there was a rent and rebate system to protect the weak and the poor in our society. I want to see that protection for my constituents.

Finally, I refer to the voluntary housing associations. On Friday I looked at an impressive scheme in my constituency, known as Thomson street school, in the east end of the city. The school was closed down because of a shortage of pupils and now there is a beautiful housing complex for disabled people on the ground floor and families above. The associations are worried. After all the work that they put in, in four or five years' time, those houses could be in private hands and the associations could have no control or input.

I hope that the Minister will look at the points that I have raised.

5.14 pm

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): The hon. Member for Glasgow, Springburn (Mr. Martin) seemed to be in a state of some confusion about the right-to-buy policy introduced by the Government in the Housing Act 1980. He started his speech by complaining about three houses in his constituency which were previously owned by the council, and which, as a result of the right-to-buy policy, had been bought by the former tenants, yet the hon. Gentleman, who criticised the purchase of those three houses by his constituents, went on to affirm his belief in the right to buy. He said almost in the same sentence that it was the fact that those three houses had been bought that had denied another of his constituents the right to be a tenant. There is still much confusion within and without the House about the consequences of the right to buy.

Mr. Michael J. Martin: I should like to make one thing clear. The point that I was trying to make is that there should be the right to buy, provided that the Government assist in replenishing the stock.

Mr. Gow: But those three houses that were bought by the former tenants, all of them the hon. Gentleman's constituents, are still there. If those former tenants had not bought those houses, the chances are that the tenants would have remained there and the prospects of the hon. Gentleman's other constituents finding a tenancy would have been neither improved nor impeded whether or not that sale had taken place.

I congratulate the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) on selecting the subject of housing for today's debate. He will not misunderstand me when I say that I wished that he had been able to secure not a three-hour but a six-hour debate for the subject. It is common knowledge —this at least unites both sides of the House—that many hon. Members would like to take part, but time will not allow.

I want to address myself to one aspect only of the motion tabled by the hon. Member for Hammersmith and the amendment tabled by my hon. Friend the Minister. I think that it is a common view that, although in Britain today the overwhelming majority of our people are better housed than ever before, nevertheless, both the motion and the amendment refer to homelessness and bed-and-breakfast accommodation. I believe, and I make my own

confession of error, that those at the very bottom of the pile to whom the hon. Gentleman refers in his motion and to whom my hon. Friend refers in the amendment—the homeless and those who are in bed-and-breakfast accommodation—represent a continuing scandal. I say this to my hon. Friend: the paradox of a greater supply of houses than of households, even though the empty houses are not always in the places where the homeless are, should be a continuing source of concern for the House.

I should like to talk particularly about London because it is in London that the problem is most acute. When I held the office now held by my hon. Friend the Minister, I made a journey in the company of Mr. Reginald Freeson, the predecessor of the hon. Member for Brent, East (Mr. Livingstone), to look at some of the bed-and-breakfast hotels. Some of those so-called hotels are a rip-off of the taxpayer and the ratepayer and provide appalling accommodation for those who live there. I underline the word "some".

It is wholly unsatisfactory that in London houses and flats owned by local authorities stand empty while people have to live in wholly unsatisfactory bed-and-breakfast accommodation. If almost all the people living in the worst type of bed-and-breakfast accommodation—sometimes mum and dad and two or three or even four kids living in a single room—were offered the choice between remaining there or moving to a house or flat, they would prefer to move. They would exercise that choice even if the house or flat were not in good repair. It is a continuing indictment of some local authorities in London that that truth has not been understood.

The hon. Member for Hammersmith and other Opposition Members have understandably said that part of the reason for 20,000 empty houses and flats in London is bad repair. Even if I accepted that argument, I would still assert that many people living in bed-and-breakfast accommodation would infinitely prefer to live in houses and flats that are not in good repair. The cost of keeping individuals or families in bed-and-breakfast accommodation is in many cases outrageous. I repeat that that is a rip-off of taxpayers and ratepayers. In addition, void properties accelerate the opportunity for vandalism and mean that no rent or rates are being paid.

Mr. Allan Roberts (Bootle): Would the hon. Gentleman apply the same strictures to empty private sector houses?

Mr. Gow: Among the evils that the Housing Bill seeks to address is the scandal of empty private sector houses and flats. It may not be morally right, but it is legitimate for any man to do what he will with his own. We are trustees in the public sector and have a different obligation. I am not talking about morality.

I shall give the hon. Gentleman an illustration. It is legitimate for him to leave the electric light in his house on all day if he wishes. By doing that, he is wasting his own money. In the case of public assets, whether in the sphere of central or local government, we are the trustees. I do not quarrel with the hon. Gentleman's central point.

Mr. Soley *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Perhaps some Front Bench interventions could be held back until we come to the winding-up speeches.

Mr. Soley: I shall be brief, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Would the hon. Gentleman direct his comments to the Government sector, which has 6·9 per cent. of empties? Before he moves from this important point, will he bear in mind the fact that, before the Labour Government left office, there were hardly any families in bed and breakfast but that now in Labour, Tory and Liberal boroughs there are literally hundreds of people in such accommodation? Can the hon. Gentleman tell us why that should be so?

Mr. Gow: I do not defend, nor could anyone honourably defend, a situation in which houses and flats owned by the Government are empty. There have never been so many empty local authority houses and flats in London. It is to that matter that I am directing my speech.

A long time is elapsing between the conclusion of the Committee stage of the Housing Bill and its return to the House on Report. The Minister's officials or the heroes who toil away drafting legislation could utilise that time to include two, three or four clauses in my hon. Friend's excellent Housing Bill that would apply pressure upon local authorities—especially, but not exclusively, in London—to bring unused accommodation into use. That would do much to diminish the number of families living in totally unsatisfactory bed-and-breakfast accommodation. Such clauses would command the enthusiastic approval of all hon. Members.

5.25 pm

Mr. George Howarth (Knowsley, North): While listening to the Minister, I was reminded of a quote by no less a person than Zsa Zsa Gabor. She was asked for her comments about the condom and said that she was inclined to say that it all depended on what was in it for her. That seems to be the case with housing policy. No matter from what angle it is viewed, everybody seems to be concerned about what is in it for him.

We all seem to be missing the point about housing; the Government are certainly missing it. In Britain, probably more than in any country in the Western world, the access to decent quality housing depends almost entirely on one's wealth, income and social class. It is worth spending some time looking at the results of that. Some people who are lucky enough to be housed in rented accommodation are forced to live in almost ghetto conditions. Perhaps the standard and size of the property is an improvement on what a family had before, but in some ways it may be compared to a house in a ghetto of the 19th century.

Hon. Members have talked about homelessness steadily rising over a substantial part of this decade. I welcome the Minister's announcement of some new initiatives and resources; I am sure that we all welcome that. The Government have now been in power for almost a decade and all the problems of homelessness cannot be laid at the door of Labour or Liberal councils or anybody else. The problem of homelessness has increased under the Government and they have taken only small and insignificant steps to resolve it.

There has been a great deal of talk, especially by the Minister, about the use of resources and about who will benefit from the Housing Bill. Let us spend a little time examining the Government's recent record. We support owner-occupiers as much as anybody else does. About £5 million is currently spent subsidising people who are very often the people who least need that subsidy. At the same time, housing benefit to the least well-off or to people just above that level has been cut. That is a paradox, yet the Government and their supporters somehow seem to

[Mr. George Howarth]

square that circle. Hon. Members must have had sackloads of letters from constituents explaining the difficulties that they have had as a result of the loss of housing benefit since April. These two factors co-exist—mortgage tax relief seems to grow without check, while the Government are happy to reduce the subsidy available to the least well-off.

The Housing Bill will shortly return to the House. I felt that some of the measures in it were worthy of discussion, and I spent three and a half months in Committee being willing to discuss them. However, on reflection, I feel that there is something inherently dishonest about that Bill. It is that the Government know, the Minister knows—although I suspect that the Secretary of State is so cocooned in an ideological straitjacket that he probably is not aware of it—all the officials who advise the Minister know, most serious commentators in the press know, and all the experts in the academic world and the great institutions involved in housing know that the Housing Bill will not make much difference at all. Areas such as my constituency, others in the north and all areas with severe urban deprivation, which is reflected in housing, will not be affected by the Housing Bill.

Mr. Corbyn: It will make matters worse.

Mr. Howarth: I do not know that that is so. Sensible tenants may say they do not want to get involved in any pick-a-landlord scheme, so it will make no difference to them. Unless resources are directed through the local authorities, those estates will continue to decline, and the tenants will know that without more resources, going to a private landlord will make no difference.

Mr. Corbyn: When a group of tenants on an estate near the City of London or an area of housing crisis are hoodwinked into allowing tenancies to be transferred, will that not be a setback in the long run, because it will take housing from the working-class people for whom it was built in the first place?

Mr. Howarth: I could not disagree with that.

The Minister and his colleagues have made great play of the use of housing action trusts, of which it is proposed that there will be 10. The Minister will be aware that I have the forerunner of a HAT in my constituency—the Stockbridge village trust. I have taken a great deal of care not to criticise the trust. I hope that it will work, because for many people the prospect of decent housing depends upon it. However, as Ministers may be aware, it has not been a great success. Part of the reasoning behind the building of Stockbridge village and the setting up of HATs is that they will uplift areas and ensure a greater mix. For example, if some spare land is left over, private developers can build houses for owner-occupation. However, Barratt built some houses three or four years ago in Blackthorne crescent in Stockbridge village, with a purchase price of £22,500. I understand that a developer is now offering the Abbey National building society, which owns them, £5,000 a unit, so that cannot be said to be a great success.

The Stockbridge village trust has not succeeded in making owner-occupation attractive. I suspect that if areas of the greatest deprivation are chosen for HATs, that will ensure they are not a success. We are dealing with a phenomenon that is not entirely the responsibility of councils or to do with rented houses—it is to do with the local economy.

In the Committee that considered the Housing Bill, I tried to promote a consensus of support, from hon. Members on both sides of Committee, for housing co-operatives. One product of the Bill is the use of private finance in a system of flexible housing association grants. I know that the intention is to increase the supply of houses in the housing association sector, but when that is applied in an area with low values and high costs—and one or both of those problems applies in most areas—the net effect is that the housing co-operatives and housing associations will have to do package deals with construction companies, cutting out the architect. Those package deals lead to system building, a problem on many housing estates. It is ironic that housing co-operatives, which the Minister and others support, may be killed off by the application of private finance.

The Housing Bill will not work, and the Minister knows it. He knows too that the Government's housing policies are not working. The civil servants know it, the academics and housing experts know it. I suspect that the Secretary of State does not know it, and that the Minister, who is a nice chap who tries to build up his role as the acceptable face of the Department of the Environment, will not escape criticism, because there is a housing crisis. It is an intellectual crisis for the Secretary of State, but a human crisis for thousands of people.

5.36 pm

Mr. John Heddle (Mid-Staffordshire): I hope that the hon. Member for Knowsley, North (Mr. Howarth) will forgive me if I do not pursue most of the points that he made. However, I was disappointed, as I am sure that the House was, that he did not pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Minister for Housing and Planning, who announced last week an additional £20 million for the housing investment programme, to go specifically to those local authorities that have within their housing stock Airey houses, Smith houses, Wates houses and other system-built houses. I place on record my gratitude and that of my constituents in the Pear Tree estate in Rugeley in the Cannock Chase district council who, through that announcement, have received a substantial sum of increased resources, which will relieve the hardship of owners and tenants on those estates. In the west midlands area in general, the Department of the Environment has announced an increase in its housing investment programme for this purpose of £4·6 million. For that, my constituents are extremely grateful.

Another form of hardship could be alleviated if only local authorities behaved more prudently and responsibly in the way that they manage their properties. My hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow) touched specifically and in an enlightened way in his reply to the hon. Member for Bootle (Mr. Roberts) on the difference between the ethic of private ownership and the way that a private individual spends his or her money, and public ownership, and the fact that local authorities, elected councillors, and Members of Parliament are custodians and trustees of the public purse. It is a scandal that local authorities have failed to collect £2·5 million in rent arrears. That is "squandermania" on an increasingly

horrible scale. Had that money been collected, it could have been recycled and spent on improving hard-to-let houses and blocks of flats.

Mr. Corbyn: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Heddle: I shall not give way because I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will be able to catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if hon. Members follow your strictures to be brief, as I intend to do.

One form of hardship which has not yet been mentioned but is referred to in both the Opposition motion and the Government's amendment to it is the question of the ever-escalating cost of homes, particularly as it affects the first-time buyer. My hon. Friend the Minister will confirm that we said in our manifesto:

"Some people are still deterred by the costs and complications of house purchase. That is why we must look for new ways to make house-buying simpler and easier."

I wish to declare a non-pecuniary interest. I have the honour to be a vice-president of the Building Societies Association. All financial institutions involved in providing money for house purchase, whether they be local, regional, national and, increasingly, international, building societies, banks and other lending institutions, have a duty to regulate the amount of money that the public can borrow and to educate them about that. Most building society posters show that the societies are prepared to lend up to four times the applicant's income. I wonder whether that is prudent and sensible in the long run and whether it is perhaps fuelling house price inflation and encouraging some people, particularly first-time buyers who have no alternative but to get on to the first rung of the ladder of home ownership, to spend more than they can afford.

In the context of the manifesto commitment to which I have just referred, I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister, if not on his occasion, then on a future occasion before the next Session of Parliament will bring forward legislation to reduce, if not outlaw, the dishonourable practice embodied in the horrible word gazumping—the practice of people's word no longer being their bond. I should like to put to the House four practical ways in which that practice can be reduced, if not eliminated.

First, it can be done simply by reducing the time beween the acceptance of an offer and exchange of contracts. It can be done by improving the recommendations of the Law Commission's conveyancing sub-committee, under the chairmanship of Professor Julian Farrand who suggested, in his report of January last year, that the vendor and purchaser, on agreeing a price and the terms of the transaction, should be voluntarily obliged to place half or a three quarters deposit so that, if either party withdrew from the transaction unreasonably, that deposit would be forfeited. Professor's Farrand's recommendations amount to no more than a toothless tiger, because, no vendor, while there is a buoyant housing market and, indeed, the majority of first-time buyers, because they cannot afford to do so, will want to put down such a preliminary deposit. That deposit should be made mandatory and enshrined in an Act of Parliament.

Secondly, on the acceptance of the purchaser's offer, the vendor should be obliged to produce local searches for the purchaser, thereby eliminating the necessity for solicitors to spend time and the purchaser's fees on obtaining local searches.

Thirdly, if that is not possible, I hope that my hon. Friend can be persuaded to impose upon local authorities the duty to respond to local searches within a reasonable time. In that context, the Law Commission's conveyancing sub-committee has suggested that 10 days is a reasonable time. It is, therefore, scandalous that some local authorities, such as Hackney, Islington and Tower Hamlets, take up to five or six months to respond. When I introduced an Adjournment debate on that subject two months ago, I produced heart-rending, tear-jerking letters from nurses and schoolteachers wanting to buy but who had been frustrated in their wishes because of the bureaucratic log-jam and the inability and insensitivity of some local authorities.

Finally, I hope that my hon. Friend, without having to come before the House with a Bill, will be able to impose upon a local authority the duty to computerise its search procedures. If local authorities are incapable, unable or unwilling to do so, he should encourage them to put that function and that responsibility out to the private sector. By adopting those positive, simple and straightforward proposals, the majority of first-time buyers, who at present are either being gazumped, or frustrated by local authority bureaucracy in their attempts to get on the vital first rung of home ownership, will realise their ambition and achieve their dream much sooner.

5.44 pm

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): This Opposition debate is welcome and, as hon. Members will have noticed, my colleagues and I have added our names to the motion without amendment. We did that specifically to show, first, that the two main Opposition parties agree in large measure that the Government have gone wrong and, secondly, that we agree what the priorities should be. The majority of people in this country share those priorities and, together, we, the two largest Opposition parties, represent the majority of the electorate of the United Kingdom. Thirdly, we need to confirm those areas that are at the root of the housing problem, for example, the need to change the housing finance system. I am glad to see that the Labour party now joins us in, for example, advocating a change in housing finance and recommends equal subsidy for those who rent and those who buy, as we have long advocated.

The word "homelessness" has been heard often in this debate, and rightly so. The figures give the lie to the argument that homelessness is the fault of specific local authorities. For example, in 1979 in Southwark 651 families presented themselves as homeless, but last year that figure was 1,700. In inner London in 1979 the figure was 9,610, but last year it had risen to 19,000. The figure for Greater London in 1979 was 16,650, but last year it had risen to 30,000. In 1979 the figure for England was over 50,000, but last year it had risen to over 110,000. Those figures show that it is not local authorities that have failed, but rather that the nation has failed and homelessness has increased, whoever runs the local councils.

Although I agree that by putting our empty property back into use we would go a long way towards solving the problem—I have sponsored Bills on that subject—it is not possible for Ministers to blame local authorities entirely, because the problem has grown, whichever local authorities have been responsible. The country knows that for the past nine years the Government have squeezed

[Mr. Simon Hughes]

local authorities in all sorts of ways, above all in the resources available to them. Of course, management by local councils must improve. My local council in Southwark has an appalling record, as have many others, but increasing homelessness is not only the responsibility or fault of local councils. Increasing unemployment over the past decade has meant that more people have been unable to keep up mortgage payments, let alone rent payments, and the drive towards home ownership has driven many people too far, such that they have had their homes repossessed.

Additional resources to help the homeless are now the priority. The Government's announcements, both last year and this year, have been welcome, but the amounts announced are a tiny proportion of what is needed and by no means make up for the 70 per cent. cut in housing investment over that time. Much of the additional cash apparently given is in fact cash which the Government announced they were giving a week or two earlier. The Government announced £25 million extra for the homeless in the Autumn Statement, but the same announcement was made in a different press release on 30 November. Another announcement was made on 3 December, but it again referred to the same money. We are not fooled by that, and nor are the homeless, because substantial numbers of them were still homeless after all those announcements.

There has been a massive increase in the number of families, including women who are expecting children and others in priority categories, who are accepted as homeless by local authorities, and there are many more single people and young people, both men and women, who are homeless on the streets. Homelessness is visibly the major housing problem of 1988. The homeless do not come only from the poor parts of Britain. The hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) cited Centre Point, which deals in London with some of the young homeless. The young homeless there do not come only from Ireland, Scotland and northern towns. Increasingly people from the home counties homeless in London because they cannot find housing.

It is right for criticism to be made when local authorities do not do a good job. I contend that it is entirely unacceptable that anyone should be homeless on the streets of London, including members of foreign communities such as the Bangladeshi community who come to Britain and who cannot return home without losing the immigration rights that enable them to stay here. They must be housed whether they are in Tower Hamlets or any other borough. If the responsibility for housing that group and others does not lie with the local authority, it must be a shared one with the Government.

On this subject, this is a crucial week for the Government and all local authorities, and I say that with friendship and courtesy to all those who represent the various parties in London. Now is the time when the issue of homelessness, as it especially affects members of immigrant communities, must be addressed across London and elsewhere and by all London boroughs. It is unacceptable that any group within our community should not be housed. If local authorities cannot independently of Government house the members of these communities, the Government must find the necessary resources at the end of the day independently of local authorities, or with their support.

Bed-and-breakfast accommodation is a continuing scandal, but the responsibility for this too must not entirely be attributed to any local authority. We all have responsibility. For example, Camden's homeless persons unit was closed for several months while the unit in Tower Hamlets, was open. The way in which Lambeth dealt with homeless persons has been criticised by the ombudsman. Brent's homeless persons unit was closed for months. The use of bed-and-breakfast accommodation in London over the past year increased by 22 per cent. while in Tower Hamlets it decreased by 11 per cent.

As I have said, all families should be housed. We must concentrate our efforts on housing families and not on making party-political points against our colleagues in this place.

Mr. Shore: I think that the House, especially those Members who have followed the saga of the intentionally homeless, as it is alleged, of Bengali families in Tower Hamlets, will welcome the hon. Gentleman's forthright and courageous statement. Some of his colleagues in Tower Hamlets are this very week pitching out 11 families on to the streets—they are in bed-and-breakfast accommodation—who are in Britain lawfully under our immigration rules. I hope that they will heed his words carefully. I accept entirely that the problem is too large to be handled by any one council in London. The Government must provide adequate resources to deal with what is a national disgrace.

Mr. Hughes: I welcome the right hon. Gentleman's comments. The Select Committee on Home Affairs has specifically said that the Government must help local authorities to deal with this aspect of homelessness. I have been in consultation with my colleagues in Tower Hamlets and I believe they understand that a collaborative effort is needed. I believe, too, that they are willing to participate in that approach along with the representatives of other parties, if that is possible; so that once and for all there is no group in Britain that does not have secure accommodation because of its immigration status. I look forward to discussing the issue further later tonight with other colleagues.

The Government's response to the crisis has been to increase home ownership. The Minister referred to the great increase in first-time buyers. There has been such an increase, and many have responded to the Government's right-to-buy policy. Many of those who have taken advantage of that scheme have not been in the south-east, where many of those who wish to become first-time buyers cannot afford to buy. The right to buy has also come at a time when greenfield sites have been under pressure. It was not a shortcoming in presentation that led to the homeless not being mentioned in the Housing Bill, which we are waiting to consider again on the Floor of the House. It is a fact that developers are causing pressure to be put on land use in the south-east, at the same time as cheap rented or for sale accommodation is not being provided.

The Housing Bill is flawed in many fundamental respects. It perverts the system under which people will have a choice of remaining council tenants, by rigging the voting system. It does not come to the rescue by providing affordable rents in the social housing sector. Unless the

Government reintroduce the Housing Bill in an amended form, which includes a fair voting system for tenants and a finance system that will ensure affordable rents, they will be failing in their duty. Tenants in the area which I represent and in many others are entirely critical of these and other fundamental flaws that are to be found in the Bill.

Those in special need and the vulnerable, need housing. They do not need speeches about housing. Last weekend the Prime Minister bared her soul and revealed her personal theology in Scotland. I reflected that Christ, followed by the Salvation Army and many others ever since, thought that the best way of preaching the gospel was to act it out. The best way of dealing with the needs of Britain must be to provide practical help and support rather than preaching about self-reliance and the acquisition of more money. If the housing of the homeless and those who are in bad housing has not been a priority of the Government for the past eight years—the figures testify to this and show that there is a crisis of unparalleled proportions—that is a more powerful fact than any that can be made in a speech by a Minister, no matter how mighty she or he might be.

5.56 pm

Mr. Patrick Thompson (Norwich, North): I am grateful for the opportunity to participate briefly in the debate, especially as matters concerning both public and private housing are of great importance to my constituents. Housing is one of the major issues in Norwich.

I did not agree with every word that was uttered by the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes), but I accept that the party-political approach is not the best one for housing. There is a great need for constructive ideas to be advanced for the future instead of continually returning to the old party-political battle-ground. I was surprised when the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) implied that there is a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow that would be found if a Labour Government were elected. Heaven forbid!

It is clear that the hon. Member for Hammersmith has a short memory. During the period to 1979, when the Labour Government were still in power, we read of the lowest ever number of housing starts. We read also that 400,000 houses which were available to rent were lost, as it were, during the time that that Government were in office. There was a major decrease in housing improvement grants, and mortgage interest rates rose as high as 11·75 per cent. There was a fall in gross expenditure on public sector housing. To suggest that the Labour Government presided over an improvement in housing is a travesty of the truth, and every hon. Member knows that.

It is difficult to learn from the terms of the motion what the Opposition's housing policy is. That being so, I shall not refer to it. I am not surprised that the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey attached his name to it. After all, the Social and Liberal Democrats chose to ignore housing in their policy document, which was entitled "A Democracy of Conscience." It was cobbled together in about 24 hours. It appears that the hon. Gentleman was reading the Bible during the speech of the hon. Member for Glasgow, Springburn (Mr. Martin). At least he has been searching for some inspiration for a housing policy.

The important difference between the Government and the Opposition is that the Labour party still believes that the answer to the housing problem lies in massive public housing programmes. That means a vast increase in the number of council houses. That is Labour's view, fair enough, but I disagree with it.

In Norwich there is 42 per cent. public housing and 54 per cent. private housing, which means that there is a high proportion of council houses. The proportion is changing slowly. The amount of private housing is steadily increasing, partly because of house building by private house builders and partly because of the right to buy council houses—a policy which has an increasing influence in Norwich. In the past few months the number of council houses sold has increased remarkably. I think that I am right in saying that 3,500 council houses have been sold.

I should like to talk about the problems rather than debate the differences in philosophy between the two sides of the House. My constituency case load in Norwich, North is made up almost entirely of housing problems —for example, waiting lists, transfers and damp, which some officials would have us believe is condensation, delays to repairs, empty houses and delays and errors in dealing with right-to-buy applications. The list is endless. Housing is a major problem for my constituents. I do not approach this matter in a partisan spirit. My constituents want these problems solved. They do not particularly mind how they are solved, so long as there is some way out of their unhappy circumstances.

I believe, although the Opposition will not agree, that there are overlarge council estates. There are 22,500 council houses in Norwich——

Mr. Boateng: Not enough.

Mr. Thompson: My point is made for me. Time does not permit me to launch into a great criticism of Norwich city council, but even the most efficient housing authority would find it difficult to run a council estate operation of that size efficiently. That is why the Housing Bill is a major step forward.

Unlike the Opposition parties, which merely hark back to the past, we say that things cannot go on as they are and that we must have a change for the benefit of those who need or live in this housing. I welcome the Government's intention to take powers to compel local authorities to dispose of empty properties. Even in Norwich, which has quite a good record, more than 100 properties have been empty for more than six months. This is a major problem to which hon. Members, including my hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow), have referred It is right that the Housing Bill should address that point.

There are 75,000 more houses than households in Britain. The question is how we can best match the houses that already exist with those who, we all agree, need them. Contrary to the criticisms of Labour authorities, the measures in the Housing Bill—I hope that we shall debate them soon—will help the homeless and young people, will give young people and council tenants more rights and choice and will give local residents more opportunities to be involved in decision making.

Mr. George Howarth: In what way will the Housing Bill give all these additional powers to people on council estates?

Mr. Thompson: I could speak at great length—[HON. MEMBERS: "Why give those powers?"] I shall talk at great length on why the Housing Bill will help tenants on council estates. Many of them look forward to the opportunities——

Ms. Diane Abbott (Hackey, North and Stoke Newington): Name one.

Mr. Thompson: We have been asked to make brief speeches, so I shall say only that Labour authorities, including Norwich, have been circulating leaflets which put across the kind of rubbish that we have heard from the Opposition and have been totally misleading people about the Bill's contents. With your permission, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I shall confine myself to that comment.

Labour has claimed that the tenants' chance to opt out will offer a bonanza to property speculators, but Labour does not explain properly the role of the Housing Corporation. Every landlord will have to be approved by the corporation. Labour's leaflets do not explain the role of the Housing Corporation in supervising discussions and consultations between tenants and landlords, even during the period of the ballot. It is important to remind the House that under the Housing Bill any tenant who wishes to remain with a local authority can do so.

Mr. Allen McKay (Barnsley, West and Penistone): Has the hon. Gentleman heard of estate management? If he goes to Barnsley, he will find the best estate management in the business. That was said by the Minister, who came to examine what was happening. The hon. Gentleman has talked about private landlords. I hope that he will take care to look at the position of former National Coal Board tenants who now have private landlords.

Mr. Thompson: I am interested in that remark. I am in favour of good estate management, whatever the authority.

It is unlikely that housing action trusts will be set up in Norwich in the near future, but I think that my point about them still applies. People in my constituency and Norwich city council feel that it would be a good idea if the meetings of the housing action trusts were held in public, and I agree. I remind my hon. Friend the Minister of that point, which I have discussed with him, and hope that he can find time to respond as soon as possible.

There is another problem in Norwich that needs to be addressed. It is generally agreed that there is a problem with the deterioration of many houses in the private sector. Labour-controlled Norwich city council and the Government must work together to find a solution. Many of these houses are let to tenants and the condition of many is deteriorating. My hon. Friend the Minister has said that an amendment to the Housing Bill may be introduced to insist on higher standards from private landlords. I think that both sides of the House agree on this point. Anyone who drives around Norwich or any of our other great cities will be worried about the deterioration of parts of these cities and the housing stock. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will address this point.

Under this Government, 2·9 million more people own their homes, including an increasing number of young people. We have improved the right-to-buy provisions. Since 1979, improvement grants have increased by 46 per cent. We have provided more rights for council tenants. The Opposition offer only policies of more public spending, which would lead to high interest rates, which would destroy any chance of a good housing policy. We should welcome the Housing Bill as a constructive step forward. We should reject Labour's motion and support the Government's amendment.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. It may be helpful if I say that I understand that the first of the Front Bench speakers will seek to rise at 6.30 pm. A large number of hon. Members wish to take part in the debate and five-minute speeches would be helpful.

6.9 pm

Mr. Barry Jones (Alyn and Deeside): The hon. Member for Norwich, North (Mr. Thompson) will understand why I will not follow his points.

The Opposition motion calls for

"a planned programme of house building, repair and renovation."

There is a definite need in Wales for a housing strategy and a major injection of funds to sustain that strategy. There is a problem in north-west Wales in the county of Gwynydd where many houses are in a state of disrepair. There is also a totally unacceptable position in the south-eastern valleys. That has arisen because in that area there is the highest percentage of pre-1919 houses occupied by owners who frequently are the least well-off in our society.

The biggest problem in Wales involves council houses built between the two world wars, which now require the highest investment where modernisation has not been carried out. I appeal for a boost for housing expenditure in Wales. I warn the House that if the problems are not tackled and if the money is not forthcoming, slum clearance will be required at the turn of the century at the latest.

In calling for fair play, I must state that unemployment is highest and dereliction and environmental blight are at their worst in those areas with severe housing problems. The people living in those areas gave Britain great economic service delivering coal and steel when the nation needed it during the first and second world wars. In the time remaining to me, I, like other hon. Members, want to emphasise the predicaments in which my constituents find themselves with regard to housing benefit cuts.

A constituent of mine from Llay, an old mining village, has lost an estimated £18 a week as a result of the new regulations. He is a world war 2 veteran and he has a British Rail pension. I believe that he is a brave man. He served in the 4th battalion Royal Welsh Fusiliers and he fought from the Normandy beaches right through to Hamburg. His family and I believe that he has been shabbily treated. The whole family are worried sick—financially—at the consequences of the proposed cut.

Another constituent has written to me as follows:

"We are writing as a family to express our abhorrence of the effects of the new 'Housing Benefit' rules on our widowed mother. On a total income of £63 per week with no savings remaining, she is expected to pay £18·73 in rent, previously this was £15·73 per week. . . . If a 72 year old widow on low income who has had two operations for cancer is not part of a priority group, we wonder who is."

Less than a fortnight ago I interviewed Mr. Tarren from Buckley who is aged 76. He has defeated cancer after a

major operation and is now in good health. However, the new regulations will deprive that cheerful battler of £80 a year in housing benefit cuts. At my constituency surgery on Saturday a 74-year-old widow told me that her income would drop by £2·44 a week as a result of the cut in housing benefit. She now lives on an income of only £44·05 a week. At the same surgery a 68-year-old man with a defective knee and a severely arthritic spine reported that he would lose £80 a year in housing benefit.

Another constituent of mine on Deeside has a mild mental handicap,. He was given a tenancy by the local housing authority under the all-Wales strategy for services to people with mental handicap. Before his tenancy, he conscientiously went on a course for two and a half years. Under the old regulations he had rent and rate rebates of £16·30 a week. Despite his mental handicap, he is now not entitled to rebate. Despite his low income, the 65 per cent. rent taper disqualifies him.

Another constituent showed me his rent book at my surgery on Saturday. His fortnightly rent and rates is now £50 instead of £6—the figure during the previous financial year. He told me that the family's diet has fallen away. They live on chipped potatoes because they are so hard-pressed.

The background to the cases that I have described is considerable unemployment, near poverty, social isolation, ill health, hopelessness, bewilderment and immobility. I report the concerns of the most vulnerable people in the fine community that I represent.

I remind the House that the Prime Minister addressed the Church of Scotland on Saturday. She adopted a high moral tone and she quoted the Bible to the assembled clerics. She held forth about money in her homily. I believe that the Prime Minister's stance is an affront to my vulnerable and honourable and respectable constituents. They have very little ready money and they suffer real hardship.

If the Prime Minister had been beside me for the four hours that my surgery lasted on Saturday, she would have felt ashamed. She might even have felt some humiliation about the predicament in which her hard policies had placed my constituents.

6.16 pm

Mr. Robin Squire (Hornchurch): I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham, South (Mr. Brandon-Bravo), who may have sacrificed his chance of speaking in this debate by allowing me to speak now.

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Minister for Housing and Planning on the wording of the Government amendment to the Opposition motion. I support the amendment and its priorities. We are coping with the self-evident consequences of a success in home ownership and it is right that accordingly we are concentrating on the rented sector. I want to refer to quality, quantity and choice in that rented sector.

Mr. Gow: Would my hon. Friend care to send a message to his noble Friend the Captain of the Gentleman-at-Arms, because over the past few moments in another place—this is most relevant to the subject of housing which occupies us today—the amendment tabled by the noble and gallant Lord Chelwood has been defeated by 317 votes for the Government to 183 votes against?

Mr. Squire: I can assume only that Opposition peers stayed away.

I want to refer to quality in the rented sector. It is a sad fact that the quality in much of the rented sector today is very bad. In referring to the rented sector I include the private rented sector and much of the council sector.

The hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) spoke at some length on matters about which we share common views. He would be hard put to suggest—and indeed he did not—that future investment in the rented sector should be aimed exclusively at council property. If he were to say that, he would be going against his experience in the London borough of Southwark, which experience is all too often repeated up and down the country by other local authorities and has been highlighted by the Audit Commission. It is not good enough for Opposition Members to talk as though, uniquely, the private rented sector is all bad. The fact that there is bad property in the private sector is willingly conceded by Conservative Members. We seek in return a concession that the service given to and the quality of property enjoyed by many council tenants is equally bad and requires attention.

My second point, which is about quantity, follows from the thrust of the Housing Bill. The Government expect an increase in the volume of housing that will in future be privately rented. I fully support them in that aim. It is essential that there should be some increase, on mobility grounds alone. Representing as I do an outer London constituency, I can see that there is an appalling shortage of rented property, and that view is surely shared by hon. Members for London, wherever they sit in the Chamber. One of the ways in which that shortage can be tackled is by enhancing the private rented sector, including housing associations. That is essential if we are to have normal and free movement of labour.

It is over the question of choice that the biggest divide arises between the two sides of the House. Until now there has been little argument between us about council housing. However, my hon. Friends believe that there is an advantage in offering a genuine choice to would-be tenants rather than having, as there is in most parts of the country, a near-monopoly of tenanted property owned by the local authority. Where there is a good local authority, such a monopoly will be in the interests of tenants. Sadly, in too many instances the local authority is not good and there are few alternatives, if any, from which would-be tenants may chose. Those who are looking for rented property —apart from those at the luxury end of the market—are, by definition, people who have an average or below-average income and have few, if any, alternatives. It is not open to such people to buy their way into house ownership.

London and the home counties in particular face appalling problems in staff recruitment over a wide range of employment in both the public and private sector. I refer to the public transport system, to the National Health Service, and to the catering and entertainment industries. The central reason for that is insufficient housing at an affordable price. My hon Friend the Minister for Housing and Planning is aware of the problem. I have made the point to him on a number of occasions and he knows that it remains a concern of mine. Provided that we get the balance right on the very important question of housing benefit—and we await the

[Mr. Squire]

details of the scheme, along with others relating to the Housing Bill—the Government will be able to tackle that problem.

We must use the planning system more to achieve a proportion of social housing in most, if not all, local authority areas around London and in our other major cities. Otherwise, it will not be possible for essential workers——

Mr. Dennis Turner (Wolverhampton, South-East) *rose——*

Mr. Squire: In fairness, I must continue speaking because I know that there are other hon. Members wishing to contribute.

If the housing benefit scheme is unable to be of assistance, we shall need areas zoned for social housing, otherwise the people who are essential to making a big city tick will not be able to find accommodation.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hyndburn (Mr. Hargreaves) mentioned the importance of using empty property. As a supporter of his original Bill, and as someone who attempted to have his proposals passed in Committee on the Housing Bill, I am a firm supporter of greater use being made of empty property.

I have made clear my support for the Government's priorities. I conclude with a comment on homelessness, because ultimately it is that which we are seeking to tackle through many of the provisions of the Housing Bill. If we can succeed in our efforts to overcome that problem, we shall ensure in a number of ways that the majority of the population, who are well housed or adequately housed, will be so aroused that they will keep up pressure on both local and national politicians to provide more housing opportunities—particularly in the rented sector.

It is in the interests of all hon. Members to press my hon. Friends the Minister for Housing and Planning and the Under-Secretary of State so that in their discussions with the Treasury—which they will undoubtedly have at regular intervals—they are both persuaded that housing is of the highest priority in our nation's affairs. If we can persuade my hon. Friends of that and can strengthen their hands in their discussions with the Treasury, the reforms, which already look encouraging, will be followed by further reforms. Above all, the conscience of that part of the nation that is well housed will be extended to the minority who are homeless or badly housed.

6.25 pm

Mr. Paul Boateng (Brent, South): The Minister of State has had the bare-faced gall to come to the House and accuse Opposition Members of a so-called dearth of housing policy. That is obviously nonsense. I can tell the Minister that we shall restore the level of public spending on housing which, under the present Government, has been cut from £6·7 billion to £2·7 billion. That cut lies at the heart of the Government's failure to tackle the housing crisis.

The means by which the Minister chooses to attack this side of the House is by reference to a magazine, which he produced and showed us all, called the *New Statesman* —an organ that makes an intellectual contribution to the Labour party, and a very welcome one. I shall tell the Minister of a magazine that was recently drawn to my attention. It is a glossy publication which is surprisingly well written. It deals with the fads, the fancies and the foibles of the parvenus and parasites who make up the core of the Conservative party. Lo and behold—what did I see as I sifted through that publication, between the adverts for houses which are a snip at £375,000, and for bijou flats in Wandsworth for £160,000? I saw an article about the golden boy of the Thatcherite housing policy—none other than the Minister of State himself.

When I heard the line the Minister was taking in this debate, I asked those working with me to obtain a copy of that magazine. I even provided them with a plain brown envelope so that they could do so. However, my secretary has written me a note saying, "Sorry, couldn't get one." They are sold out. So interested is the world in the Minister of State's utterances that my assistant could not obtain a single copy of that publication, which I can now name as the *Tatler*, within one square mile of this Palace of Westminster.

At the heart of that article, the Minister of State comments on the need for community and how housing must serve the community. Anyone hearing what he and other Conservative Members said during the course of this debate, and anyone who had to sit through hour after hour of the Housing Bill, as we had to do, knows only too well that the Government's housing policy has destroyed the sense of community in all of the constituencies we represent, and that the bed-and-breakfast population have had any possibility of a community life removed from them. In my constituency, more than 900 families are in bed-and-breakfast accommodation, and mine is a constituency that has been praised by the Minister of State and his chief acolyte for the advances it has made in coping with its housing crisis. The other day the Minister of State talked about us in glowing terms. That is unusual for my borough.

Despite all the work that we have done for those in bed-and-breakfast accommodation, however, our housing allocation has been viciously cut by some 20 per cent. in real terms in the space of a year. Having asked for £82 million, we were given £19·25 million. That is the priority that the present Government give to housing. The result is a destruction of the community and a grouping in our society of people who have no opportunity to obtain public housing, and no opportunity to buy houses either.

We have heard cheers of delight from Conservative Members about the defeat of the Lords' amendment in the other place. They should reflect that that in itself will cause a massive spiral of inflation in house prices, particularly in the south-east, as a direct result of the poll tax. It will do nothing to help the housing crisis, any more than the measures so far proposed by the Government will dent that crisis.

We have heard talk today about the Bangladeshis. It is as if they, through no fault of their own, had contributed to the housing crisis in some parts of our country. That is not the case; the crisis was there long before they came. I can, however, name one person from the Indian sub-continent who has made a contribution to solving the housing crisis, Mother Teresa. That the day should ever come when she should have to leave the streets of Calcutta to point the finger of reproach at us in our capital city, and when Members of Parliament making their way home at night see people sleeping in boxes, is a reproach that Conservative Members must face.

The odour of sanctity clings to Mother Teresa as it has never clung to the Prime Minister, and we need to listen to what she says to us about housing. She says that we should care more, that we should devote more resources to housing and that we should put strategy in the place of rhetoric. That is the challenge that Mother Teresa presents to the House, and I only wish that Conservative Members were up to it.

6.32 pm

Mr. Allan Roberts (Bootle): This has been an interesting and wide-ranging debate. It is also a welcome debate, and far too short for the right hon. and hon. Members who wish to participate. But one never knows. Eventually—perhaps before the summer recess, perhaps after it—we can have a major debate on housing if the Housing Bill goes through Report stage and receives its Third Reading. The Bill is now lost in the limbo of the Department of the Environment and the disputes between the Secretary of State and the Minister for Housing and Planning as they desperately try to define a "social landlord" in the private sector.

Last night I met a Mr. Roy Murphy. People in the north-west will know that he is Shelter's representative in the region. He said that he had just been to a Shelter meeting on "social housing". It used to be council housing; then it was public housing; now it is social housing. If I went on to the streets of Bootle and offered someone a social house, they would wonder what I was talking about. They would understand what a public house was, but that is not what the Minister is talking about. They want to be offered council housing. They do not want houses with private landlords.

Meetings all over the country during the run-up to the elections on 5 May were packed with people who made it clear, on council estate after council estate, that they did not want to go back to private landlords—especially the elderly and middle-aged, who started life as private tenants and waited and fought to get their council houses. They know what private landlordism means, and there is no going back to it for them.

The Housing Bill—an amazing feat on the part of the Secretary of State and the Minister—has made the Government's right-to-buy policy a vote-winner for the Labour party. People on council estates, as my hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Withington (Mr. Bradley) pointed out, are dying to escape the consequences of this legislation. It was one thing for the Government to destroy the public rented sector to sell council housing to sitting tenants by means of discounts or other incentives —to sell to people who wanted to become owner-occupiers. It is another to start selling council houses over the heads of the sitting tenants, which is what they are now proposing—and, in some cases, selling off the sitting tenants as well, against their wishes.

Nearly 30 per cent. of people who live in council houses have bought them. That is not simply a tribute to the right to buy; it is a tribute to public sector housing. The tenants would not have bought the houses if they were not attractive low-rise houses. The Conservatives may be proud of selling them, but Labour is proud of building them. They would not have been there to sell if we had not built them in the first place. It is a myth perpetrated by the Tories that all council housing is bad and badly managed, but they are beginning to believe it themselves. Most council housing is low-rise and attractive. Of course there have been mistakes, the mistakes of the late 1950s and early 1960s: the high-rise flats for families and the deck-access flats. But those mistakes represent a minority of the council houses in which nearly 30 per cent. of the population live.

What does the Minister think of council housing and council tenants? In a speech in August 1987, he said:

> "My belief is, there should not be much of it at all. It is an oddity confined largely to Britain amongst European countries that the state goes landlording on this scale."

So now we have it: council housing and council tenants are an oddity. That is the view of the Tories, and that is why for doctrinaire reasons they are setting about destroying public sector housing against the wishes of the tenants. As I have said, it is one thing to sell to sitting tenants; it is another to force people to give up their tenancies and be handed over to the private sector.

The Government say that the pick-a-landlord scheme gives council tenants a choice. The hon. Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire) mentioned that. Any council tenant is free to choose now: he can give up his council house and rent from a private landlord. I do not notice many of them doing that. However, I notice many people coming to my advice bureau and saying, "I rent from a private landlord. The property is infested with cock-roaches; it is damp; he is fiddling the meter; he is overcharging; I cannot get the repairs done. Please will you get me a council house?" That has been the history of our advice bureaux for the past nine years of Tory rule, and it is the history of Conservative Members' advice bureaux as well, if they would only tell the truth.

The Government know that council tenants do not want to pick a private landlord. That is why they are rigging the voting system so that 51 per cent. of the people living on an estate picked out by a private landlord who wishes to take it over—not one that the tenants have asked to be taken over—must vote against the takeover; otherwise it will go ahead. It will not be 51 per cent. of those who vote, but 51 per cent. of those living on the estate. If someone dies while the vote is taking place, he will be counted as having voted yes because all abstentions will be counted votes. A tenant cannot go on holiday if he does not want to be taken over, because if he does not vote he will be counted as having voted yes.

Those who have exercised the right to buy—the owner-occupiers on the estate—will have a vote as well. They can vote for their neighbours to be taken over. It is a voting system worthy of Stalin or Franco. It gives the lie to the Tories' claim that people want to opt out of the council sector. They know full well that that is not true.

Mr. Michael J Martin: This applies not only to council housing, but to the Scottish Special Housing Association, which is a Government agency. All the tenants are happy with the organisation, yet the Government are forcing new landlords on them.

Mr. Roberts: We talk about the voting system for the pick-a-landlord scheme, but housing action trusts will not even get a vote. The Minister promised to tell us their position when the Bill received its Second Reading, but we still do not know. He said that he was going to announce six trusts. But there will be no choice whatever for them.

This is a con trick that the Conservatives always operate: "Starve the public sector of resources; do not give

[Mr. Roberts]

the Health Service the money that it needs; that will cause waiting lists." Then they say, "It does not work; go private."

The Government are doing exactly the same in public sector housing. They are starving local authorities of the resources that they need to maintain and manage housing. They are also starving local authorities of the housing allocations that they need to build houses and offer transfers. They are making it difficult for local authorities to run public sector housing effectively. Then they say, "It does not work; go private." But people on the council estates know what the Government are up to. They have rumbled them.

The Government have tried to obfuscate and hide the facts. When the Secretary of State for the Environment answered a question about subsidies he said:

"The total figures for Exchequer contributions to council housing in 1981-2 was £1·3 billion and in 1987-88 £0·8 billion."—[*Official Report*, 18 May 1988; Vol. 133, c. 940.]

That is a massive drop. However, the Secretary of State said that that does not matter because there were fewer houses in 1987-88.

I have the figures for 1978-79. The subsidy was £1·457 billion, an even bigger amount. It is not that there is less subsidy because there are fewer houses: there are fewer houses because there is less subsidy. The cut in subsidy has resulted in fewer houses. There are 1 million fewer houses for rent. The decline in subsidy over the last nine years of Tory rule is because the 1980 Act got rid of the Labour Government's direct subsidies to local authorities for the building of new council houses and the modernisation of older council houses.

Subsidies bear no relationship to the number of new council houses that are built or to the number of older houses that are modernised and improved. Central Government told local authorities to increase rents every year by a set amount—the local contribution—until the housing revenue account was in surplus. Central Government subsidies were reduced and it was hoped that eventually they would disappear. In many areas, they have disappeared. The housing revenue accounts of many local authorities are now in surplus. That is a direct consequence of this Government's attempt to cut subsidies to local authorities so that they build no more council houses, thereby ensuring that the public rented sector declines even further.

There are fewer houses and, we must assume, fewer tenants. However, as rents have increased during the last nine years, housing benefit payments, despite the seven cuts that this Tory Government have introduced, have increased from £1·7 billion in 1981-82 to £3·5 billion in 1987-88. There have been massive cuts in public expenditure subsidies to build council houses and improve older ones, but there has been an increase in public expenditure to help those who have to face the massive rent increases imposed by this Government.

There have also been massive cuts in the housing improvement programme allocations. In today's prices, South Bedfordshire spent £13·6 million in 1978-79. Now it has been given £809,000, a cut of 94·1 per cent. Manchester was spending £108,329,000 on its housing investment programme. That has been reduced to £23 million, a cut of 78·8 per cent. The hon. Member for Norwich, North (Mr. Thompson) did not refer to the housing problems that have been caused by the cut of 80·9 per cent. in the housing investment programme between 1979 and now. Norwich regularly returns a Labour council. At Beauthorpe it was building houses for sale, houses to rent from housing associations and houses to rent from the local authority. That has been stopped because of the Government's cuts in the housing investment programme.

What do this Government offer? They claim that the way to solve homelessness is to make sure that councils fill their empty houses, but they have ignored the huge number of empty houses in the private sector. In 1987, 511,000 private sector houses were standing empty, but only 108,600 public sector houses were standing empty.

The Government's answer to the problem has been to hand over housing to the private housing market. They want to destroy the public rented sector completely. They have introduced the concept of assured tenancies, which destroys security of tenure for most tenants in the private sector. They have also handed over council housing to the private rented sector.

The Government believe in only one kind of free market in housing—a shortage of housing. Market rents and house prices would fall if there were a surplus of housing. As the Government believe only in their own free market—a shortage—they will not build houses in the public rented sector. That would destroy the shortages that provide the profits in private rents and house prices. A house is not worth what it costs to build or what it costs to replace. A house is worth what people can get for it on the open market. That also determines rent levels. There is profit in the private rented sector and in the free market only if there is a housing crisis, a housing shortage and waiting lists.

Aneurin Bevan said that the best kind of rent control is nine families chasing 10 decent houses. That is why I make no apology for restating Labour's answer to homelessness and the housing crisis. It is to build more low-rise council houses in the public rented sector that people want so that we can eat up the waiting lists, rehouse homeless families and get people out of bed-and-breakfast accommodation. Public expenditure will be needed. The Government say, "We agree, but where is the money coming from?" But they cannot say that after the last Budget. There is plenty of money, "loadsa" money, and we are going to spend it on building council houses.

6.46 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mrs. Marion Roe): As the hon. Member for Bootle (Mr. Roberts) has said, this has been a wide-ranging and interesting debate. Hon. Members have made many points, to which I shall respond. First, however, may I put the debate in the context of the changes that have been taking place in housing.

After the war our housing problems were on a large scale but they were relatively simple. What was needed was a massive programme of slum clearance and a massive programme of new building. It was arguable that, because of the uniform nature and scale of the problem, the house building programme had to be centrally planned and directed both nationally and at local level.

Today circumstances are very different. As my hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow) has already said, nationally there are more houses than households. At regional level it is quite clear that the problems of each

region are very different from one another; that within each region the inner city, the suburbs, the small towns and the rural areas each have different needs. Even within a single locality there is a range of different specialist needs —for example, for the elderly or for single parents.

People's wants have changed, too. Most people want to own their own home. Even if they cannot afford ownership they want a choice. They are fed up with being on the receiving end of a distant and sometimes downright inefficient bureaucracy.

The difference between the Government and the Opposition is perhaps not so much one of ideology but that the Government have recognised that different circumstances require different solutions, while the Opposition, stuck in the groove like some cracked 78 record, keep repeating their worn-out formulae, unwilling to admit that the world has left them behind.

The Opposition motion invites us to "restore a planned programme" and

"to create. . . an effective system of regulation."

The language is revealing. Plans, programmes, regulations are apparently the panacea. But what are plans, programmes or regulations if they are not decisions that affect our lives taken by someone else: by Whitehall, or by the town hall?

People would never accept for a moment that the quantity or type of food they eat or the clothes that they wear should be planned or programmed by their town hall, and they do not want to be dependent on them for their homes. Even more important, perhaps, the centralised approach to meeting housing needs can never work when those needs vary so much. Especially it will not work when our people are—and rightly so—so independent minded. It is no accident that many local authorities face severe housing management problems. These are the inevitable consequences of an approach that is no longer fitted to today's circumstances.

Mr. Boateng *rose*——

Mrs. Roe: The Government's policy is based on offering people choice: letting them decide what they want. What most people want is to buy their own homes.

Mr. Boateng *rose*——

Mrs. Roe: Since 1979, 4 million people have bought a home for the first time, including 1·1 million who were formerly council tenants. The number of home owners has risen by a quarter, and private sector house building has reached the highest level for 14 years.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hyndburn (Mr. Hargreaves) asked about proposals for improvement grants. As I am sure he knows, a consultation paper was issued on 5 November. We shall bring forward legislation as soon as we can.

The hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) and my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Staffordshire (Mr. Heddle) spoke about the rise in house prices. However, more people are able to buy their own homes. In 1979 there were 390,000 first-time buyers; last year there were 620,000. Total housing output continued to rise by 8 per cent. in 1987 to a total which is higher than in 1979. I was most interested by the suggestion of my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Staffordshire for speeding up house purchase and reducing gazumping. I shall certainly examine his suggestion.

There is of course a minority who do not want, or who cannot afford, owner-occupation. It is tenants who in the long run have suffered most from decades of excessive regulation and a centralised, programmed approach to housing provision. In practice, the tenant has had to accept whatever accommodation and whatever level of service his monopolist local authority landlord offers.

We want tenants to have a real choice. We need to break down the local authority monopoly and encourage private investment in the rented sector, creating competition between landlords so that landlords have to respond to tenants' needs rather than the other way round. To those who are already tenants of local authorities, and who cannot buy their home under the right to buy, we want to offer the possibility of choosing a new landlord.

The hon. Member for Knowsley, North (Mr. Howarth) suggested that tenants might want to stay with local authority landlords. That is their choice, but the hon. Gentleman should remember that a National Consumer Council survey has shown that more than one fifth of tenants would prefer a new social landlord. Even if they decide not to make that choice, we are putting in tenants' hands a power which they can use to persuade their local authority to improve their level of service, a power that will even up the unequal contest between the tenant and a distant or uncaring management.

Several hon. Members have referred to the private rented sector. Excessive regulation of the private rented sector has stifled investment. In 1938 the private rented sector accounted for 57 per cent. of the stock; now it accounts for only 8 per cent. In 1981 17 per cent. of the private rented stock was in serious disrepair.

Mr. George Howarth *rose*——

Mrs. Roe: We must encourage new investment. The business expansion scheme will stimulate investment by offering tax relief. Local authorities are being given a power to give subsidy where it is needed. Those measures will provide a major incentive to the investment that is needed to improve the housing conditions of those who rent.

I am glad that the hon. Member for Hammersmith welcomes our policy of supporting housing associations. Housing associations have a record of flexibility and responsiveness to tenants' needs. They are much better adapted to cope with the enormous variety of housing needs that we now face. The Government intend to build on that success. We are bringing in more private investment and increasing public sector support through the Housing Corporation.

Mr. George Howarth *rose*——

Mrs. Roe: The Housing Corporation's investment programme has been increased to £737 million in the current year and will increase further to £850 million by 1990-91. The private investment which is already coming in will be over and above that.

The increase in the Housing Corporation programme was part of a general increase in the resources made available for housing investment. The housing capital programme this year was increased to £3,827 million; up 10 per cent. on earlier plans and £140 million above outturn for 1987-88.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Unless the hon. Lady gives way—*[Interruption.]* She does not have to give way.

Mrs. Roe: I agreed to curb my comments to 15 minutes so that I could respond to hon. Members' points without giving way.

Local authorities continue to account for the bulk of expenditure. They continue to account for a very significant proportion of tenancies. It is vital, therefore, that local authorities offer a good service to their tenants.

The first priority is to improve the state of the stock and to bring back into use vacant dwellings. There is no lack of resources for repair and improvement of the local authority stock. Plans for the current year allow for capital expenditure of £1,770 million, an increase of 11 per cent. over last year's outturn. Total expenditure on repair and maintenance is nearly £3 billion—more in real terms than in 1979-80 even though the stock is smaller. More important perhaps is the fact that the money is used effectively, and that improvements to the fabric are matched by improvements in management.

Run-down estates get special attention and extra resources through the Estate Action schemes. Projects involve renovation of the fabric, the bringing in of private investment, and the establishment of responsive locally based management. Since 1985 schemes have been supported with £120 million of allocations, benefiting 110,000 homes and 300,000 tenants. Expenditure this year will almost double to £140 million.

My hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne and other hon. Members referred to the numbers of homeless, and to local authorities' use of bed-and-breakfast accommodation. It really is extraordinary that some authorities cannot manage without extensive use of bed-and-breakfast—even though they have properties empty and idle—particularly as other authorities with just as many homeless to care for do manage without bed-and-breakfast.

Local authorities have more than 112,000 empty properties; 28,000, or 25 per cent., have been empty for more than a year. That is nearly three times the number of families in bed-and-breakfast. In London, which accounts for over 80 per cent. of those in bed-and-breakfast, local authorities have nearly five times as many empty properties as there are families in bed-and-breakfast.

Local authorities have unlimited access to their capital receipts to bring empties back into use. But not every authority uses its receipts. For example, Labour-controlled Camden and Hammersmith and Fulham had at 1 April 1987 over £60 million in accumulated receipts and 600 households in bed-and-breakfast while 150 and 250 council dwellings respectively awaited major repairs. Some authorities that could raise more receipts through right to buy and use them to bring empties back into use have been dragging their feet.

There are 20 authorities with 4 per cent. or more of their stock empty. Twenty authorities with the most vacancies have more than 50,000 empty dwellings between them. In London, Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Newham, Southwark, Islington and Lewisham have between them some 13,800 empty homes. Some authorities re-let their dwellings in three to four weeks, but it takes Southwark an average of 24 weeks. That reduces the number of dwellings available by 1,800—enough to house all its homeless. I repeat that the Audit Commission estimated that if the national average re-let preiod could be reduced by just two and a half weeks an additional 20,000 empty dwellings could be occupied.

The Opposition motion protests at the numbers of homeless and the number in bed-and-breakfast accommodation and calls for an increasing supply of low-cost housing. I share their concerns. The difference between us is this. The Opposition talk of their concern while their own authorities keep houses empty for months or even years and fail to collect the rents, fail to use receipts to carry our repairs and fail to deliver a decent service to those whom they claim to represent. Faced with the challenge of the changing pattern of housing needs, the Opposition can think of little better than to return to the formulae of the 1950s.

The Government have faced up to the challenge of the 1980s and the 1990s. We have come forward with a programme of radical reform. Our approach is based on giving people greater freedom to make their own choice, on creating diversity in the housing market and competition between landlords and on breaking down remote, insensitive, and inefficient local authority monopolies.

The Opposition used to condemn the idea of giving tenants the right to buy their own homes. They do not do so now. It is far too popular. Perhaps in time they will come to realise that those tenants who cannot afford to buy still want a choice and a better service. They want less politicking and more efficiency. They do not want to be dependent on a municipal monopoly. The Opposition's approach is based on the town hall deciding what housing people should have. The Government's approach is based on giving people the freedom to make their own choice.

Question put, That the original words stand part of the Question:—

The House divided: Ayes 204, Noes 331.

Division No. 316] **[7 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*

Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Galbraith, Sam
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Ken Eastham.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan

Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

Question accordingly negatived.

Question put, That the proposed words be there added:—

The House divided: Ayes 332, Noes 202.

Division No. 317] **[7.13 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth

Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Galbraith, Sam
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Lambie, David
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John

McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Ken Eastham.

Question accordingly agreed to.

MR. SPEAKER *forthwith declared the main Question, as amended, to be agreed to.*

Resolved,

'That this House congratulates the Government on the success of its home ownership policies, enabling more people than ever before to own their own homes; notes with satisfaction the Government's proposals in the Housing Bill to encourage private renting, to expand the role of housing associations, to give council tenants the right to seek a new landlord of their choice, and to establish Housing Action Trusts to improve conditions for tenants in some of the worst council estates; deplores the incompetence displayed by some Labour housing authorities who have on the one hand condemned homeless people to bed and breakfast while they have empty council property, and on the other failed to deal with delays for existing tenants who seek to exercise their right to buy; urges the Government to press ahead with its radical reforms of the rented sector of housing in the interests both of present tenants and the homeless, and to continue to maintain a proper balance between the needs of development and the protection of the environment; and congratulates it on extending and maintaining the protection afforded by green belts round major cities.'.

Orders of the Day

Firearms (Amendment) Bill

Order for consideration, as amended (in the Standing Committee), read.

7.25 pm

Mr. Speaker: I have selected the recommittal motion in the name of the hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare (Mr. Wiggin). I remind the House that it is subject to the provisions of Standing Order No. 72, by which the proposer of the motion may speak for 10 minutes with a similar limit for the reply.

Mr. Jerry Wiggin (Weston-super-Mare): I beg to move,

That the Bill be recommitted to the former committee.

I am grateful to you, Mr. Speaker, for selecting this motion in somewhat unusual circumstances and I appreciate that you will be operating under the usual ten-minute Bill procedure.

It is reasonable to ask why the Government brought the Bill before the House for consideration in the first place. Of course, we all understand that after the disastrous events at Hungerford there was an instant lobby that demanded that the Government do something. However, I have to tell the House that if that something is this Bill, the events at Hungerford could still have taken place because there is no legislation that can legislate against a madman. A madman can kill with whatever weapon he chooses.

There is nothing in the Bill that will reduce crime. The Government are quite wrong in simply wishing to reduce the number of firearms by seeking out a section of the community for no good reason. Self-loading rifles and pump-action shotguns are the main objects of the legislation. The interesting thing about rifles is that they are scarcely ever used in crime. In 1976, the last year for which figures are available, in nearly 10,000 crimes involving firearms, about half were with air weapons and only 53 were with rifles—0·6 per cent. The police acknowledge that pump-action shotguns are the least useful weapon to take if one is bent on criminal assault. They are least useful because they are bulky, heavy and difficult to saw off.

I sympathise with the Government's wish to increase the security of weapons and to understand more about the ownership and disposition of weapons. However, that could have been done by administrative procedure. Instead, we have this Bill which was hastily drawn up, written in a few minutes and written very badly. Before the Committee stage, the proposal was that a cardboard tube, which I produced in Committee, was an item that would from thenceforth require a firearms certificate because it was a mortar. The advisers to the Home Office had forgotten about fireworks. That is one example of many.

I shall come to the substantive part of my argument in moving the motion. There are no fewer than 36 groups of amendments on the Order Paper.

Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop (Tiverton): Groups.

Mr. Wiggin: Yes, as my hon. Friend the Member for Tiverton (Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop) said, there are 36 groups. By anybody's interpretation, the Bill is being rewritten and

that will happen unless the House votes for my motion. Surely it is not right to rewrite a Bill on Report; that should be done in Committee.

My most important reason for seeking the support of the House was last week's inclusion, for the first time in all the months that we have been debating the Bill, of Northern Ireland. It cannot be constitutionally right for a Bill to pass Second Reading and Committee without including Northern Ireland and then, at the eleventh hour, to be changed to include it. As we constantly debate the unity of the United Kingdom, that was a grave error by the Government, and it is another good reason to send the Bill back to Committee.

We believe that my hon. Friend the Minister gave us several commitments that the Government are refusing to honour. The exclusion of self-loading rifles with integral magazines was given in all but name. My hon. Friend used weasel words, but he has now gone back on that commitment.

The one thing in the Bill that those of us who are interested in the subject believed was a step forward was the statutory committee to advise the Government so that we should not get into this sort of mess again. The lack of expertise in firearms in the Home Office is only too apparent. On Friday morning the Government tabled a series of amendments to neuter that statutory committee and make it a puppet of the Home Secretary—and effectively useless.

I see no reason to take the full 10 minutes that you have kindly allowed me, Mr. Speaker. My final and most overpowering argument is that if the House votes for this motion everyone should be having their dinners in their homes before 8 pm. If it does not, 36 groups of amendments will have to be gone over carefully. It is just conceivable that in the early hours of the morning some of my hon. Friends may turn a little critical. If they want a night's sleep, I hope that they will support the motion.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hogg): My hon. Friend the Member for Weston-super-Mare (Mr. Wiggin) played his best card last. The only thing in favour of the motion is that it would give us an early night. I cannot commend it on any other ground. Much as I should enjoy serving on another Committee with my hon. Friend to examine this Bill, I do not think the facts justify my asking the House to give me that indulgence.

It is perfectly true that there is a substantial number of amendments on Report, but there is nothing unusual about that. I have always made it plain that the Government would respond to reasonable criticisms, and that is what we have done. With the exception of the amendments related to Northern Ireland, all the substantive amendments reflect exhaustive debate in Committee. Indeed, in most cases they reflect the Committee's conclusions.

The main changes can be summarised as follows. First, we are leaving three-shot self-loading shotguns in clause 2. That matter was extensively canvassed in Committee and in making that concession we responded to the Committee's wish. The second major change relates to the deactivation and conversion of guns, which was also extensively debated in Committee, and these amendments respond to what was said.

Although our movements on compensation do not feature on Report in the form of Government amendments, they were widely debated and are, I think, broadly welcomed by hon. Members.

Other major changes relating to museums were also debated a great deal in Committee, and, without exception, the amendments that we are bringing forward today respond to what hon. Members who served on the Committee wanted us to do.

As for Northern Ireland, most of the powers that have been taken by way of order either accord with existing practice or are of minor impact.

What we have done with the consultative committee is to put in proper form that will be acceptable to the House the intent of my hon. Friends and Opposition Members. We tidied up the provisions about the nomination of its members and provided clear guidance on its remit. We have honoured the intent of hon. Members on the Committee in every respect.

My hon. Friend the Member for Weston-super-Mare has always been candid; he is instinctively opposed to firearms control and believes that this is a bad Bill. He is entitled to those views, although I disagree with both. But the motion that he so lucidly and briefly introduced was more a reflection of his hostility to the concept of firearms control and to the Bill than of his desire to spend another few months in Committee with me. I do not criticise him for that—he is entitled to his views—but hon. Members listening to the debate need to be clear about the reasons that lie behind the motion.

Question put:—

The House divided: Ayes 206, Noes 254.

Division No 318] **[7.36 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Benyon, W.
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boateng, Paul
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Buchan, Norman
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Colvin, Michael
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Corbett, Robin
Cousins, Jim
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek

Foulkes, George
Galbraith, Sam
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Grylls, Michael
Hardy, Peter
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Holt, Richard
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kennedy, Charles
Lambie, David
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rost, Peter
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wiggin, Jerry
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Sir Hector Monro and
Mr. Robert Hicks.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowis, John
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Staml'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dicks, Terry
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith

Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Walden, George
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Stephen Dorrell.

Question accordingly negatived.

Bill, as amended (in the Standing Committee), considered.

Mr. William Ross (Londonderry, East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You will recall that, in moving his motion, the hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare (Mr. Wiggin) referred to Northern Ireland. May I point out that in Committee I was prevented from discussing the effect that the Bill would have on Northern Ireland because there was no reference to it in the Bill? The House should be aware of that. What guidance can the House be given about whether Northern Ireland may be fully discussed?

Mr. Speaker: The matter has been resolved by the House and we must now proceed. If the hon. Gentleman catches the eye of the occupant of the Chair, he will be able to deploy his case then.

New Clause 2

DE-ACTIVATED WEAPONS

'For the purposes of the principal Act and this Act it shall be presumed, unless the contrary is shown, that a firearm has been rendered incapable of discharging any shot, bullet or other missile, and has consequently ceased to be a firearm within the meaning of those Acts, if—

(a) it bears a mark which has been approved by the Secretary of State for denoting that fact and which has been made either by one of the two companies mentioned in section 58(1) of the principal Act or by such other person as may be approved by the Secretary of State for the purposes of this section; and

(b) that company or person has certified in writing that work has been carried out on the firearm in a manner approved by the Secretary of State for rendering it incapable of discharging any shot, bullet or other missile.'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider Government new clause 3—*Conversion not to affect classification*—

'(1) Any weapon which has at any time (whether before or after the passing of this Act) been a weapon of a kind described in section 5(1) of the principal Act as amended by or under section 1 above shall be treated as a prohibited weapon notwithstanding anything done for the purpose of converting it into a weapon of a different kind.

(2) Any weapon which—

(a) has at any time since the coming into force of section 2 above been a weapon to which section 1 of the principal Act applies; or

(b) would at any previous time have been such a weapon if those sections had then been in force,

shall, if it has, or at any time has had, a barrel less than 24 inches in length, be treated as a weapon to which section 1 of the principal Act applies notwithstanding anything done for the purpose of converting it into a shot gun or an air weapon.'.

and amendment (a) to the new clause, leave out subsection (2).

Mr. Hogg: The two new clauses before the House respond to the criticism of clause 7 of the Bill as it was originally formulated and which was defeated in Committee. The two new clauses deal with deactivation and conversion. I shall deal first with deactivation. It is dealt with in new clause 2, which permits it. Deactivated weapons will be outside the scope of the firearms legislation, provided that the work of deactivation has been carried out in accordance with a specification approved by my right hon. Friend and is certifed by the proof house or houses as having been deactivated in an approved manner.

The original proposal about conversion in clause 7 was that a weapon always retained its original status. Hon. Members on the Committee suggested that that proposition went too far and they deleted clause 7 from the Bill. On reflection, we feel that there was justification in that criticism, although I suggest to the House that the original proposal should still apply to section 5 guns. Thus fully automatic guns, and if the House so decides self-loading rifles, will always retain that status. So will section 1 guns having a barrel length of less than 24 in. Subject to that, the Bill allows conversions of section 1 guns downwards to airguns and shotguns. The most obvious example is a rifle that has been smooth-bored so that it takes a shotgun cartridge. The purpose of new clause 3 is to permit that downwards conversion.

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): We welcome the new clause about deactivisation, which we debated at some length in Committee. However, the Minister will have to go a little further in explaining what he is doing. The Minister has been fair enough in what he has said so far, but we have to go into the issue of clarification about the proof houses and the letter that they will have to provide to say that the weapon has been deactivated.

As we all know, there are only two proof houses in Britain—one in Birmingham and one in London. Given all the things that they will have to do if the Bill is approved, they will be grossly overworked. They are geared not to do

[Sir Hector Monro]

this sort of work but to do what they do better than any other proof house in the world—test guns. They are not used to writing out certificates and, if necessary, writing on the weapons something to the effect that they have been deactivated.

Can the Minister tell us who else will be allowed to carry out this work? Which gunsmiths or dealers will be allowed to carry it out? The skill and knowledge of our gunsmiths are envied throughout the world and it should not be too difficult for the Minister to arrange through the trade for many gun shops throughout the country to be available to do this work.

I hope that the Minister will bear in mind the geographical issue. Birmingham is as far north as the proof houses go and I should like to see dealers in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Inverness appointed to carry out the work because they could do it just as effectively as anyone in the south. It could also be carried out in the north of England, in Newcastle and perhaps in Carlisle. Nothing about this is in the Bill or has been spelt out by the Minister who has not given us anything like sufficient information that would enable us to give the Bill the wholesome welcome that we wish to give it.

New clause 3 deals with conversion. I hope that the Minister will explain subsection (2). I have not yet found anybody interested in this Bill who has been able to elucidate what on earth it means. The people to whom I have spoken are highly skilled and knowledgeable members of the British Field Sports Society. They all ask what on earth the Minister is trying to say in subsection (2).

The Minister has failed to deal with the conversion of rifles into other forms of weapons, such as rook rifles and .410 shotguns, and old elephant guns into shotguns. We discussed those matters in great detail in Committee. The Minister has never given an explanation about why one should not do that. He seems to think that some crook entering my house to pinch a rook rifle that has been converted to a ·410 shotgun and is therefore of smooth bore will take it to some highly skilled gunsmith to have it rifled, re-barrelled. It beggars description that that will happen. What is wrong with a rook rifle made into a ·410? It will be a smooth bore ·410 for the rest of its life. I hope that someone will give the Minister the answer to that question.

Mr. Michael Colvin (Romsey and Waterside) *rose*——

Mr. Douglas Hogg: My hon. Friend is making a mistake.

Sir Hector Monro: I was giving way to to my hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside (Mr. Colvin).

Mr. Colvin: Can my hon. Friend quote to the House any instance where a rifle converted to a shotgun has been converted back to a rifle?

Sir Hector Monro: No, I cannot, but perhaps the Minister can. Many experts have told me firmly that no converted weapon of the sort that we are talking about has ever been used in crime.

Mr. Hogg: My hon. Friend may be under some misapprehension. The proposition that we originally put forward was that a gun retained its original classification. As I explained when I introduced the new clauses, we adhered to that proposition for section 5 guns. I also said that where a section 1 rifle has been smooth-bored to make it a shotgun it has been treated as a shotgun under the proposals and not as a rifle. My hon. Friend is talking about a rifle that has been turned into a .410. He can do that because the weapon is then treated as a shotgun held under section 2 and not under section 1.

Sir Hector Monro: I am grateful for that explanation. The matter mystifies everybody else in the gun trade and the Minister must be the only chap who understands the Bill. His explanation is a step forward.

I have already spoken about the point raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside about whether a converted weapon has ever been used in crime. I have not heard of any such cases, but I look forward to the Ministers's reply when perhaps he can tell us whether such a crime has taken place. The Minister has gone too far and has been over-restrictive about conversion. My hon. Friends in Committee raised other matters about conversions and no doubt they will raise other points in this debate.

Is the Minister clear in his own mind about where we stand about sleeving guns, re-barrelling and re-sleeving them, because that is also important? We want to know whether that will be entirely in order in future. There was certainly doubt about it in Committee and it has not been elucidated in the new clauses. As I have said, I welcome the minor step about deactivation but the Minister is still going too far on conversion.

8 pm

Mr. Robin Corbett (Birmingham, Erdington): One of the hallmarks, or perhaps one of the proofs, of the Bill is the sloppiness with which it has been drafted. Because of the earlier vote, we shall now have to discuss 177 amendments and new clauses, 63 of which have been tabled by the Government—a fine example of making legislation on the hoof. This is not the best way to do it, especially with such an important subject. These new clauses illustrate this point.

Yet again we are being invited to give the Secretary of State a blank cheque. I doubt whether the details that lie behind new clause 2 exist on paper. They are probably a thought in the head of somebody in that grey area of the Home Office. Perhaps the Minister will tell us something about these details because he did not do so when he moved the new clause. Over what period is this expected to happen? Is it unlimited? Is it over a fortnight, six months, a year, three years, six years, 10 years, or as quickly as possible?

What kind of mark is envisaged? Is it to be a red dot, a yellow dot or a blue dot? What is to be its size? Is it to be a scoring on the barrel? Clearly, it must be something that cannot easily be removed if this is to be of any value with either deactivated or converted guns. This is a serious point, and I am not treating it lightly. What discussions has the Minister, or his officials, had about the kind of mark that will be permanently attached to the weapons? Have the fine proof houses in Birmingham and London been consulted? Has there been consultation about the adhesion or the engraving of the mark and of the effect

that that may have on valuable weapons? I am thinking in particular of antique, vintage weapons or classic weapons that have a high market value.

The hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) asked the Minister who he has in mind to carry out the work, and on what basis. The geography is important. Pleased as I am to see more work going to the Birmingham proof house, it will make problems if only proof houses are used. If, as I suspect, some gunsmiths will be allowed to put these marks on the weapons, on what basis will they be selected? Is it every gunsmith who applies, one per county, or two per county? These are the factors about which we need to know.

What about the cost of the exercise? Has anybody taken advice on the likely charges that either the proof houses or the authorised gun dealers or gunsmiths will impose for carrying out this work? Will there be a difference in the level of charges between the proof houses and the gunsmiths? Has anybody thought about this? These are the questions that the holders of these weapons not just want answered but have a right to have answered. These points could well have been settled in Committee if the Minister had not been so bone-headed as to oppose the earlier motion for recommittal.

Unless the Minister is going to say that every gunsmith in the kingdom will be able to apply to carry out this work of deactivating and converting weapons, there will be a great deal of unfairness because choices will have to be made. I do not object if we say to every gunsmith, "If you want to do it, spend 13p or 18p on a stamp and we will grant the necessary authorisation." I suspect that it will not be like that. Instead, qualifications will be laid down. I hope that, before we get much further in the debate on the new clause, the Minister will give us, and those beyond the walls of the House, the answer to these questions.

I understand that Bills are drafted in this way, but new clause 2(b) is confusing. It says:

"that company or person has certified in writing that work has been carried out on the firearm in a manner approved by the Secretary of State for rendering it incapable of discharging any shot, bullet or other missile."

I am not sure what

"in a manner approved by the Secretary of State"

means. Does it mean that the mark put on the weapon will be approved by the Secretary of State; or—this is another legitimate reading of these words—that it has to be put on, let alone that it is a proof authorised by the Secretary of State, in a manner of which the Secretary of State approves?

This is an important issue. It would be for the convenience of the House if the Minister had been more forthcoming at the start of the debate on these new clauses and told us in a little more detail what they propose. I hope that he will now do so.

Mr. Wiggin: I say, first, to my hon. Friend the Minister —in the hope that he is not leaving the Chamber—that, despite his accusation, I am not opposed to all firearms legislation. I am opposed to legislating against the innocent private legitimate owner of firearms in the completely misplaced notion that in some way that will prevent criminal activity. My hon. Friend has consistently refused to answer that point, because he has no answer to it. That is why I am opposed to the legislation. I would support any part of it that I could fnd useful, but I can find little or no part of it that is useful, and this has promoted my hostility to the Bill.

I find it distressing that, the Committee having removed a clause from the Bill, the Government are seeking to put it back again, although I suppose that that is predictable. If someone has a ·410 that has been made from an old rifle —there are a considerable number of such weapons—on the passing of this legislation that person will be committing an offence. This is a retrospective proposal, and I have always voted against retrospective legislation. In this instance, innocent people who have shotgun certificates will be required to get a firearms certificate at a considerable cost.

Mr. Ron Davies (Caerphilly): On Second Reading, which we both opposed, the hon. Gentleman and I made common cause on the grounds that the Government had advocated this legislation on the basis that it would be an adequate response to the events at Hungerford. The hon. Member served on the Committee that considered the Bill, and I know that he agreed with the points made by those of us who had reservations about it.

If these new clauses had been in force, would they have prevented any of the events that led to Hungerford? If they were accepted now, would they prevent events such as those that led to Hungerford, or would they improve the existing legislation on firearms in such a way as to prevent the illegal use of firearms in the pursuit of crime?

Mr. Wiggin: As I said in my speech when I proposed the motion to recommit the Bill, I do not believe that anything in the Bill would have prevented Hungerford. Nor do I believe that the Government can legislate about anything that could have prevented Hungerford. A mad man can, and sadly may in the future, kill with whatever weapons he happens to have at his disposal. The misplaced notion that reducing the number of legally held weapons will prevent such an incident is ridiculous.

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North): Would the hon. Gentleman care to speculate on the proposition that had the existing legislation been properly applied Hungerford would not have happened?

Mr. Wiggin: The hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross) has recently tabled a series of interesting questions. The spokesman for the Thames Valley police made a slip the other day when it was acknowledged that there may have been some modest administrative error in the issue of Ryan's certificate. I support those who believe that the Government should have had a full-scale inquiry into that matter. The Government's persistent refusal on the ground that there is nothing to inquire into does not give the public the confidence that the Government tell us they are trying to imbue in the public, and for which purpose they have introduced this legislation.

Mr. Frank Cook: I want to be clear about this, and I do not want there to be any misunderstanding. Is the hon. Gentleman saying that if the existing legislation had been applied the events at Hungerford should not have been possible?

Mr. Wiggin: Every item of evidence points to that effect, but other hon. Members may be better informed than me and may wish to elucidate that matter. I do not want the hon. Gentleman to put words into my mouth.

It was a mistake not to have had a fuller inquiry into the precise bureaucratic procedures that preceded the issuing of that certificate. On the other hand, it is worth bearing

[Mr. Wiggin]

in mind that Ryan also possessed some unlicensed firearms and therefore even if the procedures had been complied with he would still have been in possession of weapons. I am not certain whether it is wise to go down that road, certainly not in respect of these measures, and I have no doubt that you, Madam Deputy Speaker, will rule me out of order if I do so.

I query the application of retrospective legislation to this important issue, and I question the great crime wave that is supposedly associated with converted weapons. I do not believe that it exists. It is yet another example of the petty, spiteful attitude towards all firearms of those who advise my hon. Friend the Minister.

Sir Eldon Griffiths (Bury St. Edmunds): I wish to ask my hon. Friend the Minister to comment on four points. First, an issue has come to light that I had not realised might arise under the proposal. There is some doubt as to whether guns that have been resleeved or rebarrelled would still have protection. The Minister should deal with that point and I wish to quote to him some advice that I have received from a former colleague, Fred Silvester, who has been assiduous in representing to the Committee the interests of the gun trade. He says:

"There is the problem of sleeving. The Home Office keeps saying they understand the point, but they do nothing about it."

He goes on to say:

"Sleeving involves removing the barrel and replacing it with another."

He is not entirely right. My gun has been redone, and that simply involved taking out a piece and replacing it. However, he goes on to say:

"The man who does this work commits no offence because he is given special protection by section 4 of the 1968 Act, and by clause 6 of the Bill. New clause 3, however, still leaves the gun itself unprotected. If it is cut down below 24 inches, it remains in section 1"——

that is entirely right—

"and fixing the new barrel to it makes no difference."

My hon. Friend the Minister should elucidate that point as a simple issue of practicality.

My second point echoes that raised by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett). I should like to know exactly what kind of mark will be required to be placed upon firearms to prove that they have been rendered inoperable. It is important for the police—the House knows of my interest, which will remain for some time to come—to know what sort of mark will be used, and their advice should be taken because they will have to identify the mark and take action accordingly.

My third point arises from the fact that other persons, besides proof houses, will be able to carry out such work. That is entirely right. There are only two proof houses, and it would be extremely onerous to expect people throughout the country to use only those two proof houses. There are plenty of satisfactory craftsmen who can do the job. For example, a man in my constituency, who acts as the police armourer, is capable of doing that job without relying on the excellent work done in Birmingham. However, it is important to the police, to the trade and to all those who will be required to have their firearms dealt with in this way to know which local craftsmen will be allowed to do the job and on what basis.

8.15 pm

That brings me to my fourth point—how the Government intend to authenticate the armourers who will be permitted to perform the deactivations. What sort of skills must they have? How is their probity to be measured? A form of qualifying certificate will have to be issued. It is important, on Report, that the Government are seen to have thought these matters through and to have explained them carefully to the House before we accept the measure.

Mr. William Ross: If the Bill had contained a reference to Northern Ireland when it went into Committee, the consideration that we gave to it would have been somewhat different. In those circumstances, and in view of the terrorist situation in Northern Ireland, the effect of the Bill on the supply of weapons to terrorists would have been carefully considered. There will now have to be references to Northern Ireland in every part of the Bill because, despite the amendments, the ramifications will go much further.

A number of questions relating to the two new clauses have not been fully considered. I wish to point out to the Minister that we do not have a proof house in Northern Ireland. If the guns, or weapons of whatever kind, have to be brought across to Britain for the work to be carried out, the cost will be greatly increased. If we then have to look for gunsmiths to do the work in Northern Ireland and the work has to be done in a rush, rather too many weapons will be in the hands of individual gunsmiths for at least some time and no one wishes that to happen.

Above all, we shall have the problem of ·410 conversions. For many years, it was possible to buy the old ·303 ex-Army rifle, converted to a ·410 bolt action. There are many such weapons throughout the United Kingdom. Although it is not the most popular sporting weapon, there are many ·410s and converted ·410s lying around in farms all over the country. As I understand it, those weapons are caught by the legislation, as any ex-bullet firing weapons will be.

It is my understanding—I have consulted people who know and give evidence in court cases about such matters—that the weapon normally used by a criminal is a clapped-out sawn-off shotgun, if only for the good reason that a good quality shotgun is worth far more on the black market as a shotgun than it would ever be to a criminal. If a weapon looks capable of being fired, it is sufficient for the criminal's purposes.

However, there is a real problem when one considers new clause 2(b), which relates to the expertise available to the Home Secretary. I have not been as impressed by that expertise as I would like to be, because it appears to fall short of what is required for the purposes of the Bill, even before it was amended. If the Home Office is to advise on what sort of work must be carried out, that advice will have to be based on detailed knowledge of the most intricate type of weapons. Has the Home Office such a person on its staff? I believe that it has not, and, therefore, I wonder where it will go for that information and advice and what it will cost.

We shall be dealing with hundreds of different types of weapons, not one, and many of them will be mechanically different from others. The methods of deactivation that apply in some instances will not apply in others. We shall reach the stage when there will be one-off operations. I do not understand how this system will be carried through

into practical effect, unless the Minister is prepared to allow the gunsmith to determine whether the work that he has carried out is sufficient. If the police decide subsequently that the work is not sufficient, who will end up in court—the gun owner or the chap who carried out the work?

The Government are entering an area that they would have been well advised to avoid. No evidence was produced on Second Reading or in Committee—nor will there be any such evidence on Report—that the weapons that we are discussing pose a serious problem in criminal activity. Anyone who knows anything about the subject is aware of that.

Mr. Peter Griffiths (Portsmouth, North): I think that we all listen to what the hon. Gentleman has to say on these matters with considerable respect. Does he agree that converted weapons are often of relatively low resale value? If the cost of carrying out the identification marking is high, there is a greater chance that it will not be acceptable to the gun-owning public. That means that there will be more evasion in this instance than with more expensive and valuable weapons.

Mr. Ross: That is correct. I am glad that the hon. Gentleman has picked up so early in our deliberations this evening an issue to which we shall probably return on more than one occasion. He has raised a matter of concern to those who know about these matters, and it is a concern that I share.

It is probable that the Government will label the hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare (Mr. Wiggin) and myself as members of the pro-gun lobby. I admit that I shoot. I do not shoot much, however, because I do not have a lot of time in which to do it after attending this place. If there is an hon. Member who is concerned about the safety of the general public in terms of firearms, it must be me. I have been to the funerals of many who have died as a result of the misuse of firearms. I do not know exactly how many I have represented in the county of Londonderry who have died as a result of terrorism, but I made a rough count some weeks ago and the total came to about 350. No matter what is said in the House or alleged in the media, I hope that I shall not be accused of being unreasonably or madly pro-gun.

I know what I am talking about. I know as much about firearms and their use by terrorists and criminals as any man. I cannot see much good in this part of the Bill and I see very little that is good in the Bill as it has been drafted and presented to the House.

Some of those who considered the Bill in Committee appeared to me to be anti-gun, to put it mildly. They were mainly Opposition hon. Members. Slowly but surely they allowed themselves to be convinced by the force of the arguments that were advanced and to be influenced by the Government's failure adequately to respond to them. They came to understand that what I and others were arguing was based on a solid foundation. If the Government had acknowledged that there was a problem and had agreed that they should return next year with a better organised, better presented and better looking Bill, we should not have the mess of amendments that are set out before us. If the Government had adopted that approach initially, they would not have had to live through such a difficult Second Reading and Committee stage.

The Government must know that this is not a good Bill. Unfortunately, they are committed to it. There is nothing worse than for a Government to proceed with a measure that they know in their heart and mind is inherently bad and will bring no good purpose to the House.

Mr. Michael Colvin (Romsey and Waterside): I should like to question the Under-Secretary of State about imported deactivated weapons, which have not been referred to so far. Would other countries with a suitably high and effective standard of deactivation be allowed to send such weapons here? Could our marks, which we have been asking my hon. Friend to say more about, be readily recognised by other countries, and would their marks be recognised in this country? We are not the only country with firearms legislation.

Perhaps my hon. Friend will comment on the effect of the Bill in terms of 1992. Only last week, I received from the Commission of the European Communities a copy of its proposal for a Council directive on the control, acquisition and possession of weapons. It is premature for this House to be debating now the amendment of our firearms legislation when the European Community is about to make its own proposals. Perhaps my hon. Friend would like to comment on the Commission directive, dated 28 July, and say what will happen on 1 January 1993 if harmonisation in Europe is achieved on that date. What will happen then to deactivated weapons?

Mr. William Ross: The hon. Gentleman will be aware that in some European countries it is possible legally to own two or three-inch mortars, for example. This was referred to briefly in Committee, and the Minister said something to the effect that good care would be taken to protect British interests. I did not hear him expand upon that to any extent in terms of harmonisation.

Mr. Colvin: I do not want to digress too far on this subject. The point that I am making is that I think it is quite wrong for the House to pass the Bill without considering the impact of harmonisation. That is why I put my question to the Minister at an early stage. I think that his answer would help to clarify our minds on what follows.

Mr. Menzies Campbell (Fife, North-East): I support the argument advanced from the Opposition Front Bench by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett) on the inherent ambiguity in paragraph (b). The precise meaning of the paragraph is far from clear. It is for the Minister to explain precisely what interpretation should be placed upon it. One cannot help feeling that this is yet another example of a rather hasty reaction to the unhappy events of last summer. First, there was the hasty production of a White Paper, which was followed by the hasty production of the Bill. I think that it is fair to say that the Bill has had hardly a friend in the House as it has proceeded through its various stages.

Secondly, it is obviously necessary that some consideration be given to ensuring that the persons who may be approved, in addition to the two proof houses, are gunsmiths located throughout the United Kingdom. It would be especially onerous, for example, if someone living in the far north of Scotland were unable to take a weapon to Inverness, Aberdeen or somewhere of that

[Mr. Menzies Campbell]

description to have the necessary work done to it, and instead had to ensure that the weapon was sent either to Birmingham or London.

I hope that the Minister will find it possible to respond to the invitation to provide more detail on precisely what sort of person the Secretary of State has in mind and the geographical distribution that he will be prepared to approve.

8.30 pm

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Deactivation is the subject of new clause 2. It is perhaps necessary to distinguish the two stages. There is the work of deactivation, which is done by a gunsmith. That is the answer to the question posed by my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths). The answer is a gunsmith—any old gunsmith who reckons that he is capable of doing the work of deactivation. That work, before it is effective in taking the gun out of the firearms legislation, must be approved by one of the two proof houses. The proof houses only certify the work: they do not do the work of deactivation.

A number of hon. Members have asked whether we intend to use the reserve power to nominate a number of certifying authorities. The answer is that it depends. The proof houses believe that they are capable of dealing with the volume of likely work. They are anxious to do it. We have no reason to doubt that. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has the reserve power to nominate another certifying person or authority if we find that the proof houses are not capable of doing the work of certification.

Mr. Pat Wall (Bradford, North): How many weapons does the Minister expect to be deactivated and to go to the proof houses? I do not wish to be over-sarcastic, but the Home Office does not have a good record in predicting numbers. The mess with the 120,000 unopened letters at Lunar house, the chaos because of the miscalculation on the issue of new passports, and the large numbers of people on remand in prison who will eventually be released having been found not guilty do not show that the Home Office has a good forecasting record. Has the Home Office thought about how many weapons will have to be dealt with and whether the two proof houses can deal with them?

Mr. Hogg: Deactivated guns have been treated hitherto as falling outside the scope of the firearms legislation. It follows that there is no record of the number of guns that will be affected by the legislation. I cannot, therefore, answer the question. This is one reason why the reserve power has been included to extend the certifying authority to others, if necessary.

Sir Eldon Griffiths: There is the issue that these firearms must be transported to the proof houses. I think that I am right in saying that.

Mr. Hogg *indicated assent.*

Sir Eldon Griffiths: I am glad that my hon. Friend agrees. Does this part of the Bill apply to Northern Ireland? If so, are we to have firearms brought from Northern Ireland to the two proof houses on this side of the water? What happens in the Customs channel when firearms are brought in and taken back to Northern Ireland from this side of the water?

Mr. Hogg: The answer to that specific question is that this part of the Bill does not apply to Northern Ireland.

Mr. William Ross *rose*——

Mr. Hogg: I should like to proceed, if I may.

A number of hon. Members have asked, understandably, about the nature of the mark. The intention is that the proof houses will engrave a view mark on the three major parts of the deactivated weapon. That will be evidence of the fact that the gun has been deactivated and that the work of deactivation has been done to the approved standard.

My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary will have the power to set the necessary standard of work. The hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Campbell) asked about the meaning of paragraph (b). The phrase

"approved by the Secretary of State"

as having been rendered incapable relates to the work which must be done to a standard approved by the Secretary of State.

My hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside (Mr. Colvin) asked about imported guns. If other countries have a system similar to ours, and deactivate weapons and place a mark to signify that fact, that mark will not be accepted in this country. If they wish to import deactivated weapons into this country and wish them to be outside the scope of the firearms legislation, they will have to submit them to the proof houses for approval in the same way as any other person operating within the jurisdiction.

Mr. Colvin: What about the visitor to this country?

Mr. Hogg: If a visitor comes to this country with a deactivated weapon which is not proof marked in the way that I have described, it is caught by the ordinary provisions of the firearms legislation. I should be surprised if my hon. Friend wanted it otherwise. A number of weapons that are sometimes described as deactivated are not in the least deactivated and can readily be used to fire as a lethal weapon. We should set up proper protection for our fellow citizens, and I am sure that my hon. Friend would wish us to do that.

There is apprehension about conversion. That may well be my fault, in which case I apologise. It is true that clause 7 as originally presented to the House on Second Reading and in Committee enshrined within it the proposition that a gun could not by conversion ever change its original categorisation—if it started life as a section 5 gun, it always remained a section 5 gun; if it started life as a section 1 gun, it always remained a section 1 gun, even if work had been done to turn it into a shotgun or airgun. That proposition was criticised, and I understand why, so we qualified the position substantially.

The proposition which we originally brought forward remains now as it always was in respect of section 5 guns —if a gun starts life as a section 5 gun, it will always remain a section 5 gun in the eyes of the law, whatever is done to it. That proposition does not apply in respect of section 1 guns having a barrel length in excess of 24 in. In respect of a section 1 gun, for example a Lee Enfield rifle, which has

been smooth-bored so as to take a ·410 cartridge and thus becomes a shotgun, it is not a section 1 gun any more—it is a shotgun.

The new clause has the effect of allowing people to transform their section 1 rifle into a shotgun if they wish without the necessity of getting any certification to prove it. That does not apply in respect of those guns with a barrel length of less than 24 in. The most obvious and gross examples are pistols which are smooth-bored which can still fire a pistol cartridge but which hitherto were treated as section 2 guns when they should have been treated as section 1 guns.

My hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) expressed some doubt about the meaning of subsection (2) of new clause 3. That deals only with those section 1 guns which have a barrel length of less than 24 in. The character of such a gun cannot be changed by downward conversion into, say, a shotgun or an airgun.

Sir Hector Monro: Will my hon. Friend spell out, chapter and verse, when it is permitted to convert a rifle into a gun capable of taking a ·410 cartridge?

Mr. Hogg: That is the necessary consequence of new clause 3.

New clause 3 prevents only downward conversion of section 5 guns and section 1 guns with a barrel length of less than 24 in. What is not prohibited is lawful and therefore the position is as I stated. If my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries has a Lee Enfield rifle which he wants to turn into a shotgun taking a ·410 cartridge, he can lawfully do that and hold that gun on a section 2 certificate, not a section 1 certificate.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds raised a perfectly proper and interesting point about resleeving. Any gunsmith can lawfully carry out the process of resleeving as a result of section 4(2) of the Firearms Act 1968. On the other hand, if the end result is a gun with a barrel length of less than 24 in.—the process of conversion has produced a short-barrelled shotgun—the law in the Firearms Act 1968 survives, although it has been modified, and that gun will be held on a section 1 certificate, if it is held at all.

I hope that hon. Members will believe that I have tried to address the various points that have been raised. I know that there were complaints, particularly from the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett), that I did not go into immense detail when I opened the debate. If the House agrees, I would like in the debates in which I introduce Government amendments to deal with them in broad terms to begin with and then meet specific points. I believe that that will be for the convenience of the House.

Mr. Corbett: I am grateful for much of what the Minister has said to clarify these matters. However, he did not comment on the likely level of charges. I assume from what he has said that consultations have taken place with the proof houses. That must follow from what he said about the engravings on three separate parts of the weapon. Therefore, the proof houses will have had the opportunity to say how much that would cost. Perhaps the Minister could elaborate on that.

The hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths) raised an important point as to whether, and if so how, the police have been consulted over the marks to ensure that they are readily identifiable.

It follows from what the Minister said that, in his words, any gunsmith can carry out the deactivation work. However, the weapon will then have to go to the proof house for it to authorise that the work has been carried out properly. What happens if and when that weapon arrives at the Birmingham proof house? I must declare an interest and say that I hope that most of the weapons will go to Birmingham rather than elsewhere.

What will happen if the proof house believes that the quality or standard of engraving is inferior and is not satisfied that it has been carried out properly? Will it improve the engraving to the acceptable standard that it is authorised to provide? Will the weapon have to go through the mail or Red Star back to the gunsmith who originally carried out the work? If the work is to be carried out by the proof house, presumably it would have to contact the weapon's owner and state that it is not satisfied and inform the owner that it can re-do the work to the standard which the Secretary of State authorises it to reach, but that will cost the owner a certain sum. It would be for the convenience of the House if the Minister could answer those practical points about the engraving marks.

Mr. William Ross *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Does the hon. Gentleman have the leave of the House to speak again?

Hon. Members: Yes.

Mr. Ross: The Minister alarmed me when he said that this section of the Bill does not apply to Northern Ireland. What are the corresponding provisions for Northern Ireland? I am sure that they exist. With regard to the importation of weapons, will the proof houses have to see each weapon that is imported and deactivated?

8.45 pm

Mr. Douglas Hogg: As my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office is sitting beside me on the Government Front Bench, it would be presumptuous of me to make any comment on Northern Ireland, and I do not propose to do so.

With regard to charges, at present the proof charge is about £3·43. I would not wish to tie the charge down to a particular figure, but I expect that it would be of that order.

With regard to consultation with the police, my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds was right, and I should have responded to him. Of course the police will be consulted about the nature of the mark. In response to the question about the mark raised by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett), he will bear in mind that the mark must be approved by the proof house. In fact, it is the proof house mark.

Sir Eldon Griffiths: It is essential that this matter is absolutely clear. My hon. Friend the Minister said that this part of the Bill does not apply to Northern Ireland. What then is to happen in Northern Ireland?

Mr. Hogg: As you will know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am always a man to duck a question when I can. As my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office is sitting beside me, I will leave that question which relates specifically to Northern Ireland to him.

Mr. Corbett: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Would it be for the convenience of the House to invite the Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office to clear up this matter, because this is of some importance?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It is not for me to invite the Minister to speak.

Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop (Tiverton): Following from the last comments made by my hon. Friend the Minister, will he clarify whom he means by the police when he says that he will consult the police? I hope that he does not mean the Metropolitan police. I do not think that any sporting bird can be found it that area. By the police, I hope that he means the more rural forces such as those in Devon and Cornwall. This is a serious point, because my hon. Friend the Minister has had so much bad advice in the drafting of the Bill that he must disabuse himself of the belief that the monopoly of wisdom and experience reposes in the Metropolitan police. Who does he mean when he says that he will consult the police?

Mr. Hogg: In the first instance at least we would consider the views of the Association of Chief Police Officers, which is the normal channel for consultation in those circumstances. If my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds felt that that was an insufficient consultative process he would let me know and inform me in respect of those whom he has hitherto so admirably represented in this place and elsewhere. We would give his views careful consideration.

Mr. Paul Marland (Gloucestershire, West): Does that not underline the serious need for a statutory committee to advise the Home Office on those matters?

Mr. Hogg: My hon. Friend will be aware that the proposal before the House recommends a statutory consultative committee.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause read a Second time, and added to the Bill.

New Clause 3

CONVERSION NOT TO AFFECT CLASSIFICATION

'(1) Any weapon which has at any time (whether before or after the passing of this Act) been a weapon of a kind described in section 5(1) of the principal Act as amended by or under section 1 above shall be treated as a prohibited weapon notwithstanding anything done for the purpose of converting it into a weapon of a different kind.

(2) Any weapon which—

(a) has at any time since the coming into force of section 2 above been a weapon to which section 1 of the principal Act applies; or

(b) would at any previous time have been such a weapon if those sections had then been in force,

shall, if it has, or at any time has had, a barrel less than 24 inches in length, be treated as a weapon to which section 1 of the principal Act applies notwithstanding anything done for the purpose of converting it into a shot gun or an air weapon.'.—*[Mr. Stanley.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

Mr. Colvin: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Bearing in mind the background of the 1968 Act, there are no copies in the Vote Office. I have the only copy, which I obtained from the Library. I raise that point of order so that my hon. Friends may know where to find it.

New Clause 4

CORRESPONDING PROVISIONS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

'(1) An Order in Council under paragraph 1(1)(b) of Schedule 1 to the Northern Ireland Act 1974 (legislation for Northern Ireland in the interim period) which states that it is made only for purposes corresponding to those of provisions of this Act to which this section applies—

(a) shall not be subject to paragraph 1(4) and (5) of that Schedule (affirmative resolution of both Houses of Parliament); but

(b) shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House.

(2) This section applies to—

(a) section 1(1), (2) and (4);

(b) section 7;

(c) section 8(1), (3) and (6);

(d) section 9;

(e) section 10(5) and (6);

(f) section 17(1);

(g) section 19(1), (2), (4), (5) and (6).'.—*[Mr. Stanley.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Mr. John Stanley): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take the following amendments to the proposed new clause: (a), leave out line 9.

(b), leave out line 10.

(c), leave out line 11.

(d), leave out line 12.

(e), leave out line 13.

(f), leave out line 14.

(g), leave out line 15.

It will also be convenient to take the following: Government amendments Nos. 21 and 22.

Amendment No. 102, in clause 20, page 10, line 38, before 'This', insert

'Except for—

(a) section 1(1), (2) and (4);

(b) section 7;

(c) section 8(1), (3) and (6);

(d) section (9);

(e) section 10(5) and (6);

(f) section 17(1);

(g) section 19(1), (2), (4), (5) and (6);

Mr. Stanley: The House will be aware that, because of the security situation, firearms control in Northern Ireland is extremely tight and it is necessary to take an altogether more restrictive approach to the possession of firearms there than in other parts of the United Kingdom.

Strict controls over the possession of firearms are exercised by the Chief Constable through the discretionary powers given to him under the Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 1981. Those powers are subject to a right of appeal to Ministers. However, we are concerned that the basic statutory provisions in relation to firearms controls in Northern Ireland should remain in line with those for the rest of the United Kingdom. As the changes now being given effect in Great Britain under this Bill would in some areas represent useful minor improvements and refinements of the existing statutory controls in Northern Ireland, we felt that it was right to take advantage of this Bill to make certain corresponding changes to Northern Ireland's legislation.

The purpose of new clause 4 is to provide authority for the making of an Order in Council subject to the negative resolution procedure to apply in Northern Ireland those provisions of the Bill specified in the new clause.

Subsection (1) of the new clause enables the negative resolution rather than the affirmative resolution procedure to be applied to the proposed Northern Ireland Order in Council. It is felt that that is the more appropriate procedure, given the fact that the Order in Council must be limited to the provisions of new clause 4 and that the House will have had an opportunity to consider new clause 4 in this debate.

As to subsection (2)(a), the specially dangerous weapons and ammunition now prohibited by clause 1 of the Bill are already prohibited to the public in Northern Ireland. That is achieved by the Chief Constable exercising his discretionary powers under the Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 rather than by specific statutory prohibition. Paragraph (a) will keep the statutory controls in Northern Ireland for those types of specially dangerous weapons and ammunition in line with those in Great Britain. It will have no effect on firearms certificate holders in Northern Ireland.

Mr. William Ross: Before the Minister leaves the subject of firearm certificates, will he make it clear that all firearms in Northern Ireland, including shotguns, have to be held on a firearms certificate? That is the great difference between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Stanley: I certainly endorse what the hon. Gentleman says.

I turn to paragraph (b). In common with the Firearms Act 1968, the Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 specifies that one photograph must accompany firearm certificate applications. Administrative experience has shown the value of having two photographs in such circumstances, and in practice two are already supplied. The opportunity presented by the Bill has been taken to enable an amendment to the Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 to include reference to the provision of two photographs. That is achieved by paragraph (b).

In Northern Ireland, the registration of firearms dealers takes place on 1 January each year. To extend the period of registration of firearms dealers in Great Britain to three years without reciprocal action in Northern Ireland legislation would put Northern Ireland dealers at a relative disadvantage, in that they would have to pay a registration fee annually rather than triennially. We also consider it desirable to provide in Northern Ireland as in Great Britain that a dealer whose name has been removed from the register of dealers should surrender his register of transactions. That is to prevent the loss of records which may be of subsequent use to the police. Those amendments to Northern Ireland legislation are achieved by paragraph (c) of subsection (2).

In Northern Ireland at present, there are no physical security requirements asked of auctioneers, carriers and warehouse men who handle and transport firearms. All others who handle firearms, such as dealers and authorised repair agents, are required to provide extensive security. Paragraph (d) will enable those businesses to be required to take reasonable precautions for the security of firearms and ammunition under their control.

Paragraph (e) will provide for police powers of entry and inspection of rifle and pistol club premises to ensure that a club is operating according to its authorisation. At present, police may enter and search club premises only if it is suspected that an offence has been committed. Paragraph (e) will make possible improved monitoring of rifle and pistol clubs to ensure that their activities are fully in accordance with their terms of authorisation, which are given under article 54 of the 1981 order.

Paragraph (f) is a minor consequential amendment. Powers exist under article 13 of the 1981 order enabling the Secretary of State to authorise the use of a prohibited weapon subject to appropriate safeguards in theatrical or other performances. This paragraph brings the list of such prohibited weapons up to date, in line with the changes made by the Bill.

Paragraph (g) deals with interpretation and supplementary provisions. They will enable definitions, time limits for prosecutions and detailed rules for the serving of notices and exemptions contained in the Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 to be carried over to the new Order in Council.

Finally, consequential amendment No. 21 will enable new clause 4 to come into effect after enactment of the Bill, subject to the negative resolution Order in Council that will be based upon it. Amendment No. 22 makes the necessary amendment to apply new clause 4 to Northern Ireland.

Now that I have explained new clause 4, the House may agree that my right hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State was entirely right in responding to the motion of my hon. Friend the Member for Weston-super-Mare (Mr. Wiggin) by saying that new clause 4 either reflects in the statute what is already existing practice or makes extremely minor changes in Northern Ireland legislation.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: Before my hon. Friend sits down, what he has not explained to the House, and what I think needs explaining, is why what he has said was not equally true when the Bill was in draft. Why is this brought in by, as it were, a side wind at Report stage, rather than having been embodied in the Bill when it was in draft? Does his own Secretary of State never meet the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland? The House needs to know.

The hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross) made the perfectly fair point that he was prevented from taking part in certain debates in Committee on the ground that at that stage the Bill did not apply to Northern Ireland. If there are not amendments down to a given clause now that the Bill is on the Floor of the House, he will not have the opportunity of debating it here either. My right hon. Friend has an obligation to tell the House why the case that he is making now is not an equally good case for having embodied it in the Bill in the first place.

Mr. Stanley: My hon. Friend will know as well as anyone that the Bill has been the subject of considerable debate, and that there have been a number of changes in Government policy and thinking as it has evolved. It was not possible when the Bill was introduced to take a final view on whether it would be sensible to make what are, as I have sought to explain, very minor changes in Northern Ireland legislation. By the time that the Bill had made some progress in Committee, it had become apparent that there could be a useful degree of tidying up of the statutory provisions. At the end of March, my hon. Friend wrote to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett), who leads for the Opposition, saying that we intended to make these relatively minor changes when the Bill reached the Report stage.

9 pm

Mr. William Ross: We have just heard what I can only describe as an astonishing admission from the Minister. He has confirmed what all of us who have taken an interest in the Bill have known since it first saw the light of day —that it was not properly thought through, but was a knee-jerk reaction. Only as it progressed and people such as myself asked more and more questions about it did it become apparent not only to the Home Office but to the Northern Ireland Office that here was a vehicle that could be used.

This is a most unusual procedure. The Government cannot get away with saying that it was a convenient way of doing things. On every other occasion when they have wanted to bring the firearms law, and indeed many other laws, in Northern Ireland into line with those in Great Britain they have brought in an order. There is no reason why that should not have been done on this occasion.

Do not get me wrong, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I do not want the House to think that I object to United Kingdom legislation. On the contrary, I welcome it. What I cannot stand is this measure being slipped in as an afterthought, and an afterthought it most assuredly was. I can take no other meaning from the Minister's speech.

The Minister also told us that the application of the legislation to Northern Ireland was largely unnecessary. That is clear to those of us who know anything about firearms and the firearms law in Northern Ireland. We know that it is extremely tight. We know that looking for a standard full-bore self-loading rifle is like looking for hens' teeth. It is not easy to obtain such a weapon, or even any high-powered centre line rifle. Firearms certificates simply are not granted for such weapons—not that the IRA uses legal weapons anyway. God knows it ships them in from elsewhere by the shipload, and it is not the kind of stuff that it is using anyway. The plain truth is that such weapons, in the hands of sympathisers with terrorist organisations, could presumably be used for training purposes and to allow people to acquire expertise in handling firearms.

I well understand that, and well understand also the restrictions that have been applied. However, I have a serious objection to the procedure that is being used. Let me explain the reasons for the amendments put down by my right hon. Friend the Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux) and myself. First, we wished to draw attention to our dissatisfaction with the procedure. We wanted to give the House an opportunity to discuss in relation to Northern Ireland all that was discussed in Committee, and anything else that occurred to us since. It seems to be the fashion nowadays to think of more and more as the passage of a Bill continues. Certainly that is the line of action that the Government have been following. That opportunity is open to the House this evening.

Amendment No. 102 deals with the part of the Bill that says that the legislation does not apply to Northern Ireland. If the Minister is honest, I think that he will confess that the method that we have proposed for extending the provisions to Northern Ireland is much neater and simpler than the route that he has chosen. I hope that he will accept amendment No. 102 and withdraw his new clause. I would find that a perfectly satisfactory course, after we have thoroughly explored the application of these slabs of the Bill to Northern Ireland.

Later—probably much later—the House will have an opportunity to discuss whether there should be two, or three, photographs. My experience, as the holder of a firearms certificate, is that the police expect me to produce two photographs. One of the photographs is on the firearms certificate. The second is held in police headquarters, where it is of little use to anybody, except to those in police headquarters. It is looked at every three or four years. A third photograph would be most welcome. The local station would then be provided with a photograph. That point has been put to me most strongly, and I hope that the Minister will take note of it and move in that direction.

There is so much that one could say about all these clauses. I could spend all evening on them. These amendments are the heart and soul of the Bill and caused the most anger in Committee. The Government had to consider them very carefully. They were introduced as a direct result of the Hungerford incident.

Why have the Government introduced the Bill? Why have they decided to proceed in this way at this time? Every honest person knows that this was the Government's reaction to the Hungerford massacre. Their excuse was that the law was insufficient to deal with Hungerford. That point has been raised again in this debate, and so far there has been no satisfactory answer to it.

I shall attempt to run through some of the events on that dreadful day. The shock of that massacre spread throughout the whole island of Great Britain and muddied people's thinking. I was distant from it but, sadly, I was all too well aware of the reaction—of the numb horror that can strike a community after such an incident. However, I had the advantage, apart from being distant from it, of 20 years of terrorism; an advantage which I could well do without and which I should be very happy to do without. Nevertheless, those experiences are with me, with the result that I tend to take a cooler look at such incidents than do those who have them thrust in their faces for the first time.

The Bill will have no effect on terrorist activity. By their very nature, terrorists are lawbreakers. They will be unconcerned about any law that is passed to control firearms. They will steal them if they find them handy, but a terrorist who is serious in his intentions does not rely upon a few .22 rifles or even self-loading rifles. He relies to a large extent upon far more lethal machinery and upon high explosives. That has been proven day after day, and happened in Londonderry last night.

Who, or what, are we trying to control by the Bill and by the other firearms legislation? We are trying to keep firearms out of the hands of known criminals, yet I am told that it is possible for people who are suspected of engaging in criminal activities to visit pistol galleries in Great Britain and shoot to their heart's content. There is nothing to stop their doing so. If we can identify them, I believe that it is our duty to keep firearms of all types out of the hands of those who are actually or potentially mentally unstable. That is extremely difficult, but I have tabled an amendment to cover that point, which I hope the House will consider carefully.

There are people who have a history of violence, although it may not be classed as criminal violence. There are people who have suffered some mental illness, and who may well suffer from mental illness again, and there are people who show a general lack of responsibility. Perhaps that is more apparent in young men than it is in older

people, but responsibility is important for those who own and handle firearms. That covers the majority of the groups from whom we should actively endeavour to keep firearms. Hon. Members may think of other smaller groups and categories, but I believe that I have encompassed most of them.

Most people who own firearms have been so well screened by their peers or by the police that very few legally held weapons are ever used in crime. In addition to the Firearms Acts, police forces have a code which they impose. I consider that the present law and the code of practice carried into effect by the Thames Valley police should have been sufficient to stop Mr. Ryan getting his weapons. I understand that the Thames Valley police enjoy a fairly high reputation with shooting clubs. That makes it all the more sad that on this occasion they appear to have fallen short of those high standards.

The questions that I have asked and the very slow dribble of information that appeared to the world as a result of that sad story should not be allowed to go unnoticed. There are lessons which have not properly been absorbed or learnt by the House, by the country and possibly by the police. If they have, nothing has been published that convinces me that those lessons have been learnt. Although chief constables can issue firearms certificates whenever they wish, they do not do so. They lay down strictures as to who may or may not have firearms. The special procedures created by the Thames Valley police force——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I have been waiting patiently to see how the hon. Gentleman relates the substance of his argument to the new clause under discussion and the amendments to it. I am finding it very difficult to do so. It would be quite wrong for the hon. Gentleman to go into detail on events arising from the Hungerford occurrence.

Mr. Ross: I bow to your judgment, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was hoping to prove that if the police in charge of the Hungerford occurrence had applied their own regulations, which must be co-existent with the firearms law, that situation would not have arisen. The amendments will not prevent someone like Ryan in future legally laying his hands on firearms unless the police carry out their procedures absolutely accurately and fully. In that context I was hoping to draw attention to the fact that the police had not really followed their code of practice. Whether they would follow the proposed firearms legislation, or whether they followed firearms legislation in force at that time, is open to debate. The amendments do not make sense unless the administration procedure used by the police in all cases is properly followed.

It is only by example that one can come to a full understanding of how the firearms law operates in practice. When one considers the history of the Ryan saga and how he got his firearms, one begins to wonder how closely the police followed the law. One then has to question whether the police will follow any amendments that we may make, even in regard to Northern Ireland.

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson (Newbury): The hon. Gentleman suggests that the Thames Valley police did not follow their own guidelines when they allowed Michael Ryan to have a firearms certificate. He will know that Ryan had been a probationary member of the Dunmore shooting centre for three months and that, in September 1986, that was the only requirement that the club required for full membership. After three months, when Ryan applied to the Thames Valley police, he was given a firearms certificate on the basis of his membership of the centre and of his being a consistent shooter at it.

Because the centre used only pistols, Ryan joined a club with a rifle range and applied to have rifles added to his certificate. He was allowed the addition to his certificate. The hon. Gentleman has tried to claim that, because Ryan did not go through the full procedure, but obtained a firearms certificate as a result of membership of Dunmore, he was somehow beyond the law when he obtained his rifle certificate. I suggest that the hon. Gentleman is wrong and that the chief constable was right in believing that, once he awarded a certificate, the addition of another weapon to the certificate was not——

9.15 pm

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Interventions should be brief. Moreover, what I feared when I reproached the hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross) is now happening—instead of discussing how relevant the application of parts of the Bill are to Northern Ireland, we are having a House of Commons inquiry into the Hungerford occurrence, and we are not going to have that.

Mr. Ross: I am sorry that we shall not have such an inquiry. There does not seem to be any great willingness to have one outside either.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Such an inquiry would be quite irrelevant to a discussion of new clause 4.

Mr. Ross: I apologise, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I hope, however, to be able to follow up the matter in another context. The hon. Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson) has been a personal friend for many years, but I must tell him that the police code demanded a six-month probationary period. When the police officer arrived to inspect the arrangements, he was bound to be shown the Dunmore card. I understand that Ryan had only a probationary card, which was a quite different colour from the full membership card.

There is much more to say about the Ryan affair. No doubt it will be possible to say some of it before the night is done. My amendments—(a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f) and (g)—cover all the matters that occupied the first sitting of the Standing Committee. These issues were the source of much pain and difficulty. I was left with the impression of the Government making a knee-jerk reaction. That is not appropriate for the Government. Firearms legislation is extremely important and we should be absolutely clear about our objectives before we embark on it. The Government are acting in haste. They have not sat down and thought through seriously the effects of what they are proposing.

There is no point in passing law for Northern Ireland which will simply annoy the law abiding. God knows they have had reason enough in the past few years to be annoyed at Government action. The small group of people who are fortunate enough to be able to practise full-bore rifle shooting and to take part in international competition will now be clobbered and, to put it mildly, that is unfortunate. They will say to me, to the Government and to every public representative, "Why have you done this? Why are you attacking us when there is a far bigger firearms problem in this country which, after 20 years, you

[Mr. Ross]

have not resolved?" When the Minister eventually replies, those are the questions to which he should address his mind.

The Minister has told us that most of those things are already covered by existing police powers in Northern Ireland. I have pointed out to the House that it is practically impossible to get a firearms certificate for a full-bore rifle in Northern Ireland. The Minister has told us that the amendments that have been tabled are minor. They are so minor that they could have been run through the House on the nod after 10 o'clock some evening if the Minister had cared to produce a little order or a statutory instrument. He now has before him his own cumbersome and inept way of extending the legislation to Northern Ireland. He also has before him a carefully drawn amendment in the names of my right hon. Friend the Member for Lagan Valley and myself. That amendment has the same effect.

I hope that the Minister will get to his feet shortly and say that he will accept amendment No. 102 and reject his own, because I believe that is the most sensible and reasonable way to proceed. My amendment will have the same effect as his own and will get over some of the constitutional fury that his present procedure has aroused.

There is a great deal more that I should like to say on this important issue. However, there are a number of right hon. and hon. Gentlemen on the Conservative Benches who expressed their concern in Committee. I hope that it will be possible to leave it to them to follow up this matter and to make the same arguments in relation to Northern Ireland as they made in relation to Great Britain. I also hope that this is the last time that I shall see such a miserable procedure used to extend any legislation to the Province, part of which I have the honour to represent.

Mr. Colvin: I have one simple, short question for my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office. It concerns the legislation that we are in the process of amending. New clause 4 proposes to change the Northern Ireland Act 1974. The Home Office produced a memorandum in response to the publication of a Council directive by the European Commission on the control of the acquisition and possession of weapons. The Home Office memorandum addressed the impact of that directive on United Kingdom law. It said that

"The relevant legislation of Great Britain is the Firearms Act 1968"

—which we are in the process of amending. It also said that the relevant legislation for Northern Ireland was the Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 1981.

When my right hon. Friend comes to reply, will he confirm that we are in the process of amending the right piece of legislation because it would be a waste of the time of the House if we did the wrong thing?

Mr. Corbett: I am delighted that the Minister of State Northern Ireland Office is here tonight. I would like to apologise for the absence of my hon. Friend the Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) who is not here for precisely the reason that the hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross) and others have complained about—the way in which the Government changed their mind about the extension of many of the provisions of the Bill to cover Northern Ireland when that was not mentioned on Second Reading and when, as the hon. Member for Londonderry, East said, discussion on it was not possible in Committee. It gets worse than that. Standing Committee F, which discussed the Bill, had its last sitting on 11 March 1988. The letter I received from the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department bears the date 22 March. I understand that it is reasonably rare for letters to be written on the date they bear at the top. In many cases, as right hon. and hon. Members will know, the month and the year are typed and when the Minister is topping and tailing the letter he will chalk in the date. The date on this letter is typed and, it has to be said, it was certainly drafted well before 22 March because it had to shunt through various procedures and it ended up in that famous grey area in the Home Office where it is decided whether it is fit and proper to present it, even to the Under-Secretary of State.

It is fair to assume that the Northern Ireland Office and the Home Office were in consultation over extending the provisions of the Bill to Northern Ireland while our Committee was sitting. Should the Minister catch your eye again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, perhaps he will be kind enough to tell us at what stage he or his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland made representations to the Home Secretary about extending the provisions to Northern Ireland or when he was invited by the Home Secretary to respond to the Home Secretary's suggestion that they should be extended to Northern Ireland.

The Government have treated the House, let alone the Committee, less than courteously. It is one of the hallmarks of the way in which the Bill has been handled since it first saw the light of day.

Sir Eldon Griffiths: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will agree that this has been a matter on which there has been rare cross-party agreement on many aspects; positive and negative. Unless things have changed, will the hon. Gentleman accept that it would not simply be a matter of negotiation between the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland? The legislation sub-committee of the Cabinet would have to give its consent to the importing into a Bill at this stage of no fewer than 16 changes to the law and, certainly, the Leader of the House and the Chief Whip would have had to consent to that being done. I agree with the hon. Gentleman that all that must have taken place while Standing Committee F, which did a first-class job on the Bill, was still in being.

Mr. Corbett: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman because everything he said must be so. To that extent, the plot thickens. We are left with the question to which I hope the Minister will respond: why was this not in the Bill when it came to the House for Second Reading? If for some reason that was not possible, why were the amendments not mentioned by the Minister during the sittings of the Committee?

Mr. Frank Cook: Do I understand my hon. Friend correctly? Is he suggesting that, when the hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross) was seeking to make reference to conditions in Northern Ireland and the hon. Member for Uxbridge (Mr. Shersby) was advising him as Chairman of the Committee that references of that sort were improper, out of place and out of order, these matters were being considered behind closed doors?

Mr. Corbett: I am saying that that must be so. This move cannot have appeared out of a clear blue sky. It is not as if one of the Ministers involved suddenly stepped out of the bath one morning and thought to himself, "I know what I'll do today. I'll extend the provisions of the Bill to Northern Ireland. I've got nothing else to do and it will fill in the odd half hour".That does not bear thinking about.

9.30 pm

I apologise to hon. Members who served on the Standing Committee. I assumed—wrongly as it turned out—when the Parliamentary Under-Secretary wrote to me on 22 March that he had had the courtesy to write to every member of the Standing Committee. That would have been the proper thing to do, but I now know that it did not happen.

On the buy-in scheme—the compensation scheme—the Minister carried out the undertaking to inform members of the Standing Committee about the Government's proposals as far ahead of this debate as possible, and we are grateful to him for his courtesy in doing that. However, that was not done in respect of the proposals to extend some of the controls in the Bill to Northern Ireland.

I claim no more rights than any other member of the Standing Committee. It so happens that during most of the Committee's proceedings I led for the Opposition, but I do not want special treatment. Every member of the Standing Committee had an equal right to know that the Government were contemplating this major change. It was not contained in the original Bill and thus could not have been discussed on Second Reading—yet another subject that we were unable to discuss. I do not want to add to the Minister's discomfort, but he will remember the little altercation we had over trying to ensure that the Committee could discuss the matter of compensation if it wanted to. The Minister had to return to the House to seek approval for a second money order to make it possible for the Committee to discuss something that, on Second Reading, the Government had said that they were not going to do and did not want anything said about after Second Reading.

Mr. William Ross: The hon. Gentleman will be aware that usually, when Northern Ireland legislation is brought forward, my right hon. Friend the Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux) is informed. The letter may well have gone astray in the post but my right hon. Friend cannot recall ever receiving any such confirmation and neither can I. What sort of political skullduggery are the Government up to here? It is unbelievable that this could happen.

Mr. Corbett: This goes from bad to worse. Not only was the proposal kept from every member of the Committee but me—I assume that that was no accident—but now we hear that the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux) was not told either. This may not comfort him, but he may be interested to hear that my hon. Friend the Member for Kingston upon Hull, North was not told. I do not know who was supposed to tell him, but whoever it was did not. From the way in which things work in this place one can assume that it was the responsibility of Northern Ireland Ministers to tell members of the Opposition and of other parties with a clear and well-known interest in Northern Ireland what had been suggested by the Northern Ireland Office to the Home Secretary—or vice versa—or what, as the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths) said, had been agreed and decided at Cabinet level. What seems to have happened is that the responsibility did not simply disappear in a fog, but dropped down a big black hole.

Generally, I have no objection to the extension of these parts of the Bill to Northern Ireland. I do not know whether the Northern Ireland Minister has seen the Under-Secretary's letter, but he will agree with this because not only did his hon. Friend say it, but right hon. and hon. Members representing Northern Ireland constituencies confirm it. The Under-Secretary reminds me in his letter that

"firearms controls in Northern Ireland are exercised under the Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 1981"

and adds that those controls

"are generally tighter than those in Great Britain."

That compounds the mystery. If the controls are tighter and more stringent, for horrendous reasons that we all understand and accept, what is the need for the provision? If that need is as compelling as the Minister has implied because he says that the provision will help for the various reasons that he gave in moving the new clause, I must ask him again why those compelling reasons only partly saw the light of day in the Under-Secretary of State's letter to me of 22 March.

Would the police and security forces in Northern Ireland happen across a copy of the Bill on their way to work or pick it up in the canteen because somebody had left it there, and say, "Well, that seems a good idea. Let's have it."? Of course it does not happen like that. I ask the Minister to understand that I accept that. That emphasises this point: why did the Government act in that way, behind the back of the Committee and of Opposition Members with responsibilities for Northern Ireland? I do not believe that it is simply incompetence, although I suspect that that is part of it. Yet again, it is an illustration of the slipshod manner in which the Bill was prepared. That has led to the new clause and 176 other amendments on Report, 63 of them from the Government themselves. The Bill remains littered with confusion. There is confusion of purpose and confusion about the aim of the Bill. Having been through all those Committee sittings, I get the impression that not a single Minister or team of Ministers has sat down and said, "What do we want to achieve? What is the best way of achieving it?" Those are two straightforward and simple questions.

I listened to what the hon. Member for Londonderry, East said, and I suspect that what happened in the wake of the appalling events in Hungerford was that senior officials at the Home Office were sent for and told, "We must do something. Give us a bit of paper." If that was so, it was a wholly improper way in which to proceed.

After that row and the argument about compensation in Committee, the Government have sprung another one on us late in the day. They say, "Trust us," giving the impression that it has only just been thought of.

Mr. Frank Cook: I am following closely what my hon. Friend is saying. I am trying to hang on to the same logic, but there is a difficulty that we should discuss. My hon. Friend agreed with the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths), who suggested that when we spoke about Northern Ireland in Committee we were told that the Bill did not relate to it but that consultations were taking place behind closed doors almost simultaneously. On issues such as compensation and on at least two clauses

[Mr. Frank Cook]

in the Bill, the Minister had to backtrack and go away. Initially he could not even get his sittings motion passed because matters were so ill-considered.

In my mind is the picture painted by the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds of some kind of subterfuge and conspiracy. There is also the picture that I recall from Committee of gross ineptitude and lack of preparedness. I cannot equate one with the other. Perhaps my hon. Friend can come up with some explanation.

Mr. Corbett: My hon. Friend illustrates the point well. I suspect that both things were happening at the same time and that the people involved in one did not know about the other. It is a classic case of the left hand not knowing what the right is doing, and in this case both hands were probably held out of sight.

The Minister should be clear. Hon. Members want the most stringent and effective legal steps to try to reduce the number of murders carried out in Northern Ireland by terrorists using firearms. We object to the way in which the Government and the Minister have chosen to treat a topic that deserves and demands better consideration than we are able to give it on Report.

Sir Eldon Griffiths: As you have just come into the Chair, Mr. Speaker, perhaps I should make it clear that references to my earlier remarks do not mean that I have spoken to this clause, and therefore I do not need to ask leave to speak again.

I approach the new clause more in sorrow than in anger, first, because I want the Bill as amended and I am off to Gibraltar in the morning and am anxious not to remain here throughout the night. Secondly, I have a very high regard for my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office, and for all the Home Office Ministers who have been occupied with the Bill. I hope that my right hon. Friend will accept that comment in the way that it is intended. I acquit them at once of any suggestion that they have engaged in subterfuge or conspiracy. I am tempted to quote the inelegant phrase of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, who said the other day that it was more a matter of a cock-up than a conspiracy.

There is here an issue of important principle. Like many other hon. Members, I have no fundamental objection to the contents of the new clause and the amendments that it makes to no fewer than 16 sections or subsections of the Northern Ireland Act 1974. It is not a small matter, but I have no objections in principle, because effectively the provisions move into statute law what is already the practice of the police in Northern Ireland. There is certainly merit in making sure that the practice of the police has statutory cover. The Northern Ireland Office is not to be criticised for wanting to do that; nor should the Home Office be criticised for wanting to facilitate it.

Mr. William Ross: There is an important issue here, to which the hon. Gentleman has drawn our attention. If it is police practice, it could easily be changed when circumstances in Northern Ireland change—when terrorism diminishes and we return to peaceful conditions. We are creating a body of law that will be very difficult to change even if it becomes desirable to do so.

Sir Eldon Griffiths: That is the hon. Gentleman's view and he has great knowledge of Northern Ireland, which I respect. I do not happen to share his view, because it is not the advice that I have received from the police. I am putting to the House a fundamental point about the way in which the Government have chosen to proceed. The lack of notice to the House as a whole has been wrong. The bad manners shown to members of Standing Committee F are disgraceful. That Committee worked extremely hard, and it was entitled to be told by the Government that this intention had been formed and approved of by the Cabinet before the Committee had ceased its work.

One should also protest at the exclusion from any consultation about the new clause and amendments of significant sections of our fellow countrymen. They might have had an interest in these changes, but have had no opportunity to discuss them since they came on the Amendment Paper last Thursday and we are dealing with them now, for the last time, on the following Monday. The exclusion of our fellow citizens from any effective consultation is a reprehensible way in which to proceed.

9.45 pm

I should remind my hon. Friend—he is a Northern Ireland Minister and therefore was not intimately involved in this legislation—that, on Second Reading, Northern Ireland was not just left out, but was explicitly excluded. In Committee, hon. Members who strayed into discussing Northern Ireland were reminded by the Chair that they should not do so because Northern Ireland was not included. Therefore, in my capacity as adviser to the police service, I did not consult the Northern Ireland Police Federation, as I would have done normally. I told the police that they did not need to apply their minds to this legislation because it did not apply to Northern Ireland. I did so on the authority not only of Ministers but of the Chairman of the Committee. What else could I do? The procedure throughout the Bill has been, to put it mildly, unsatisfactory.

Mr. Colvin: My hon. Friend's point is important, as is the point made by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett). If the Committee had known the decision had been made to apply the law to Northern Ireland, and if that been known to the House when we voted earlier on the motion moved by my hon. Friend the Member for Weston-super-mare (Mr. Wiggin), the House might have come to a different conclusion.

Sir Eldon Griffiths: That is as may be. In my judgment, if Standing Committee F had been made aware of the Government's intention to apply these clauses to Northern Ireland, the Committee would have assented. It was a good Committee, which considered these matters with great care. A Minister representing a Northern Ireland constituency served on it. If the matter had been given to us we would have debated it and come to the conclusion, based on their merits, that these amendments should be included. I have little doubt about that.

I do not object to the importing of different matter into the Bill on Report. Many of us who have served in government have seen this happen, and Governments of all complexions have done this. The procedure is not in any way outside the norms of Parliament. However, there are ways and means of doing it that were not followed in this case. For example—Mr. Speaker, your experience will probably bear this out—when a Government intend on

Report to add significant new matter to a Bill, it is often the case that a question is arranged so that it appears in *Hansard* and all Members are aware of what is intended. Alternatively, if the matter is of great importance, it can be set out in a statement. No statement was made and no question was answered. Worse than that, the only letter that was sent by the relevant Minister to any member of the Committee went to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett). It was right that he should have received a letter, because he was leading for the Opposition, but the remaining members of the Committee were kept completely in the dark.

That was wrong, and I should like to make this suggestion to my hon. Friend who, in every respect, is an honourable man. Instead of trying to defend the Government's position, he should simply say that he is sorry. Occasionally mistakes are made, and in those cases the best thing to do is to apologise. The House will always understand that. It is far better to do that than to attempt to explain the unexplainable.

The Government have not got this right. There are no objections to the content. I, for one, hope that the amendments will be carried, but my hon. Friend should recognise that, in this case, the Northern Ireland Office has dropped him in it. It is a reflection of the fact that there is insufficient parliamentary scrutiny of what happens in Northern Ireland. All too often, officials of the Northern Ireland Office have told me that changes in the law that Ministers themselves want to see and that I, on behalf of the police service, have asked for—I can give many examples—have not been made because there has been no parliamentary opportunity.

There has been ample opportunity to make many other changes, and I am left with the impression that when it suits the Northern Ireland Office to insert certain matters into legislation at the last minute it will do it, but if it does not suit it, it does not want to know. That is the objection, and I hope that my hon. Friend will recognise that that is not the way to proceed.

Mr. Stanley: The hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross) said that new clause 4 was unnecessary. I do not agree with him on that. However, new clause 4 and the statutory changes it makes are minor.

In view of the consideration of the Bill on Second Reading and in Committee, the consideration of the important policy issues of firearms control by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary and the fact that the Bill might result, in certain minor respects, in the statutory basis for firearms control in Great Britain being slightly more restrictive than in Northern Ireland, we believe that it would not be justifiable for the position in Northern Ireland, given the security situation there, to be any less tight in every respect than elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

For example, we would not want to have a statutory list of prohibited weapons and ammunition that was less limited under Northern Ireland legislation than under legislation elsewhere in the United Kingdom. We would not want security precautions taken by auctioneers, carriers and warehousemen in Northern Ireland to be less stringent than elsewhere in the United Kingdom. We would not want the statutory basis for monitoring rifle and pistol clubs to be less limited in Northern Ireland than elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

Those were effectively the three relatively minor areas in which, without new clause 4, we would have been slightly out of kilter with the rest of the United Kingdom. Given the security situation in Northern Ireland, we felt that that would not be a satisfactory note on which to end proceedings on the Bill.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): Why have the Government not chosen the affirmative resolution, but have used the negative procedure which is generally unsatisfactory, no matter how trivial the Minister regards the subject? The measure is being put to the House because it is regarded as important and I should therefore have thought that the affirmative procedure would have been best.

Mr. Stanley: If the hon Gentleman had been in his place when I moved new clause 4, he would know that I had dealt with exactly that point. The Order in Council that will come forward under new clause 4 will be based on the provisions of new clause 4 and the House has a full opportunity to debate those provisions this evening.

The hon. Member for Londonderry, East referred to amendment No. 102, which stands in his name and that to his right hon. Friend the Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux). He asked why we could not proceed with the direct extension of parts of the Bill to Northern Ireland rather than proceeding through the Order in Council procedure. Consideration was given to the desirability of making provision in the Bill for the direct extension to Northern Ireland of the provisions that are set out in the new clause. As the corpus of the law on firearms in Northern Ireland lies in the Northern Ireland statute book, to extend the provisions directly would render the law harder to find and more difficult to follow. It would require lengthy and complex amendments to be made to existing legislation. The hon. Gentleman hoped that his route would be neater and simpler, but that would not be so. That is why we decided to proceed by way of Order in Council.

Mr. William Ross: Is the Minister saying that firearms legislation in Northern Ireland is so different from that in Great Britain that it is impossible to follow the route that I have set out? If that is so, has it not been demonstrated once again how foolish it is to have the Northern Ireland statute book kept separate from the statute book for Great Britain? Instead, we should be dealing with Northern Ireland as if it were an integral part of the United Kingdom and included in United Kingdom Bills. That would be far more satisfactory to us in Northern Ireland than this miserable way of proceeding.

Finally, the Minister mentioned warehousemen and others. How many firearms have been stolen from warehouses and that sort of establishment over the past 20 years?

Mr. Stanley: The hon. Gentleman might not agree with this view, but I am sure that he will recognise that there is a considerable body of opinion in Northern Ireland that welcomes the fact that there is a separate Northern Ireland statute book. Those who are sympathetic to the possibility of restoring devolved legislative arrangements in future would recognise the importance of maintaining these arrangements.

The hon. Gentleman has taken up my reference to warehousemen. The question that the hon. Gentleman

[Mr. Stanley]

should ask himself is whether it could be justifiable in the security situation of Northern Ireland to have any lesser statutory arrangements for physical security precautions in such establishments than elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

My hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside (Mr. Colvin) asked whether we were amending the right piece of legislation. I am happy to assure him that we are. The reference in the new clause to the 1974 legislation relates to proceeding by negative resolution rather than affirmative. The base legislation that will be changed by the substantive part of the new clause as opposed to the procedural part is the Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 1981.

The hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett), who leads for the Opposition, and my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths) both spoke of the way in which the new clause was brought forward and its timing. I was rather surprised that the hon. Gentleman's contribution this evening was not one that he might have made at a somewhat earlier stage. He did not tell the House—I am sure that he would wish me to do so now—that my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State made it clear in his letter to him on 22 March that the new clause and amendments that we proposed to bring forward would be introduced on Report. We accept entirely the criticism which the hon. Gentleman and my hon. Friend made, along with my hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside, that the letter of 22 March should have been sent to all Committee members to ensure that they were fully informed of what would take place. I convey our apologies to Committee members for the fact that that was not done. I understand that the drafting had still not been finalised before the Bill had left Standing Committee, so we would have had to bring forward the measure on Report. That is the explanation for the timing in bringing forward the measure.

Mr. Frank Cook: The Minister seeks to present a reasonable case and is doing a decent job in difficult circumstances. I congratulate him. Bearing in mind the comments of the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths) about the timing of the letter and the new clause, will the Minister explain why there was a two-month delay before tabling the new clause——

It being Ten o'clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Ordered,

That, at this day's sitting, the Firearms (Amendment) Bill may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hour.—*[Mr. Maclean.]*

As amended (in the Standing Committee), again considered.

Question again proposed, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Cook: Bearing in mind the need for consultation with the Police Federation, which the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds represents, and the consultation which the hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross) and his colleagues need, why did it take two months to table the new clause after the letter had come on 22 March?

Mr. Stanley: When my hon. Friend wrote to the hon. Member for Erdington, the measure was still being finalised. I do not know exactly when it was finally available. No doubt, further consideration was being given to the finer points of drafting. The substantive changes brought about by new clause 4 are small. I hope that neither the House nor people outside have lost very much by not having sight of the measure earlier.

Mr. Corbett: I am grateful to the Minister for his explanation. I do not want to make heavy weather of this matter. I do not know whether it was a slip of the tongue, but the right hon. Gentleman gave the House the impression that the measures were in the process of drafting while the Standing Committee was meeting. If so, that compounds the felony. That could and should have been mentioned while the Standing Committee was sitting.

Mr. Stanley: I cannot say precisely at what point the drafting began and was finished. There may have been some few days during the Committee's sittings when the parliamentary draftsmen were working on it. I believe that there was no possibility of tabling this measure in a final form during the Standing Committee's proceedings, as I have explained to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause read a Second time and added to the Bill.

New Clause 5

STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT OF APPLICATIONS FOR CERTIFICATES

'After section 26(2) (b) of the principal Act (rules requiring verification of matters contained in applications for certificates) there shall be inserted—

"(c) require any application for a certificate to be accompanied by a statement by the person verifying the matters mentioned in paragraph (b) above to the effect that he knows of no reason why the applicant should not be permitted to possess a firearm.".'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

The purpose of the new clause is to improve the application procedure. Section 26 of the Firearms Act 1986 provides for verification of the likeness of photographs and prescribes details. This provision in new clause 5 adds to a provision that will enable the Secretary of State to require the inclusion of a statement by the person verifying that he knows of no reason why the person who is making the application should not possess a firearm.

Mr. Corbett: New clause 5 sounds eminently reasonable. We want to take every sensible precaution to ensure that the applicant is, in the well understood phrase that is perhaps a little old hat, responsible and a person of good standing.

On what basis will the person signing the verification make the judgment that he knows of no reason why the applicant should not be permitted to possess a firearm? That is like proving a negative. It implies, but does not state, that the person verifying should not just know the applicant, but should have known him for a sufficiently long period to enable him, or her, responsibly to make a judgment. Probably the Minister can dispose of this quickly for me.

The new clause says nothing about the factors that must be taken into account. What is the person who is asked to sign the verification statement supposed to do if he is

aware that the applicant, five, six or 10 years ago, had a very severe mental illness, but is satisfied that the applicant is over that illness? None the less, that is part of the applicant's history. Is that a factor that must be taken into account?

A very senior and well respected Member of the House, in response to a constituent's request after the police had refused to issue him with a firearms certificate, gave the opinion that he knew of no reason why the applicant should not be permitted to possess a firearm. The senior hon. Member knew the applicant—although not like a member of the family—and he was surprised when he was told that the local police has declined to issue the certificate. He signed the verification. He was confident and content that he had acted properly.

Some weeks later the local police telephoned him. He was told that the certificate had been issued, although against the better judgment of the police, and the person to whom the certificate had been issued had blown his brains out after a quarrel with his girlfriend. No one would question that the hon. Member concerned had acted anything other than correctly, and all of us who know the hon. Gentleman would agree with that. Had he not known the applicant seeking to have the application verified, he would not have signed it. He would not have signed it if he believed that it was wrong to do so. However, he signed it with tragic results.

Would it not be helpful for those called upon to make statements of verification to be given guidance about the factors that they should take into account? We are not talking about a photograph that accompanies a passport application. In that case, many hon. Members and other people are simply required on the form to say how long they have known the applicant and to certify that the likeness is true. Much more is at risk in verifying a statement in support of a firearms certificate than in signing the back of a passport photograph. Without wanting to be facetious, I do not know many people who have been battered to death with passports. This is an important matter.

If it will help to achieve the purpose which I believe the Minister intends, those who are invited to verify applications ought to be given explicit guidance about the basis on which they should make their judgments. If the Home Office and the police will merely require signatories to declare, "I have known Joe Bloggs for five years and can think of no reason why he should not be permitted to possess a firearm," and if the Government are saying that the signature is worth no more than that, I must question its value. I suspect that it is meant to mean more than that. I hope that it is, and that a signature of verification will be given after much weightier consideration. It will help the House if the Minister will spell that out.

Mr. Colvin: I follow the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett) in questioning who precisely should be entitled to verify applications. In the case of passports, only certain people, such as Members of Parliament, are entitled to give verification. I do not know whether we are suitable people to verify whether or not a person should be granted a firearms certificate. If a list of suitable persons could be drawn up by the Home Office, it would be of assistance.

As to photographs, the law applying to passport applications provides that the person who signs the accompanying photograph commits an offence if his statement proves to be false. In the case of a firearms application, will the person who verifies it also commit an offence if the applicant proves, with hindsight, to be unsuitable to hold a firearm? If that is a danger, it should be possible to include in the Bill a phrase that will provide for a statement made in good faith to be a let-off if the holder of the firearms certificate proves in time to be unsuitable. Perhaps my hon. Friend will clarify that point when he winds up the debate.

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson: Does my hon. Friend agree that this touches on a subject that was discussed in Committee? It concerns the whole question of the validity of the counter-signature on a firearms certificate application. The new clause places upon the general practitioner who counter-signs an application a requirement to know more about an applicant, rather than merely look at the 10 questions which precede his counter-signature and agree that they have been answered correctly. My hon. Friend will know that one of those questions asks the applicant:

"Do you suffer from any form of mental disorder or defect?".

I cannot imagine a general practitioner putting his signature to an application without examining the applicant concerned. If his signature is to serve as verification of the qualities of the person seeking the certificate he must ask himself, as a medical person, whether he will simply add his signature or will ask the applicant to his surgery for an examination and study his records. Such would be a wise precaution.

Although it is a fact that Michael Ryan's general practitioner signed his application, I wonder whether he would have done that quite so willingly if this new clause had been before him. He might himself have wished to take a second look at Ryan and consider his mental state before doing so. I impress on my hon. Friend that, although I entirely support the new clause, I wish to see it strengthened by introducing the concept of a medical examination before an applicant's signature is counter-signed by a general practitioner. In that is not only the question of the person's mental state but also that of his physical ability to handle a weapon.

10.15 pm

Mr. William Ross: One or two little questions disturb me. The Firearms Act 1968 requires

"the verification in the prescribed manner of any prescribed particulars and of the likeness of any such photograph to the applicant."

But I am not sure what kind of person the new clause is talking about, and I should like an explanation.

A working party reported on the administration of the Act in 1984. I am sure that the Minister, having read the Bill assiduously, would also have taken time to read that report, and that he has looked at paragraph 48, headed "Counter signatures" which reads:

"Rule 4 of the Firearms Rules provides that a shotgun certificate application form must be countersigned by a person of good standing, who has known the applicant personally for at least two years, to the effect that the information given on the form is, to the best of his knowledge correct. Many forces make no enquiries at all about countersignatories and the requirement seems to serve little useful purpose. There is no similar requirement in respect of firearms certificates. The Working Party accordingly recommends that the requirement of countersignatures in respect of shotgun certificates be dropped."

[Mr. William Ross]

I am not sure that I can mesh together the statements in the various reports, Bills and orders amending Bills, but no doubt the Minister, who has had such a clear exposition of the Bill given to him by members of the Committee, will be able to make it all clear to us. I should like to know why the working party was able to come out with that statement, why the Bill seems to say something rather different and why the new amending Bill seems to be restoring an earlier position. I confess that I am becoming rather confused, and I should like some daylight—or perhaps a spotlight—cast upon the matter so that we can understand what it all means.

Sir Hector Monro: I too would like to know who will verify the application and the photograph. It is a very different kettle of fish from what many of us do in various walks of life, whether we are doctors, ministers, Members of Parliament or justices of the peace—verifying the likeness of a photograph for a passport. Here it is necessary to verify that a person is capable of holding a firearms certificate. As the matter is dealt with in section 26(2) of the 1968 Act, why is it only now that we are talking seriously about photographs when they could have been introduced administratively at any time in the past 10 years?

I also wonder about the efficiency of the photograph system. I do not think, when I look at my photograph in my London Underground pass, that anyone would know who it represented, and I am glad that that is so. But we should bear in mind that the photograph could be used by someone going to a gun shop to buy a weapon or ammunition. As it is not a legal requirement to carry a firearm certificate at all times, it will be of no great use when someone is out in the countryside with a weapon. What are the qualifications of the person who has to verify the application under section 26(2)(b) of the 1968 Act? The section does not specify who has to verify the application. We might make some progress if my hon. Friend could give some details about that.

Mr. Martyn Jones (Clwyd, South-West): I echo the point that was made by the hon. Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson). I was a member of the Committee that considered the Bill. It is strange that we are not considering an amendment that specifies what the verifier of the firearms certificate is supposed to be looking for. Without such an amendment, the Bill will not prevent such tragic events as Hungerford. We heard earlier that, had the existing legislation been correctly implemented, the Hungerford tragedy would never have happened.

I see no point in including this new clause in the Bill unless it covers the person who has to verify the application. Without that obvious criterion, it is administrative nonsense and serves no purpose whatsoever.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I agree that this is a modest procedural improvement. We are asking for a statement to the effect that a person is not unfit to possess a firearm. It is not a statement that a person is suited to hold a firearm. Few people would care to make that positive assertion. We consulted the British Medical Association, whose considered view was that general practitioners would not wish to be party to a verification procedure that obliged them to make a positive assertion that somebody was fit to hold a firearm. It is a negative procedure, to the effect that somebody is not unfit to hold a firearm.

Questions have been asked about the identity of the people who will be asked to make such a statement. An example can be found in rule 4 of the 1969 firearms rules. Instances are Members of Parliament, justices of the peace, ministers of religion, doctors, lawyers, bank officers, or persons of similar standing who have known the applicant personally for at least two years.

My hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside (Mr. Colvin) asked about the offence. The position is dealt with in section 26(5) of the Firearms Act 1968, which provides:

> "It is an offence for a person to make any statement which he knows to be false for the purpose of procuring, whether for himself or any other person, the grant or renewal of a certificate under this Act."

Accordingly, if a person made a deliberately false statement under the proposed new clause, he would be caught, but if he were acting honestly and in good faith, he would not be committing an offence.

Mr. Frank Cook: As to the verifier's qualifications, the Minister appears to be saying not that he wants to make it harder for the applicant to obtain a firearms certificate but that he wants to make it easier for the verifier to do his job without difficulty or embarrassment. Is that his argument?

Mr. Hogg: No. I think that the hon. Gentleman is doing me an injustice, so I shall repeat what I have already said. I accept that this is a modest amendment. I do not think that we can impose on any person who is verifying an application the obligation to assert positively that the person making the application is fit to hold firearms. The hon. Gentleman must ask himself whether he would make such a positive assertion in respect of somebody else. I think that he would probably answer, no. Most of us can sensibly ask ourselves of a person we know whether there is any reason known to us why that person should not hold a firearm. The new clause seeks to address that question, and it is wholly reasonable to incorporate it into the legislation.

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian) *rose*——

Mr. Hogg: I shall give way to the hon. Gentleman; it is nice to see him here.

Mr. Home Robertson: If the Minister is happy to see me, he may hear more from me. I hope that the new clause is intended to be constructive. I presume that the Minister tabled it in such a spirit. It is building on part of the 1968 Act which provides simply for the verification of a photograph and adding to it a judgment as to whether someone is a suitable person to hold a firearm. He has given a list of ministers of religion, bank managers and Members of Parliament, but does he think that such a measure will add to the sum total of human safety in the United Kingdom if the hon. Member for Belfast, West (Mr. Adams), who I do not think has taken his seat here, signed a document asserting that he knows of no reason why the applicant should not be permitted to possess a firearm?

Mr. Hogg: The hon. Gentleman is wrong. Section 26 of the principal Act is not confined to a verifying photograph; it also deals with the verification of a substantial number of relevant particulars.

Sir Dudley Smith (Warwick and Leamington): My hon. Friend has read out the usual list of people who are permitted to do that. Does he agree that there is a vast difference between signing a verification of this kind and a passport application? If something goes wrong in regard to a passport, not too much discredit accrues to the person who did the signing, but I should have thought that a great deal of opprobium would attach to the person signing if the person who has the licence eventually goes wrong. It is a very difficult judgment for anyone to make, even under this procedure, and to sign his name. Indeed, a great number of people will opt out of signing.

Mr. Hogg: My hon. Friend emphasises the difficulty which I previously stressed. Very few people would make the positive assertion that someone was fit to hold a firearm, because of the very points that my hon. Friend has just made. However, most of us who know someone reasonably well would be able to judge whether there were any good reason to disqualify that person from holding a firearm. If we felt that there were no good reason to disqualify that person from having a firearm, we would sign the verification contained in the new clause. My hon. Friend is right about the difficulty, but I hope that he feels that we have the balance about right.

Mr. Corbett: Has the Minister thought about guidance which could be made available to those asked to sign verification statements? I have followed what he said, although, if he will forgive me, it is more of a lawyer's point than a layman's point. A statement saying, "I know nothing that would prevent Joe Bloggs from having a gun," in simple terms is tantamount to saying, "Let him have a gun." I understand the reservation that the Minister makes, but does he not consider that there is some virtue in having guidance available for those called upon to make verification statements?

Mr. Hogg: I am always reluctant to indulge in too much bureaucracy. The verification contained in the new clause is fairly clear. It is an assertion that the person knows of no reason why someone should not be permitted to possess a firearm. That matter is fairly clear to an ordinary person addressing it. I do not think that it would be necessary to furnish guidance. If we adhere to the groups of people referred to in rule 4, the hon. Member might feel that a person such as himself would be able to deal with the question without further guidance.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause read a Second time, and added to the Bill.

New Clause 12

GRANT OF CO-TERMINOUS FIREARM AND SHOT GUN CERTIFICATES

'(1) Where a person who holds a firearm certificate applies for the grant or renewal of a shot gun certificate that certificate may, if he so requests, be granted or renewed for such period less than that specified in or prescribed under section 26(3) of the principal Act as will secure that it ceases to be in force at the same time as the firearm certificate.

(2) Where a person who holds a shot gun certificate, or both such a certificate and a firearm certificate, applies for the grant of a firearm certificate, or for the renewal of the firearm certificate held by him, he may, on surrendering his shot gun certificate, apply for a new shot gun certificate to take effect on the same day as that on which the firearm certificate is granted or renewed.

(3) Where a shot gun certificate is granted to a person or such a certificate held by him is renewed and on the same occasion he is granted a firearm certificate or such a certificate held by him is renewed the fee payable on the grant or renewal of the shot gun certificate shall be £5 instead of that specified in section 32 of the principal Act.

(4) Subsection (3) above shall be included in the provisions that may be amended under section 43 of the principal Act.'.
—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

10.30 pm

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take the following: New clause 1—*Conditions attaching to the possession of self-loading rifles*—

'No firearm certificate shall authorise a person to possess, purchase or acquire a self-loading or pump-action rifle to which section 5(2) (ab) of the principal Act applies unless that person—

(a) has held a firearms certificate for at least three years, and

(b) has been a full member of a rifle club for at least three years, and

(c) is a member of a club which is affiliated to the National Rifle Association or the United Kingdom Practical Shooting Association and which has been approved by the Secretary of State as a club suitable for target shooting with self-loading rifles, and has satisfactorily completed a course of service rifle or practical rifle shooting approved by either of these Associations, or

(d) has a reason to possess such a gun because of disability or participation in vermin control or deer-culling.'.

New clause 6—*Club membership a condition of new firearms certificate*—

'Before a Chief Constable issues a firearms certificate to a person who has never previously held a rifle or pistol that person shall have been a member of a Home Office approved rifle or pistol club for at least six months and have obtained full membership of the club. "Home Office approved" shall mean a club organised along guidelines drawn up and issued by the Home Office.'.

New clause 7—*Qualifications for holding certificate*—

'No firearm certificate shall authorise a person to possess, purchase or acquire a self-loading or pump-action rifle to which section 5(2)(ab) of the principal Act applies unless that person—

(a) has held a firearms certificate for at least three years, and

(b) has been a full member of a rifle club for at least three years, and, as a member of a club which is affiliated to the National Rifle Association or the United Kingdom Practical Shooting Association, which has been approved by the Secretary of State as a club suitable for target shooting with self-loading rifles, has satisfactorily completed a course of service rifle or practical rifle shooting approved by either of these associations, or

(c) has a reason to possess such a gun because of disability, or,

(d) has a reason to possess such a gun for vermin control, deer culling, or other good reason.'.

New clause 8—*Appeals in cases of refusal of registration*—

'(1) An appeal under section 20, 29, 30, 34, 36, 37, or 38 of the principal Act lies in England and Wales to the Firearms Appeal Tribunal and in Scotland to the Scottish Firearms Appeal Tribunal and an appeal from a decision of any such tribunal on a point of law shall lie in England and Wales to the Divisional Court of the High Court of Justice and in Scotland to the Court of Session.

(2) The Home Secretary shall by regulations provide for the establishment of a tribunal or tribunals to determine appeals by persons in England and Wales aggrieved by any decision of a Chief Officer of Police under the principal Act or under this Act.

(3) The Secretary of State for Scotland shall by regulations provide for establishment of a tribunal or tribunals to determine appeals by persons in Scotland aggrieved by any decision of a Chief Constable under the principal Act or this Act.

(4) Regulations made by the Home Secretary or the Secretary of State for Scotland may include provision for summoning persons to attend and give evidence and produce documents and for authorising the administration of Oaths to witnesses.

(5) There shall be defrayed out of moneys provided by Parliament any administrative expenses incurred by the Home Secretary or the Secretary of State for Scotland for the purposes of the principal Act or this Act.

(6) Section 14 of the Firearms Act is repealed.'.

New clause 9—*Certificates, applications and grants*—

'After section 26(1) of the principal Act (Application for, and grant of certificates) there shall be inserted:—

"(1A) When an application for the grant or variation of a firearm certificate in respect to firearms ammunition or conditions or grant of a shotgun certificate has been made in the prescribed form to the Chief Officer of Police for the area in which the applicant resides the Chief Officer of Police for the area in which the applicant resides shall proceed to either—

(a) grant the shotgun certificate or firearms certificate or variation to the firearms certificate application within twenty-eight days, and/or

(b) state in writing the reasons for refusal to grant the authority to possess each individual firearms/ammunition or shotgun and ammunition, additionally stating the relevant sections of the Act in each case and notify the applicant of his right to appeal to Crown Court within twenty-one days from the date of receipt of such notification, and/or

(c) state in writing any difficulty or delay external to the Police service preventing the granting or formal refusal to processing of the application.".'.

New clause 10—*Application of certificates (verification)*—

'After section 26(2)(b) of the principal Act (rules requiring verification of matters contained in applications for certificates) there shall be inserted—

"(c) require the application form for a certificate to contain the following questions, the answers to which shall be certified by the applicant's General Practitioner to the best of his knowledge and belief that the particulars as stated by the applicant to the above questions are accurate—

(i)(a) Do you suffer from epilepsy or from sudden attacks of disabling giddiness or fainting? Please state 'Yes' or 'No'.

(b) If 'Yes' give details opposite,

(ii)(a) Do you suffer from, or have you at any time suffered from mental illness? Please state 'Yes' or 'No'

(b) If 'Yes' give details opposite.

(iii)(a) Do you suffer from any other disease or disability which might make possession by you of a firearm dangerous to the public? Please state 'Yes' or 'No'.

(b) If 'Yes' give details opposite.".'

New clause 11—*Renewal of and temporary certificates*—

'After section 26(1) of the principal Act (Application for, and grant of Certificates) there shall be inserted:—

"(1B) When an application for the renewal of a firearm or shotgun certificate has been made in the prescribed form to the Chief Officer of Police for the area in which the applicant resides no less than twenty-eight days prior to the date of expiry of the existing certificate and subject to the certificate holder not having been served with a notice of revocation then the Chief Officer of Police shall either:—

(a) grant a renewal of the firearm or shotgun certificate subject to subsection X below in either the terms of the expiring certificate, and/or

(b) issue a temporary certificate in the same terms and conditions as the expiring certificate, subject to subsection X below, and/or

(c) state in writing the reasons for refusal to grant the authority to possess each individual firearm/ammunition or shotguns and ammunition additionally stating the relevant section(s) of the Act in each case and notify the applicant of his right to appeal to Crown Court within twenty-one days from the date of receipt of such notification, subject to subsection X below, and/or

(d) state in writing any difficulty for delay external to the Police Service preventing the granting or the formal refusal to the processing of the application, subject to subsection X below, to the issue of a certificate.

(X) To be received by the certificate holder 48 hours prior to the expiry of the existing certificate".'.

New clause 16—*Standard form of firearms certificates*—

'The Home Secretary shall authorise the use of a standard application form by all police authorities in respect of the grant or renewal of firearms certificates after consultation with the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Police Federation and representatives of shooting interests within 12 months of the coming into force of this Act'.

Amendment No. 7, in clause 1, page 1, line 18, at end insert

'unless the person holds a firearm certificate issued on the conditions required by section (conditions attaching to the possession of self-loading rifles) of this Act.'.

Amendment No. 134, in clause 3, page 2, line 42, at end insert—

'and shall take such steps to ascertain the mental and physical history and present state of the applicant as he considers necessary.'.

Amendment No. 10, in line 48, at end insert—

'(1AA) No such certificate shall be refused on grounds relating to the safekeeping of the shotgun unless the chief officer of police has reason to believe that the lack of security for the shotgun is a danger to the public safety or the peace.'.

Amendment No. 11, in page 3, line 11, after 'guns', insert—

'and any additional shotguns acquired after the grant or renewal of the certificate shall be added to the certificate by the holder of the certificate and such amendment shall be notified to the chief officer of police.'.

Amendment No. 114, in clause 7, page 4, line 24, leave out 'two' and insert 'three'.

Amendment No. 115, in line 27, after 'photograph' insert—

'certified by the Chief Constable to be a true likeness'.

Amendment No. 13, in clause 10, page 5, line 27, leave out

'with only such types of rifles or pistols as are specified in the approval'

and insert—

'and competition with small-bore rifles and pistols and full-bore rifles and pistols or any combination of them.'.

Amendment No. 14, in line 31, at end insert—

'(3A) A person aggrieved by the refusal of the Secretary of State to approve a club, or renewal of the approval of a club, or by the imposition of conditions may in accordance with section 44 of the principal Act appeal against the decision.'

Amendment No. 80 in clause 17, page 9, line 30, at end insert—

'(3A) After section 27(2) of that Act there shall be inserted—

"(2A) Where a condition is specified on the certificate to the territory over which the firearms may be used, such conditions must be such as is specified in the firearms rules.".'

Amendment No. 146, in line 30, at end insert—

'(2d) section 33(4) of that Act (registration of firearms dealers) shall be amended by inserting after the word "registration" the words "which shall bear an up to date photograph of the person registered, countersigned by a person of standing and known to the dealer.".'

Amendment No. 147, in line 37, at end insert—

'(2e) In section 53(a) of that Act there shall be added after the word "of" the words "application documents and".'

Mr. Hogg: Perhaps the most helpful course would be for me to introduce new clause 12, inform the House that I cannot commend the other new clauses and the amendments in the group, and respond later to what has been said in the debate.

New clause 12 is designed to make coterminous grants of firearms and shotgun certificates. That is what most members of the Committee wanted, and I am glad to say that we have been able to achieve it.

Mr. Corbett: The Minister said that he would be brief, and my word, he was.

There seems to be sense in the new clause. Perhaps the Minister would be kind enough to make it clear that the Government have also accepted that, when someone holds——

Mr. Frank Cook: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. These are serious matters. Considerable resentment has alredy been expressed about our not being given an opportunity to discuss them properly in Committee. Can I ask you to rule on the hilarity that is being exhibited on the Conservative Front Bench below the Gangway? Is it proper in such a debate?

Mr. Speaker: I was listening so closely to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett) that I did not notice any hilarity. I do not think that this is a particularly funny subject, and I hope that we can get on with it.

Mr. Corbett: I am grateful for, and flattered by, your remarks, Mr. Speaker.

Would the Minister be kind enough to make it clear that, when someone holds both a firearms certificate and a shotgun certificate, that can be shown on a single sheet of paper? The one does not automatically follow from the other. In view of our shared interest in cutting bureaucracy, the Minister many see some sense in that suggestion.

New clauses 1 and 7 are designed to license the shooter rather than the weapon. Someone in Anglesey wrote to me

[Mr. Corbett]

today—the argument is not new, but it was put in a slightly different context—asking what the difference was between a fast motor vehicle and a slow one. The answer is the driver. He said that in the event of an accident, it is, of course, the driver and not the car who is before the courts, and if that is good enough for something as lethal as a car in the wrong hands, it should apply to weapons.

That argument has some merit in some respects. I understand the wish of people who use self-loading rifles to be able to continue to do so. I want to be open with the House and others on this issue. I said in Committee, and now repeat, that the case for using SLRs to kill animals for what are known as sporting purposes is slight. The case for using them in competition target shooting is stronger, but that has to be balanced against the potential—indeed, the inbuilt—lethality of SLRs from a public safety point of view.

The ban on SLRs is justified, although I and some of my hon. Friends were prepared to support the idea of keeping legal those SLRs with integral magazines capable of storing between three and five shots. I know that that meets the argument of many hon. Members. However, there is anger among competition shooters because the House cannot guarantee that the banning of SLRs will prevent another Hungerford tragedy. We should acknowledge that and perhaps it is the strongest case for banning SLRs. Such a ban would make even the illegal possession of these weapons more difficult given that they would be added to a list of weapons that people would not be allowed to hold. That is a public safety argument that we cannot dismiss.

Mr. L. R. Tucker wrote to my hon. Friend the Member for Stockton, North (Mr. Cook) to explain how he and his brother had invented a device that locked the trigger mechanism so that it was impossible to fire weapons without unlocking it with a key and removing the device. He was kind enough to enclose a photograph of one such mechanism attached to a shotgun. To unlock the mechanism takes about five seconds. Mr. Tucker states that keys for such devices could be held at gun clubs when weapons were taken home. Such a mechanism would also cover anxieties about the safety of weapons in transit from home to an event, sometimes via a public house or restaurant.

Such a mechanism is another alternative to an outright ban on the use of SLRs and it could go a long way to meet the Government's objective to try to ensure better public safety. Hon. Members who sat on the Committee will already be aware that I find this a difficult area because I do not want the Government to act as a nanny. We want an enabling state and at the end of the day a judgment must be made. That judgment is simple and stark, although, as I am demonstrating, it is not an easy one to reach.

Will the public safety be helped to some degree by making it illegal to hold SLRs? I have reached the conclusion—I am not pretending that it is shared by all my right hon. and hon. Friends—that the answer must be yes.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor (Upminster): I am following the hon. Gentleman's argument with great care and I agree with much of it. He has reached the conclusion that the banning of such rifles, even if they are limited to five rounds, will enhance public safety. Is there any evidence to back that conclusion?

Mr. Corbett: I hope that the hon. Gentleman will not think me discourteous when I say that we spent a great deal of time in Committee discussing this matter—he would expect nothing less. At the end of the day it is a matter of judgment. Some facts are available—the House will be familiar with them, so I shall not weary it with them—that would strongly support the argument that I suspect the hon. Gentleman backs.

It is a balance of judgment as to whether such a ban helps or hinders public safety. I have reached the conclusion—I am aware that it will not be universally shared—that it stands a chance of helping public safety.

Amendment No. 134 concerns the grant and renewal of shotgun certificates. It would empower the chief officer of police to inquire into the

"mental and physical history and present state of the applicant as he considers necessary."

In Committee there was a substantial debate about making such an inquiry a condition of consideration for every application, but that was not a successful proposal. Where a chief officer of police or someone acting on his behalf was uncertain and had perhaps no more than a fingertip feeling about this—police officers are not medically qualified and do not pretend that they are—they should have powers under the Bill to seek the opinion of the applicant's general practitioner in cases where licences were about to be issued or renewed. It is an extremely important point.

We have to face the fact that about one in five of us is likely to suffer some form of mental illness during our lifetime. Happily for most of us it is temporary and we get over it. However, it does happen. I am thinking about what the loss of a job that someone enjoyed could do to a character. Certainly, the sudden and tragic loss of an infant, the break-up of a marriage or a relationship, and everyday events such as that—unhappily that is how they should be described—can and do put people temporarily off mental balance.

It may be said that a person in that condition should know well enough that he or she should not make applications in the first place. However, it could be part of that condition that they do not recognise that they are in that state and are reluctant to take advice about it. That is an area of risk.

All that the amendment seeks to do is to enable the police, through a quick telephone call to a GP, to clear up the matter. I appreciate the point about medical confidentiality but the applicant could be asked to agree to the telephone call being made beforehand. The police officer concerned would draw conclusions, and would perhaps be entitled to do so, when an applicant said, "No, I do not want that done."

Amendment No. 146 deals with a simple and obvious point. If it is proper to require certificate holders to have an up-to-date photograph on their certificate—there is little disagreement on that—I would have thought that it is at least as important for registered firearms dealers to have to do the same. Perhaps it is more important for the firearms dealers because the scope for abuse or misuse of a dealer's licence is greater than for the holder of a single weapon. I hope that the Minister will see the sense of that.

The House will know that under section 53(a) of the Firearms Act 1968 the Home Secretary is given powers by statutory instrument to prescribe the form of the certificates. Amendment No. 147 seeks to give him the power to do the same with application forms for those certificates. It seems an obvious point and makes one wonder why it was not done in the first place. The intended merit of that is that every police force in England and Wales would be collecting the same sort of information in response to answers to exactly the same set of questions from every applicant whether he or she lived in the far reaches of Cornwall and Devon or just below Hadrian's Wall.

10.45 pm

As we were told in Committee, some shooters complained about the attitude of some chief constables to certificate applications. It is well known that some of them are less enthusiastic about firearms than their brothers. It is strange that they all happen to be men; to the best of my knowledge, there is not yet a single woman chief constable, although no doubt we shall get around to that. You, Madam Deputy Speaker, have provided a marvellous precedent which I hope will soon be followed by the police forces. Shooters, as I was about to say, do not want the issue of a licence to depend either on the temperament of a chief constable or on where an applicant happens to live. Now, on occasion, it does. It is wrong that there should be so much personal interference in the way the Firearms Act is applied. Just because chief constables in different areas have different attitudes to firearms should not mean that shooters with equally legitimate reasons for holding weapons should be treated differently when applying for certificates.

As for new clause 16, I have teased the Minister about this issue before. I have a draft of the standard application form which I am perfectly prepared to let the Minister see. It is called:

"An inquiry form for the grant, renewal or variation of a firearms certificate."

It lists all sorts of personal details, followed by 20 questions—almost like "20 Things You Did Not Know About Getting A Firearms Certificate" in *The Sun*. Frivolity aside, the form goes through the things about which it is proper for the police to ask questions and get answers. It is designed to assist the police to determine the suitability of an applicant to hold a certificate.

This proposal would not put any great burden on the police. It is one of the things that the consultative committee—and the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Police Federation—should be consulted about. The more people who see such a draft, the better. I imagine that agreement about this could easily be reached. Why should police forces bear the extra burden—as they now do—of devising, preparing and printing their own application forms? Across the country, that must waste a tremendous amount of police time and money.

The Minister may say that such provision for a common application form is not needed. If the Secretary of State gets powers under the 1968 Act to specify the licence or certificate that shall be issued, I cannot see why the application forms should not be similarly covered. If, however, the Minister disagrees, will he give an undertaking that the Home Secretary will strongly recommend such a course of action in guidance given to chief constables to try to meet the concerns of large numbers of shooters about the differences in treatment that they receive from chief constables and those who work under their authority in the police forces in England and Wales?

Sir Hector Monro: The hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett) made an important point about uniformity of information for a shotgun or firearms certificate. As my hon. Friend the Minister will remember, he gave this undertaking in Committee:

"There is no intention to use the shotgun certificate process to limit the number of guns that an individual can possess. The only intention . . . is for the number of shotguns possessed to be described and identified."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee F*, 18 February 1988; c. 138.]

I am not sure that my hon. Friend has followed that up by giving us legislation that can be interpreted in the way that he did in Committee.

I welcome new clause 12 and thank my hon. Friend for it. It is about conterminous certificates. My only question is about cost. I know that my hon. Friend is reducing the shotgun cost to £5, but throughout the Committee stage he dodged the issue of the eventual cost—perhaps next year—not only of a shotgun certificate, but of a firearms certificate. As a result of the legislation that may be introduced after the Bill, enormous additional costs may be imposed on the police, so that inevitably the cost of the shotgun and firearms certificate will increase substantially. I mentioned £50 for a firearms certificate, and my hon. Friend has not denied that yet.

I am glad that the Home Secretary has returned to the Chamber, because this group of new clauses and amendments is at the heart of two of our main criticisms of the Home Office's handling of the Bill. The second is the issue of the statutory committee. One arm of the Government gave us an absolute assurance last week that it would remain as it was in the Bill, and the following morning, last Friday, we found a series of amendments that made substantial alterations. That is not the way in which hon. Members should operate, and I found it extraordinary that that should happen.

The other great issue is the self-loading rifle. I hope that we shall be able to vote on new clause 1 if we do not receive a satisfactory reply from my hon. Friend. This is another opportunity to try to persuade the Government that the use of self-loading rifles is not as heinous as they make out. It is the man behind any rifle, not the form of action, that matters. As we demonstrated time and again in Committee, a competent operator with a bolt action rifle can get off just as many rounds as a person with a limited integral magazine with a self-loading action. Yet the Minister seems reluctant to listen or understand. I shall come to some of his quotations in the not too distant future.

One of our principal objectives in new clause 1 is to give us another opportunity to persuade the Government, and my hon. Friend will see that we include four important safeguards so that a self-loading weapon can be used. The first is that the owner

"has held a firearms certificate for at least three years"

and has a good track record. Secondly, he must have been

"a full member of a rifle club for at least three years",

observed and controlled by people who understand firearms. Thirdly, he must be

"a member of a club which is affiliated to the National Rifle Association or the United Kingdom Practical Shooting Association,"

[Sir Hector Monro]

two national bodies that control practical shooting. He must have completed proper training. The Home Secretary would have the power to approve special clubs using self-loading rifles, and so on. That is a powerful control.

I shall refer to the fourth safeguard in depth because it covers those who are disabled and need self-loading rifles if they are to participate in the important recreational sport of shooting. Why is my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary determined that disabled people should not have self-loading rifles for their enjoyment of the sport? Why will he not let women use self-loading rifles to participate? I am glad that my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, the hon. Member for Edinburgh, West (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton), is here. Why will Scotland, England and Wales not allow those people to use self-loading rifles?

We are not talking about self-loading rifles with a vast magazine capacity. We are talking about self-loading rifles with four or five-round internal magazines. What does the Home Secretary have against such weapons compared with a bolt-action rifle holding 10 rounds and having greater firepower than a five-round self-loading rifle? I am disappointed that my right hon. Friend does not even appear to be listening to me. I wish that he would take on board the fact that we are serious about disabled people, women and others who cannot fire a bolt-action rifle. Some people have disfigured hands and cannot use a right-handed bolt-action rifle and cannot afford to have it converted to left-handed action.

There are many difficulties related to self-loading weapons, but the Home Secretary and the Under-Secretary of State do not seem to be prepared to listen to them. It is a disgrace that, even though this country goes out of its way to help the disabled in athletics and almost every sport, the Home Office is not prepared to help and support the recreational shooter. I am amazed that the Home Secretary and the Under-Secretary of State are not prepared to respond to the needs of these people.

Our other reason for being cross about this issue of the self-loading rifle is that in Committee my hon. Friend said that he would look favourably upon the five-round, internal magazine self-loading rifle. It is astonishing that at the end of the day he has reversed everything that he said in Committee, although he never gave a firm commitment. I shall give a few quotations from my hon. Friend. He said:

"As a self-loading rifle can fire three, four or five rounds over an extended period, it is difficult to argue that that gun is more lethal than a traditional 10-shot bolt action."

Later he said:

"I am trying to approach the matter constructively in an attempt to meet the point about disability. Incidentally, it would also meet the culling point."

We were talking about culling hinds. He went on:

"It does not constitute a major departure from the main thrust of the clause".

My hon. Friend later said:

"I am very much closer in this matter to the view of my hon. Friend the Member for Newbury than those of my hon. Friends the Members for Norfolk, North-West and for Dumfries. I am happy to reconsider the issue, but I have in mind a limited capacity. What we are likely to consider appropriate will probably be nearer to four, as for the Remington Woodmaster, than to eight shots.

Therefore, my undertaking is that I shall look at this issue seriously to see whether it would be right to leave in section 1 integral-magazine self-loading guns of very limited capacity, preferably three . . . That would meet . . . the pest control point".

Mr. Henry Bellingham (Norfolk, North-West): Is my hon. Friend aware that one of our reasons for feeling so strongly about this issue is that a quasi commitment was given and as a result we did not vote against clause 1 stand part? That is why we feel badly let down. A quasi commitment was given to buy off our vote.

Sir Hector Monro: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. Even the Minister would accept that he knew he was facing defeat. It was only because of my summing up at the end of the debate that he escaped. He has let us down very badly. In winding up that debate I said:

"I am about to seek to withdraw the amendment, bearing in mind that, had I pressed the amendment on disability, I could probably have won it in the Committee. I hope that I shall not feel that I am let down on Report, when one has little hope of winning against the full Government Whipping operation. I should be very disappointed if the Minister did not table an amendment on Report covering the points that we have made this morning."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee F,* 8 March 1988; c. 326-32.]

My hon. Friend never came back to say that that was wrong. He left every impression that that was the right summing up. My hon. Friend has let down not only the whole of the shooting public, but all the disabled men and women over the issue of the small four or five-shot internal magazine self-loading rifle. I should have preferred him to go as far as an eight-shot internal magazine, because that would have covered the Garand rifle, which is commonly used by the target shooting fraternity. This country is particularly good at target shooting, and has the highest reputation for it, but one of the weapons used is to be taken away, purely at the behest of the Front Bench and the Home Office. It is a disgrace, and I hope that it is not too late for my hon. Friend to reconsider the astonishing decision that he and Scottish and Welsh Ministers have made.

Mr. Colvin: Will my hon. Friend confirm that during the passage of the Bill we have all undergone a certain amount of education about what shooting today is all about? We are no longer living in the days when he and I went down to the ranges and used a bolt action rifle because that was the only sort of rifle that was available. We have moved on, through the self-loading rifle, and many of the competitions that take place, nationally and internationally, do so with self-loading rifles. The point about competition is important for the United Kingdom and should not be under-estimated by my right hon. and hon. Friends on the Front Bench.

11 pm

Sir Hector Monro: Who would have thought in 1917 that many cars would have automatic gears by now, instead of a gear lever? We have moved on, and my right hon. and hon. Friends on the Front Bench do not seem to have done so in this respect.

From the start we have agreed that certain military weapons with large magazines are not acceptable. We are talking about rifles that hold a maximum of eight rounds, and usually four or five, as we discussed in Committee. My hon. Friend the Minister said that he would do as we wished if there were a sufficient number of rifles, but some of them are made internationally. There is a huge supply of these rifles. I reeled off about six different types in

Committee, and can go through that list again. If the Government are prepared to look at the matter again and give a commitment that they will introduce an amendment in the other place on self-loading rifles with internal magazines and deal properly with the consultative committee, there would be a different attitude to the Bill, not only in the House, but in the other place.

I shall not go into the details of the amendments grouped with the new clause, because my hon. Friends will speak on them. Many of these are extremely important. I am not saying that my new clause is 100 per cent. right, and I would be happy if my hon. Friend would concede the point about the five-shot, or eight-shot or the pre-1939 self-loading rifle. He has a whole host of opportunities to get out of the corner into which he has painted himself. I hope that if I move the new clause later, for voting purposes, we will get the concession hoped for by all those in the shooting world involved in target and sporting shooting for recreation—there is a huge involvement in it—who feel cross about the Government treating them in the way that they have. We shall have a fresh attitude to the Bill if tonight we get a positive answer from my hon. Friend.

Mr. William Ross: Like the hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro), I have been rather disappointed by the Government's reaction this evening, because I remember clearly the incident in Committee to which the hon. Gentleman referred, when we refrained from voting. Had we done so, the Government would have been defeated and as a result would have been in a difficult position. The Minister's hon. Friends let him off the hook, in the expectation that he would meet their case, which they had put to him graciously, but unanswerably. The Minister appeared, as so often, to accept what they said, and in good faith they let him off the hook. I am sorry that they have lived to regret that. At the time, some of us wondered whether that was wise, but we were guided by their judgment rather than our own cynical assessment of Government attitudes.

You will appreciate, Madam Deputy Speaker, that this is a large group of amendments. You will also appreciate that many of them are mine, which means that I shall have to talk on this subject for a long time. They are all sensible and soundly based and they are all worthy of acceptance by a Government who are trying to do something sensible and constructive about firearms law. As the Minister has said, that probably means that none of them will be accepted, but I hope to persuade even him, with his closed mind, that my proposals are worthy of acceptance.

I have considered each of the amendments carefully before tabling them to try to find the appropriate language. Sadly, there is a typing error in the group of amendments which alters the meaning of one of the new clauses. Like the typing error that originated in the Minister's office regarding the verification of the Home Office approval of the Dunmore shooting centre, it has unforeseen consequences, but not, I hope, as serious as those arising from that error.

I should like to refer first to the new clause tabled by the hon. Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson). I understand what he is driving at and it is clear from the various amendments that have been tabled that we are all aiming at roughly the same thing. The hon. Gentleman's amendment excludes farmers and persons who use firearms in their work and other bona fide firearms clubs.

A number of points raised in Committee have a bearing on these issues. The hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare (Mr. Wiggin) asked what changes there had been since 1968 and what record of crime or irregularities the Home Office had discovered. The Under-Secretary of State replied:

> "An unapproved rifle club would be no more than the banding together of people who possess section 1 certificates for the shooting of their guns in a quarry . . . They are a gathering together of people who have section 1 certificates and want, for example, to shoot in a quarry that one of their number owns."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee F*, 25 February 1988; c. 213.]

In other words, certain difficulties are involved in defining a club. From what I have been told, that is a real problem in Great Britain. The problem may lie not entirely with the clubs, but with the Home Office and the form sent out to clubs. That form is then filled in by the club and sent back to the police, who send it back to the Home Office. The Home Office is then supposed to tell the National Rifle Association or the National Small-bore Rifle Association. That appears to work, albeit sometimes slowly and irregularly, in regard to the first application for the formation of a club.

However, if a club then seeks an extension of the firearms that it may use, there appears to be a difficulty in that no one appears to think it necessary to send the forms on to the relevant associations. Because of that, we must go further than the hon. Member for Newbury goes in his new clause. I tabled new clause 7 because of my knowledge of this subject and the knowledge of those people who advised me.

New clause 7 demands that a person should have held a firearms certificate for at least three years, should have been a full member of a rifle club for that period and should have undertaken a training procedure as a member of that club, or should have a reason to possess such a firearm because of disability. There are those who do not belong to a rifle club but who need to use one in the course of their work. Deer stalkers, gamekeepers and others fall into that category, including farmers. We must try to cater for that large and important group.

A difficulty arises with new clause 8, which appears in my name, because the final line includes a reference to section 14 of the Firearms Act 1968 when it should have been section 44. Section 14 deals with the possession, purchase or acquisition of a shotgun by those temporarily in Great Britain, a matter to which we shall come in due course. Section 44 deals with appeals, and it is only when the typing error is taken note of that the new clause makes sense. I tumbled to the error only the other day. I tried to have it corrected, and it is unfortunate that it was not. If the mistake had been put right, I do not think that the new clause would have appeared in the group that is now before the House.

It is vital that we meet the concern of those who find that their application for a firearms certificate has been refused. I am sure that all those who take an interest in firearms will be aware that if someone's application is refused there is no cheap or easy way in which he can appeal against the decision. Such an appeal normally ends up with a hearing before the High Court, and that is an extremely costly business. It could cost many hundreds of pounds to take that course, but quite frequently those who appeal win the day.

I hope that the Government will meet the real need for a cheap, simple and straightforward appeal system that

[Mr. William Ross]

will sort out some of the worst cases of refusal and at the same time, if the appeal tribunal fails, allow the issue to *proceed to the High Court if that* is considered worth while. I ask the Government seriously to consider this issue.

The object is to set up a tribunal system to hear appeals against the refusals of chief officers of police to grant or vary firearms certificates or shotgun certificates, but not to deal with criminal offences. The tribunal should be on the lines of an industrial tribunal, the procedures of which would provide a useful model. It should have a legally qualified chairman of suitable standing. It should represent police interests and shooting interests, and perhaps other interests. The tribunal should sit in England and Wales in buildings of the sort that are used by industrial tribunals, and there would be localities in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Some sort of legal representation would be allowed. No award of costs would be allowed except in exceptional circumstances. There would need to be a secretariat.

There would need also to be a flat fee. The costs of taking an appeal to such a simple tribunal should not be allowed to move into the realm of costs that are incurred in taking cases to other legal forums. There could be an appeal on a point of law to the divisional court or whatever happens to be the relevant court in the appropriate jurisdiction. The tribunal could have all the functions that are exercised by the Crown court in its administrative capacity.

The advantages are numerous. The cost of administration would be much less to the police and the shooting public. I assume that, normally, whenever the police lose an appeal, the public purse must bear the cost. The speed of decisions would be far greater than under the present system in Crown courts, where appeals are regulated and are properly considered less important than criminal matters. Taking away this small portion of work would greatly ease the burden on the Crown court system. The new system would build up its own expertise.

11.15pm

At present, the Crown court cannot compel the attendance of witnesses, documents and so on. Anyone who wishes to compel attendance must issue writs through the High Court, which is a time-consuming and costly business. *[Interruption.]* By far the most important advantage of a tribunal over the Crown court would be the lessening of the enormous cost of dealing with firearms applications. It has been a tactical advantage in some cases to refuse certificates, knowing that the costs would be £2,000 or £3,000. That is unacceptable.

An important possibility has been opened up by the new clause. I hope that the Government intend to go down that route, as it is badly needed. *[Interruption.]* No doubt—

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. There is a great deal of noise in the Chamber. The hon. Member has serious points to make and I hope that he will be heard properly.

Mr. Ross: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. No doubt hon. Members at the rear of the Chamber are catching up because of their lack of knowledge of firearms law. I am pleased to see them all here, but, is a pity that they have not attempted to read the Bill's proceedings.

New clause 9 deals with the application for the granting or variation of certificates. It imposes a time limit within which the whole application procedure must be carried out. Twenty-eight days is a reasonable time for the police to carry out their work. The new clause demands that the police must tell the individual when the application has been refused and notify him that he has a right of appeal within 21 days of the date of receipt of the notification and

"state in writing any difficulty or delay external to the Police service".

There should not be any difficulty within the police service, but something may happen over which it has no control —for example, in the Home Office—so I should like to give the police a let-out.

New clause 10 sets out three questions which are intended to discover the applicant's condition. The Minister may not have seen these questions before. If so, he should pick up the RUC application form. These questions are a direct lift from that form. The questions ask:

"Do you suffer from epilepsy or from sudden attacks of disabling giddiness or fainting? . . . Do you suffer from, or have you at any time suffered from mental illness? . . . Do you suffer from any other disease or disability which might make possession by you of a firearm dangerous to the public?"

The applicant must answer yes or no and give details.

One might think that an individual who suffered from those conditions and who was anxious to get a certificate would not answer the questions. The RUC tells me that frequently people answer them truthfully and a proper investigation can be carried out.

The RUC application form does not ask, as paragraph (c) does, for the applicant's general practitioner to certify

"to the best of his knowledge and belief that the particulars as stated by the applicant . . . are accurate".

I have listened to what has been said about the position of the medical world in certifying the stability and sanity, or otherwise, of an applicant for a firearms certificate. No one, not even the doctor who apparently signs and acts for the applicant, can give a hard and fast, black and white ruling that an individual is stable. That is not a matter for a general practitioner.

Mr. Corbett: I want to return to the question of mental illness in the context of what the hon. Gentleman said about the RUC experience being that most people—or perhaps he said many people—answered the questions truthfully. Is the hon. Gentleman aware of an applicant who answered that he had suffered at some time from mental illness, say 10 years ago, yet has clearly recovered from that illness, who has been refused a certificate merely on the grounds that he has demonstrated that he has recovered from that illness?

Mr. Ross: I am not aware of that, and I cannot answer that question. However, I understand that in such cases the police make the most careful, detailed and discreet inquiries of the medical staff who treated that person for the mental illness, of the general practitioner and of those people who know the individual intimately. I would think that in general such people with that background of mental illness would not receive a firearms certificate, but I believe that there are cases in which people have recovered from instability and would be granted a

certificate. However, this is a delicate matter that is best left to common sense, which is sometimes sadly lacking in these affairs.

This is a difficult matter, and no one would try to deny the difficulty of the general theme. However, the line followed by the RUC is a worthy example that should be followed. I have introduced the matter for the House to consider.

I have a number of examples of application forms for firearms certificates. I have a copy of the form that I sent to the Minister today at his request. He said that he was not aware of its existence, and I have tabled a written question about it. I apologise for neglecting to send him a copy of that form until today. It is a model produced by the Home Office in 1969. It is headed:

"Report upon the application of . . ."

It continues:

"Is applicant of good character and fit to be trusted with firearms? If not, give reasons—eg. mentally unstable, previous convictions, intemperate habits, notoriously careless, etc."

Even then, previous consideration was given to this whole theme. The application form included space for reasons why the applicant wanted the firearm.

It is interesting to note that all the police forces in Britain use pretty much the same form, but with a different number. One never knows which firearms application form one is dealing with because each constabulary has its own. The South Wales constabulary has progressed. Its form asks:

"Is the applicant of temperate habits and sound mind?"

It approaches the whole question from a slightly different direction. It also asks:

"Is the applicant subject to fits of violent temper or careless in the use of firearms?

Can applicant be permitted to have a certificate without danger to public safety or to the peace?"

The police have made progress. However, they do not seem to have developed cohesively or satisfactorily for all concerned. It appears to be bitsy—a little bit here, a little bit there. That is not satisfactory. We should have a more comprehensive approach. The RUC has taken a different approach. That is wrong. We should try to nail this down and deal with it comprehensively across the country. One approach should be known to the police, the public and the shooting world and understood by all concerned. It is far more likely that such an approach would be considered satisfactory by all concerned. If we can achieve that tonight, this debate will have been worth while. I am afraid that we may not get that far.

New clause 9 is important and the Government should be prepared carefully to consider it. They should try to learn some lessons from it and aim at producing something in a form that people will accept.

New clause 11, standing in the name of my right hon. Friend the Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux) and myself, is aimed at making the police get their act together and handle renewals as quickly as possible. It provides:

"(1B) When an application for the renewal of a firearm certificate or shotgun certificate has been made in the prescribed form to the Chief Officer of Police for the area in which the applicant resides no less than twenty-eight days prior to the date of expiry of the existing certificate and subject to the certificate holder not having been served with a notice of revocation"—

I hope that the police would at least send out a reminder —

"then the Chief Officer of Police shall either:—

(a) grant a renewal of the firearm or shotgun certificate subject to subsection X below in either the terms of the expiring certificate"—

in other words, when there is no change. I believe that on some occasions police have renewed a certificate but have calmly removed some weapons, and then the holder found himself possessing firearms for which he did not have a certificate.

The chief officer may also

"(b) issue a temporary certificate in the same terms and conditions as the expiring certificate, subject to subsection X below, and/or

(c) state in writing the reasons for refusal to grant the authority to possess each individual firearm/ammunition or shotguns and ammunition additionally stating the relevant section(s) of the Act in each case and notify the applicant of his right to appeal to Crown Court within twenty-one days from the date of receipt of such notification, subject to subsection X below, and/or

(d) state in writing any difficulty for delay external to the Police service preventing the granting or the formal refusal to the processing of the application, subject to subsection X below, to the issue of a certificate."

In other words, I am trying to make the police state the specific reasons for their refusal so that applicants will have some understanding of the true situation rather than find themselves facing a totally blank wall. People refused a firearm certificate have a right to know what the reasons are for that refusal. If the police receive an application 28 days prior to the date of its expiry, there is no reason why they should not give those reasons in writing.

Subsection (X) of new clause 11 is simply a requirement that the police will see to it that the individual owning a firearm is provided with a new certificate 48 hours prior to the expiry of his existing certificate. If an applicant's certificate expires on 31 March, come 1 April he may otherwise be in possession of firearms for which he has no authorisation. That is not a matter to be taken lightly, because the penalty is a fine of up to £2,000, or six months' imprisonment, or possibly both.

Does the Minister really believe that any free citizen in this nation of ours should be left in that situation? I do not think so. If the police delay matters, or have them delayed, they have a duty to the public, and to the shooting public, to ensure that applicants are covered for the period in question. Holders of certificates should be told some time before if their certificates are not going to be renewed. Otherwise, renewal should follow.

I understand that in some parts of the country renewals simply omit weapons. North Wales has been quoted as one example, but perhaps hon. Members with knowledge of that part of the world can give the House more details. As a result, people are left without the right to hold the weapons in their possession. I understand that the Chief Constable concerned is a member of the Minister's working party on firearms, which seems rather a queer choice.

In passing over the amendments and new clauses put down by other right hon. and hon. Members, I am not actively saying that they are bad; it is just that I have quite enough of my own to be getting on with. I hope and pray that they will deal with theirs in a manner that will convince me, as I am trying to convince them of the validity of what I am saying.

[Mr. Ross]

11.30 pm

Amendments Nos. 114 and 115 deal with the photographic provisions. As I have pointed out before, under Northern Ireland legislation it is necessary to have two photographs, which must be certified by the police officer. Amendment No. 115 proposes the words

"certified by the Chief Constable to be a true likeness".

I do not expect Sir John Hermon to come down and look at me, then say, "That's you in the photograph, Willie," and sign it on the back. I do, however, expect him to delegate his authority, as do chief constables and chief officers of various types throughout the country when dealing with all sorts of matters.

For all I care, that authority can be delegated all the way down to the constable who came out of the depot only yesterday. But I want the policeman actually to see the individual, and then to declare on the back of the photograph that he is the individual named in the firearms certificate, so that the police have a record for the lifetime of the certificate.

Amendment No. 114 refers to the need for three photographs rather than two, which I hope the Minister will take on board. As I have said, in Northern Ireland at present one photograph is on the firearms certificate, stamped and verified. One is held in police headquarters in the firearms section. The section is far too big and overstaffed, because, as we all know, the work is probably done by the local sergeant or constable on the ground, who knows the folk anyway. I have a quibble with the Northern Ireland Office about that, but, sadly, it is outside the realms of this Minister's responsibilities. The third photograph should, I believe, be left on the file in the local police stations, because, although the police are assiduous in trying to identify individuals, they cannot always do so.

I believe that in Northern Ireland, where there is terrorism, and equally in Great Britain, which has a large population whom the police cannot be expected to know individually, it should be possible for the police to identify the individual who stands in front of them saying, "I am Joe Bloggs, and here is my firearms certificate." I want the police to have a photograph that cannot be interfered with, and which therefore will be different from the one that appears on a certificate that is stolen. The amendments are purely and simply for the protection of the public, and I strongly believe that they should be taken seriously and accepted.

At the beginning of the debate, the Minister said that only one of the amendments could be accepted: in other words, that everything was perfect. I am trying to show that everything is not perfect—that many of the suggestions being made tonight are sensible and should be acted on. The identification of people is vital to the control of firearms. Some hon. Members say that this is an invasion of privacy, but privacy will be invaded if only one photograph is taken.

Let me now deal with amendment No. 80, which is found on page 2099 of the Amendment Paper. We do not have quite 2,000 pages of amendments, although the Bill really needs that number. There is a difficulty, which did not previously exist, in Great Britain and Northern Ireland over where firearms may be used. The imposition of territorial conditions in Northern Ireland has not made a blind bit of difference. They have not improved matters; they have made them a little worse for those who use firearms. From what I have been told, I understand that the conditions are to be found in the 1969 memorandum of guidance, but I believe that they ought to be incorporated in the firearms rules.

I understand that there is a great deal of disquiet among the shooting public and also a great deal of disagreement with the police in Great Britain generally over the use of firearms. Most of those who have high-powered rifles know how dangerous they can be, and they are very careful in their use, but there is always somebody who is not. I have been given a large amount of correspondence on the use of firearms. *[Interruption.]* I am troubled by the fact that the correspondence shows that few policemen appear to have real knowledge of the behaviour of bullets when they strike and ricochet.

I have a report, written by a major who is clearly a man who knows about firearms. *[Interruption.]* He says that, on behalf of the occupier of a farm, he met a sergeant of the Gwent constabulary.

Mr. Frank Cook: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. These are serious matters. The points that are being made by the hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross) are pertinent and must be decided this evening, but Conservative Members who are sitting below the Gangway are talking yet again about matters that appear to have nothing whatever to do with the subject under discussion. I ask you either to ask those Members to hold their discussions outside the Chamber or to pay attention to what is being said by the hon. Member for Londonderry, East.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Far too many group meetings are taking place in the Chamber. I have already appealed for quiet so that we can hear the hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross), who has tabled a number of serious amendments to which he wishes to speak.

Mr. Ross: I regret that so many hon. Members from both the major and the minority parties have been so overburdened with Hungerford that they have been unable to stand back and take a long, cool look at what we are trying to do. I very much regret that it has fallen to an Ulster Unionist to make comments which I believe should be made. I should have preferred them to be made by hon. Members with constituencies in Great Britain, because their constitents rather than mine will suffer from the effects of the legislation. The application of the firearms law will make no real difference to the people of Northern Ireland.

The major said:

"During the discussions, it became apparent to me that, in general,"

the sergeant's

"knowledge of firearms was not of a very high standard and most certainly his knowledge of their use in the field and of the type of weapon involved was minimal. When dealing with land inspections of this type, such knowledge must be vitally important.

To confirm my suspicions, I showed him a sample safety template and asked him if he had ever seen anything like it before. After a careful examination, he finally admitted that he did not know exactly what it was."

I assume that he did not know what it was at all.

"This was said in the presence of the Inspector. A safety template is a printed pattern, which can be laid on a map to enable persons accurately to mark out areas liable to become danger zones because of ricochets etc. Training in the use of such items is a basic part of the syllabus of a weapons instructor and I was amazed and horrified that a Force

weapons instructor had no knowledge of it and even more so that he was employed in assessing land for safety without such knowledge."

That is a very serious situation.

I am sure that right hon. and hon. Members saw the article in the *Western Mail* on Friday 19 July 1987 which reported that golfers at Wales's top golf course were having their golfing destroyed by rabbits. The course manager asked for a ·22 rifle and was refused. He took the police to court and he won because the judge said, "Public safety is what the case is all about. In this case the risk is as slight and as minimal as it could ever be in well-regulated circles." That is another case where the police are in a mess.

There is a great deal more. People seem to have lost their common sense about firearms safety. I have a vast amount of information, but I do not want to weary the House with all of it. I have a letter from one gentleman who draws attention to the entire history of territorial control, right back to the Firearms Amendment Bill 1919. It shows how the system of territorial control has developed over the years. There is far too much for me to read out at 20 minutes to 12 in the evening, but I should like to quote one or two extracts.

Under the heading "The 1973 Green Paper", the letter states:

"This paper was at the time of its publication unacceptable to the then government. This present Bill"—

the 1988 Bill—

"is based on the 1973 Paper and there has been no change in the circumstances but even in paragraph 77 the Committee say on occasion a Firearm Certificate is issued subject to a condition limiting its use to a specified area of land. The practice since 1968 has been invariably to impose a condition restricting usage to specified land. In exercising his discretion the Chief Officer should bear in mind that the imposition of a territorial condition might be unduly restrictive in some cases."

It goes on to mention mortality statistics, of which there were not very many.

In Northern Ireland, we have to specify on what we can use a ·22 rifle. I assume that that is to stop people driving all over the country with the excuse that they need a ·22 rifle on a farm, but using it for some other purpose.

In my experience, that is unduly restrictive. It creates unnecessary difficulty for farmers and others who cannot restrict themselves to their own land all the time. Farms are generally small and people in my part of the world shoot vermin and rabbits over quite large areas of the countryside. That means trespassing on their neighbours' land. It is quite common, and no one was worried about it. Now, one has to seek permission. The difficulty is not that permission might be refused; it is the sheer trouble of getting it and the fact that the police can ask an individual whether he has the permission of 20 or 30 farmers to shoot on their land.

Another surprising matter has arisen in regard to the Gwent constabulary. The letter sent by the chief constable states:

"The ·303 and 7·62 rifle and ammunition to which this certificate relates shall also be used for deer-stalking on land which is safe and over which the holder had permission to shoot."

It is my understanding that, whenever he talks about safety, the shooter in that case, and not the chief constable, has to decide whether the land is safe. That might very well be the position in Gwent but it does not seem to be the position elsewhere. The deputy chief constable of Gwent said that it was for the shooter to decide. It does not seem that the chief constable's people looking at the land to decide whether it is safe need be there at all. It is left to the individual who is actually firing the shots.

The letter finishes by saying:

"Your request to also use this rifle for shooting marauding dogs is somewhat unusual and perhaps this could be clarified."

Anyone in Northern Ireland who wanted to keep a ·22 rifle but who did not have a flock of sheep to protect from stray dogs would have a poor chance of getting a certificate. It seems that conditions in Wales are very different from those in Northern Ireland.

I have spoken at some length on this matter because it is important and has not been given the consideration that it deserves. The Bill is a mess. It was ill-conceived and is a knee-jerk reaction. If they were wise, the Government would have accepted the motion tabled by the hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare and thought about the issue again. They could have come back next year with a Bill that would have gone through in a day and a half and there would have been no trouble. Sadly, they have chosen the route of confrontation, and very unwise confrontation at that. This provision will do no good. It will not prevent another Hungerford if there is another madman out there with a weapon of some sort, and it will not do anything to improve relations between the shooting public and the police.

11.45 pm

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson: I welcome new clause 12 and congratulate my hon. Friend the Minister on fulfilling yet another of the promises that he made in Committee. He has granted conterminosity between the shotgun licence and the firearms certificate. He knows that I would have preferred him to go a stage further, and have only one document divided into two sections. I believe that that would have provided certain administrative advantages for the police. I am nevertheless grateful for what he has done, and I am sure that it will be a useful step forward.

I am grateful to you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for selecting new clause 6, which relates to how somebody should obtain a firearms certificate and what Home Office approval of a gun club really means. It has been said that one of the Bill's weaknesses is that it imposes stronger legislation on law-abiding shooters and does little to catch those who are in illegal possession of weapons.

There may be some substance in the charge, but I know that law-abiding shooters feel a sense of grievance that arises out of the actions of one man—Michael Ryan—and the dreadful crimes that he committed on 19 August 1987 with a self-loading rifle and a Beretta pistol. He killed 16 people and wounded 14 others.

I believe that the Government are right, and always have been, to react to that massacre for what it was—the worst massacre of its kind that we have ever witnessed in our nation. It shook the people of Hungerford and west Berkshire, and its ripples went throughout the nation and even abroad. It is right that we should be implementing this legislation, because the Government had to react to that dreadful event and show the public that they could have confidence in our gun laws.

One of the consequences of Michael Ryan's dreadful act was that we all became aware that the Kalashnikov, which until then had seemed to be the weapon only of terrorists, might be held in our street, or in our next door neighbour's house, and that a crime as terrible as the one

[Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson]

at Hungerford could happen in any small country town. It became clear that a young man could go around with such a weapon and kill at least eight people with it, and kill a further eight with his pistol.

No Home Secretary could have walked away from Hungerford, closed the door of his office, and said, "It was the aberration of one man. It does not matter. We can forget it." As we know, he received a firearms certificate on 11 December 1986.

Madam Deputy Speaker, you may have wondered why I have detailed the way in which Ryan joined the Dunmore centre. I have done so to illustrate the reasoning behind my new clause. First, I pointed out that Ryan had to wait only three months before becoming a full member of the centre and being able to apply for a firearms certificate. The centre now insists on six months. That is not as a result of any directive from the Home Office. I cannot stress that too strongly. The centre itself has decided to raise the probationary period from three months to six months because there are no absolute Home Office rules on the matter.

Mr. Marland: Although the required membership period of the club has been increased from three months to six months, does it stipulate how many shooting lessons or how many hours of supervision a probationary member should have before being allowed to have a certificate?

Mr. McNair-Wilson: I will not weary the House with the details, but I have the rules of the club which I should be delighted to give to my hon. Friend if he would care to look at them. In the rules, he will probably find the answer to his question.

I have already referred to whether the period should be three months or six months, and that is an important point. On it, hangs the question whether somebody can apply to have a firearms certificate and from that to own a firearm.

As a result of my visit to Dunmore I wrote to the deputy chief constable of Thames Valley asking him about police guidelines on the matter and, in particular, his view on the probationary period that somebody should serve before being allowed to become a full member of a gun club and, therefore, to apply for a firearms certificate. In his letter to me, dated 9 May 1988, and signed by J. B. Rutherford, deputy chief constable, he says:

"experience has shown that the majority of Home Office approved clubs are well run and co-operate fully with the police when enquiries are made in respect of their members. However, the lack of guidelines in relation to rules of membership has led to different criteria being applied, particularly where the issue of professional membership is concerned. The majority of clubs within Thames Valley have a probationary period of six months but some have a three month period and others twelve. Some clubs insist on a minimum number of visits within the probationary period, others do not. It is perhaps in this area that greater uniformity would be beneficial given that Home Office approval is granted to a club but without a clear indication of how it should operate."

In a sense, that is the essence of my new clause. Obviously, I endorse every word of the deputy chief constable's letter, particularly the section that I have just read to the House. I should like to pick up two implications from the quotation. First, the writer said:

"the majority of Home Office approved clubs are well run and co-operate fully with the police when enquiries are made of them in respect of their members."

That seems to carry within it the implication that some Home Office approved clubs do not fulfil those requirements. If that is the case, I wonder what sanctions can be taken against them.

Secondly, the deputy chief constable states that

"greater uniformity would be beneficial given that Home Office approval is granted to a club but without a clear indication of how it should operate."

That point was reinforced by my visit to Dunmore. When I asked whether the centre had been constructed according to Home Office model rules, I was told that such rules do not exist. The shooting centre had been constructed with Home Office, guidance. The Home Office, with the co-operation of the Ministry of Defence, had approved the weapons that could be held, and the Army had vetted the firing range for safety, with the police involved from the beginning. The Home Secretary had to act, and I congratulate my right hon. Friend and my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary on the way in which they have brought the Bill to the House and carried it through Committee.

The substance of new clause 6 relates to how somebody who wishes to become a shooter is able to obtain a firearms certificate and to which club he should be allowed to belong. That should be added as a qualification to be considered when issuing such a certificate.

We would all agree that firearms are, by definition, lethal weapons, even if they are used only for target or clay pigeon shooting. I am aware that other weapons such as crossbows come within the same definition, but I do not believe that anyone would dispute that the right to possess a firearms certificate is a right that should be given sparingly. Such a certificate should be given only when the person concerned has been established as being a fit and responsible person, with a knowledge of the mechanism of a firearm and of how to handle it and its ammunition to ensure the maximum safety of those within its vicinity. He should also have a secure place in which to store it. Such a consideration is already covered by the Bill.

Before the question of applying for a firearms certificate can arise, I want to ensure that a would-be shooter follows a definite pattern of entry into the sport, and that is the purpose of new clause 6. To an extent, it is a follow-on to the debate that we had in Committee on clause 11. In Committee I queried the difference between a Home Office-approved gun club and a bona fide gun club. Membership of both confers on a would-be shooter a certain standing in the eyes of a chief constable, which makes it more likely that he will be granted a firearms certificate. In reply to my question, my hon. Friend the Minister said:

"The concept of what is a bona fide club always involves some subjectivity of judgment."—*[Official Report, Standing Committee F,* 25 February 1988; c.214.]

I wonder whether that is a good enough basis on which a chief constable should form his opinion.

Following the Committee stage of the Bill, I visited the Dunmore shooting centre, which is one of the two Home Office-approved gun clubs of which Michael Ryan was a member. It was the first of the gun clubs that he joined. When he joined the centre as a provisional member on 8 September 1986, it was approved as a pistol shooting club only. As Ryan had no experience of pistol shooting, he filled out a questionnaire about himself and was given a

green, provisional member's identity card. He then came under the jurisdiction of the range officer, whose tasks are care of the range, general safety, weapon training, how to handle a weapon and how to load and unload it before even a shot is fired. When shooting begins, such a beginner fires only with the range officer in attendance on a one-to-one basis.

First, the new shooter is required to use a ·22 single-shot pistol, and only when the range officer is satisfied with the recruit's proficiency is he allowed to progress to a ·22 revolver, and so on to a ·38 revolver assuming always that he has shown that he can cope with a higher calibre gun.

When Ryan joined Dunmore, the probationary period before full membership could be claimed was three months. Every time he visited the centre he was required to sign in and the range officer—a former service NCO instructor—was in attendance.

Once Ryan's three months were completed, he was entitled to and applied for full membership of the centre, which he received. He then sent in his application for a firearms certificate to the chief constable of Thames Valley. He included in his application his membership of the Dunmore centre so that the police were able to check it and the number of times he had attended the club. I do not suggest, and do not want to suggest, that this multi-discipline approach has been a cause for concern. On the other hand, and bearing in mind the chief constable's remarks, is it not time that we standardised the probationary period for the first-time shooter seeking to own his weapon?

12 midnight

I was told that 99 per cent. of Dunmore's members own their own guns. Should not each Home Office-approved club answer to guidelines or model rules drawn up and issued by the Home Office, covering weapons, security and training standards? Lastly, should we not make full membership of a Home Office-approved club that has met those guidelines the only club membership that is acceptable to a chief constable issuing a firearms certificate to a first-time shooter? Once someone has acquired his or her firearms certificate, he or she can join any other gun club, whether approved or not.

New clause 6 would create a formal statutory entry into the sport of shooting with a pistol or rifle. That would increase the professionalism, competence and safety of all shooters, while enabling those running clubs or shooting centres to be aware of the Home Office-approved guidelines that would have to be followed if they wished to obtain what should be regarded as the jealously guarded epithet "Home Office-approved status."

Mr. William Ross: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Madam Deputy Speaker: I think that the hon. Gentleman had completed his speech.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: I shall be brief, as I know that my hon. Friends are getting tired and do not want unnecessary delay.

It is a great pity that the Bill has reached this stage of its life with so many amendments still to be considered. We have been talking for five hours and have reached only the fourth of 36 groups of them. I cannot agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson) that the Government were right to bring in the Bill when they did. It would have been much better if they had delayed bringing it forward. *[Interruption.]* I very much regret the interruption of our business, which is preventing us from considering these problems properly. I shall try to resume my train of thought.

My hon. Friend the Minister was able to concede a great deal in Committee to hon. Members who thought that the Bill was not in the correct form. I congratulate him on that and on the tolerant way in which he has accepted the criticisms made by my hon. Friends during the debate, but there is one thing that I cannot understand, and I hope my hon. Friend will explain it now. Why, having given so many concessions to those who oppose the Bill's details, can he not reconsider the repeating rifle? Why does he think the self-loading rifle is more dangerous than a rifle that must be operated by bolt action but has twice as many bullets in its magazine? I do not understand what makes the self-loading rifle, in the numbers in which it is found, such an outstandingly dangerous weapon that it must be isolated and dealt with differently from all other types of firearm. My hon. Friend's concept of self-loading rifles —particularly those that are limited to five shots in the magazine—is profoundly wrong.

No one wants Kalashnikovs to be widespread throughout the community, or self-loading rifles of any sort not to be properly looked after by competent people, but such rifles can be dangerous to the public for only two reasons: first, if they are stolen and fall into the hands of criminal elements; secondly, if the legal owner of the rifle is someone who should not have been given it in the first place. New clause 1 seems fully to meet the second of those problems, and I should be grateful if my hon. Friend would state specifically what he considers to be the shortcomings of the clause.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) so effectively said, the safeguards are comprehensive. He has drawn the attention of the House to the three main safeguards. The first is that the owner must have

"held a firearms certificate for at least three years".

Secondly, he must have been

"a full member of a rifle club for at least three years".

Thirdly, that club has to be affiliated to one of the two national bodies. The fourth condition is significant. Under the new clause the Home Secretary would have the power of approval for special clubs to be licensed to have only self-loading rifles. For the life of me I cannot see what is wrong with the new clause and why self-loading rifles should not be allowed with the conditions that the new clause applies to them. If the reason is not that people who are licensed should not have self-loading rifles, but that the rifles may be stolen from them, will the Minister give the House examples of when that danger has occurred? My understanding is that there are virtually no examples of rifles of any type having been stolen and used for criminal activities.

I ask my hon. Friend to deal specifically with those points, because at the moment I cannot see any other course but to vote for the new clause. I hope that sufficient of my hon. Friends and Opposition Members will join me in doing so.

Mr. Martyn Jones: By ignoring most of this group of new clauses and amendments the Government have reinforced the attitude that they took in Committee, in that they have completely missed the point. It is the type of person, not the type of weapon, that is important.

[Mr. Martyn Jones]

An opportunity is being lost to effect sensible changes to the legislation. For example, why is no amendment being accepted to consider the mental history of an applicant? Many applicants may slip through, but many may also be weeded out. Why is no amendment being accepted to inquire into the standing of an applicant with his peers in a recognised club? Why is every effort not being made to standardise the approach of the police to the examination of applicants? Indeed, why have we not had an inquiry into the issue of Michael Ryan's firearms certificate, which might have turned up some facts that were pertinent to the legislation? Instead, we have had a dogmatic approach, which does not tackle the real problems, but takes the easy way out, and attacks the firearm, not the firer. It leads me at least to suspect that there is something to hide in the circumstances surrounding the Hungerford tragedy.

Mr. Colvin: New clause 16, tabled by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett), is sensible. Any moves that led to greater consistency among police authorities would help in controlling firearms and their use. Had the county boundary between Hampshire and Berkshire been some 5 miles further north, and had Ryan been subject to the sort of investigation and controls exercised by my police authority, there is a good chance that he would not have been in possession of a firearms certificate, and perhaps not those weapons either. The proposal to produce a uniform application form for firearms certificates is sensible and I hope that the Government will take it on board. If there is a vote, I shall support it.

I also support my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro), who spoke so ably to new clause 1. The Government said that they introduced the legislation to meet public demand and that these are tougher controls following the Hungerford massacre, but I wonder what evidence there is of that great public demand. Much has been written in the press perhaps, but I suspect that the Government have not taken sufficient account of the legitimate views of the shooting lobby.

I am sure that my hon. Friend the Minister, who will reply to this debate, will know that the shooting lobby consists of about 5 million people. Shooting is the second greatest participatory sport, and that means that on average there are 7,500 legitimate supporters of shooting in every constituency in the land. That is why our mail bags have been full of letters, many of them from Conservative supporters who just cannot understand why the Government have reacted in the way that they have to the Hungerford massacre.

Why do we have these proposals, and why are the Government hinting that they may not support new clause 1? It goes back to the 1973 Green Paper, which I suspect forms the basis of the proposals in the Bill. That Green Paper showed very clearly that out of 4,402 offences involving firearms between 1969 and 1971—a period that just preceded the Green Paper—only 120 featured firearms that had been licensed, and that every one had either been stolen or otherwise taken from its legitimate owner. Therefore, out of 1,020,000 firearms licensed in England and Wales, not one case could be found of a certificate holder using his guns for the commission of a crime. I suspect that that is still the case today.

As hon. Members have said in this debate and in others, it is not the weapon that is important, but the finger on the trigger that counts. I think that it was a former Home Secretary who had an accident on a grouse moor and peppered somebody in the backside. Surely that shows that it is the finger on the trigger that we have to watch, not the weapon. It is fair to remind the House that the double-barrelled shotgun is much more likely to be used in its sawn off state in the execution of crime than is the self-loading rifle. When my hon. Friend winds up the debate, perhaps he will tell us how many crimes in Britain have been committed with self-loading rifles.

Mr. Wall: I support new clause 11 tabled by the hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross) and in particular subsection (c) of that clause which deals with giving in writing the reasons for the renewal of a firearms or shotgun certificate.

In the debate on new clause 5, I appreciated the difficulties that arise in examining a person's qualifications and I listened to the Minister's speech about that. I had an experience some years ago which demonstrates those difficulties and shows why I support new clause 11. In 1982, I had the misfortune to make a speech that became nationally infamous. It became known as my "rivers of blood" speech, an exaggerated description.

Arising out of the publicity in the press, in the course of my job of commercial buying and selling, a business man came to see me. He had been chairman of the federation of his branch of industry in his city, a pillar of society. We went out at lunchtime to have a sandwich and a half of beer and as we walked to the car park he said, "Could I say something personally?" I told him that he could say anything that he wanted to say. He said, "How would you obtain firearms?" I said, "As far as I know, if you want a firearms certificate, you join a gun club, you are trained in the use of guns, and after a while the club accepts your membership and gives you advice on how to apply for one." He said, "I should have thought that you would have known how to get them much more easily." I had to assure him that I did not have a cache of arms awaiting the insurrection, and that the only collection I had was of Everton programmes and old jazz records, and he was somewhat disappointed. I said, "In any event, why do you want a gun?" "Well," he said, "I have built an atomic bomb shelter"—he had the money to do that, which most people have not—"and it is no use having that unless I can defend it." Such survivalists—Michael Ryan was in some ways a survivalist—should not be granted a licence to hold weapons that can kill and maim people.

12.15 am

The point about that case is that the man was a member of society who, had he gone about it in the right way, could have joined a gun club. He was a respectable business man, and a nice chap, a decent family man with no criminal record. Unless he said something loose along the lines of what he said to me, in his misapprehension that was fed by *The Sun*, the *Daily Mirror* and other such journals, he would have been granted a firearms licence that he would have used to defend his bomb shelter.

The gun lobby puts the point of view of 5 million decent people who participate in the sport of shooting with various types of guns. It must understand that one of the reasons why it does not get the support of the Opposition to which its membership entitles it is that many of us have

looked on gun ownership as something for gentlemen, and particularly the landed gentry. We feel that guns are the prerogative of such people. The legislation dealing with firearms, which was introduced during the 1920s, was the direct result of the events of the Russian revolution in 1917.

I am afraid, as are others, that people have been refused a licence for a shotgun on the basis of their involvement in trade unions or trade union militancy, when the business man that I described could have got a licence, and been a danger to others. However, I strongly support the right of the individual to be told why he has been refused the licence in the first place, or a renewal of his licence. The issuing of licences is a difficult business, as the debate has made clear. We, as members of society, have to take the responsibility of refusing licences to those whom we think are not capable of using guns in a responsible manner. In all walks of life, people are entitled to know the reason for the refusal, which should be given in writing, and they should be given the right to appeal in court. Therefore, I support new clause 11.

Sir Eldon Griffiths: I could not possibly agree with the hon. Member for Bradford, North (Mr. Wall). I do not think that he would suggest that a person should be told why he did not get a job, or why he did not pass some medical examination. It is impossible to prove a negative, and if the hon. Gentleman reflected on that, he would see why it is impossible for reasons to be given as to why the firearms licence is withheld.

New clause 12, with which we began the debate, is sensible and we ought to have brought together the certificates for shotguns, and for pistols and rifles, years ago. The House will be doing us a service if it passes new clause 12.

There are numerous other new clauses and amendments, and I shall comment briefly on only two of them. My hon. Friend the Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson), speaking with his deep and passionate knowledge of the Hungerford affair, deserves in every way to be listened to most carefully by the House. If I understood him correctly, he supports the conterminosity of firearm and rifle, but his new clause would then imply that every person wanting to get a shotgun certificate would also have to belong to a Home Office-approved gun club. If my hon. Friend the Member for Newbury can assure me that that is not the case, I need say no more about his new clause. However, as it stands at present and in the context of his comments about supporting conterminosity, he certainly appears to be suggesting that every applicant for a shotgun licence should go through a Home Office-approved club.

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson: I am sorry that I conveyed that impression to my hon. Friend. Just as in our driving licences certain sections cover the vehicles that we are allowed to drive, according to which part of the test we have passed, so there could be a single document, divided into two sections, the first covering shotguns and the second covering firearms, and a person would apply according to what he wanted.

Sir Eldon Griffiths: It is clear that my hon. Friend's new clause would not require the applicant for a shotgun licence to take that route.

The Bill is immensely complex and highly technical and, as usual, it will be left to the police to implement and enforce it. It is essential, therefore, that the legislation is clear, as simple as possible and, above all, uniform. The state of affairs will always vary from one police area to another because circumstances and chief officers of police vary. It is Parliament's duty to ensure that at least the parameters of legislation are the same.

So far as possible, the Home Secretary—this is probably what he would wish to do—should ensure that there is a standard form of application throughout the country, that the conditions for refusal of or agreement to the issue of a licence should be the same, that the conditions that the applicant will have to meet should be the same and that the photographs should be the same. There should also be the same number of photographs. I believe that there should be three, so that the police have a copy. The hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross), with his experience of these matters in Northern Ireland, was entirely right about that. In addition, the authentication of the photographs should be the same throughout the country.

Mr. Frank Cook: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that, if we allow the Bill to go through unamended, fewer photographs would be required in Northern Ireland than the police there at present believe are necessary?

Sir Eldon Griffiths: I understand that that is probably the case, but, as it is a procedural point, I am unable to confirm or deny it. However, if, perversely, as a result of the legislation, no third photograph were available to the police in Northern Ireland—I know that that is most important in security terms—we should be doing a great disservice, as my hon. Friend the Minister will be aware.

It is essential that, after the great amount of time that the House has spent on this matter, both Houses of Parliament should agree arrangements whereby we can create standard forms of examination of those who wish to obtain certificates to carry firearms and that they should be clearly examined on those criteria. It should be clear how a person obtains a gun and what can lead to his being refused the right to have a gun. Above all else, the police should have clarity.

Virtually every hon. Member, including myself, has a distaste for records going into computers, but, in modern policing terms, it is essential that the police national computer should be able to obtain access to all the data about people who have guns. That can be done only if there are standard methods of interrogation and standard methods in respect of the agreement to the issue of a certificate.

Mr. Menzies Campbell: I add my support to the observations made some time ago by the hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro), who made a most formidable case in support of the self-loading rifle. I do not intend to repeat the hon. Gentleman's observations other than to remind the House that they were received in something approaching deafening silence by those who occupy the Government Front Bench. It is clear from the reports of the proceedings in Committee that the case was being advanced not for the first time. When it was made in Committee, the impression was given that there might be some scope for concession. Like the hon. Member for Dumfries, I await with rapt anticipation the Minister's response to the hon. Gentleman's penetrating and pungent observations.

[Mr. Menzies Campbell]

I understand and appreciate the motives behind the decision of the hon. Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson) to table new clause 6. He spoke to it, if I may say so, in an informed and restrained manner, but I regret to say that if it is pressed to a Division I shall not find myself able to support it. As I understand it, it means that any applicant for a firearms certificate for a rifle—any rifle—would have to show that he or she had been a member of a Home Office approved club for at least six months. In the more populated parts of the United Kingdom that may be a qualification that is easy to achieve, but for a young assistant stalker in the far north-west of Scotland, for example, his nearest club may be 100 miles away or at least, to put it colloquially, a day's march.

I do not demur from the proposition that anyone who is admitted to the responsibility of a firearms certificate should be able to demonstrate that he is a fit and responsible person. However, if the provisions of new clause 6 are the necessary qualifications to be regarded as a fit and reasonable person, they will, at least in geographical terms, place an unfair burden on a number of individuals who could claim legitimately to be entitled to be the holders of firearms certificates. For that reason, new clause 6 does not commend itself to me, however well intentioned it may be.

Mr. Bellingham: I am pleased that the hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Campbell) supports new clause 1 and the quasi concession that my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State gave in Committee. I am pleased also to have the opportunity to take up the remarks of my hon. Friend the Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson) about the Ryan certificates.

As I understand it, the Thames Valley constabulary were right to issue Ryan with his firearms certificate. By the time that he received the certificate he was a fully paid-up member of the Dunmore club. However, I should like my hon. Friend the Minister to comment on the variation of the certificate. Under the stipulation of good reason, the Thames Valley constabulary should have gone through the process again to ascertain exactly whether there was a good reason for the variation of a certificate, which referred to pistols, to include a Kalashnikov and an M1 carbine. Logic dictates that a good reason should have been shown for possessing such weapons, and that would have meant full membership of a rifle club. We all know that Ryan was only a probationary member of the Wiltshire rifle club. I submit that the Thames Valley constabulary were not adhering to their standing orders and that the officers in question were ignoring completely what they had been told and the instructions with which they had been issued at various seminars.

The Government's case that the Bill is necessary because the Ryan tragedy has made the existing firearms legislation nonsensical is not one that I consider to be sustainable. It is time that my hon. Friend the Minister commented upon that. My hon. Friend should comment on the statistical point that my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) made so eloquently. In 1986, 3,177 offences were committed involving firearms. Only 27 of them involved rifles—0·85 per cent.—and quite a few of them were ·22s. Has my hon. Friend had a chance since Standing Committee to work out how many of those rifles were self-loading?

12.30 am

The Shooting Foundation has said:

"Ryan's was the only case recorded since records were kept when a rifle of any description has been used in violent crime by its lawful owner."

The Home Office has not denied that. Michael Ryan was the first person in recorded history to use in a crime a rifle described on his certificate. As the Thames Valley constabulary should never have given Ryan the certificate in the first place, we are legislating on a shaky basis. My hon. Friend knows full well, however, that I support many aspects of the Bill. I certainly agree with a Bill that to some extent improves firearms legislation, although I am worried about some points.

I am sure that hon. Members would like to know something about practical shooting. If the Bill is passed in its present form, the sport of practical shooting will be annihilated. This sport is a limited discipline involving shooting at moving targets with a self-loading rifle. There are about 20,000 members of the United Kingdom Practical Rifle Commission and the United Kingdom Practical Shooting Association. There are 124 affiliated clubs, with a total membership of 16,600.

The sport of practical shooting is growing in popularity. It is growing as an international sport and will soon be an Olympic sport. There are about 400 or 500 high-powered practical shots who shoot abroad regularly and compete in international competitions. If the new clause is passed in its present form, we shall deny those people their sport and wipe out the important discipline of target shooting.

For the past 120 or so years rifle shooting has been done, in the main, with bolt-action rifles. Most target shooting involves traditional target rifles. The technology is developing and the sport will not stand still. It is likely that in the coming years the self-loading rifle will be used increasingly as a target rifle in more than one discipline. If we do not have an escape route for these practical shooters, such as is proposed in new clause 1, we shall not only deny this sport to the many people involved in it but prevent anyone in the future from participating in it.

If the Bill is passed in its present form, for the first time a civilian will not be able to participate in a rifle competition with the Army's main infantry weapon. Until now, a civilian who passes strict criteria that are part and parcel of section 1 of the Firearms Act 1968 can participate in shooting competitions with the Army's main battle weapon. If, God forbid, there were ever a conflict or war, we would rue the fact that we did not have a pool of civilian marksmen on whom to call.

My hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries has gone through the details of new clause 1. We are looking, not at the weapon, but at individuals and applying rigid criteria to individuals. Very few individuals will pass those strict criteria. However, some will and will carry on the growing sport of practical shooting. We debated this issue at considerable length in Committee. The Minister made it clear that he could not do anything about practical shooting, but was prepared to look very carefully at self-loading rifles with a limited magazine capacity of up to five. That would not completely protect the sport of

practical shooting, but it would mean that in competitions some shooters could use self-loading rifles with magazines holding up to five bullets.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries made clear, disabled people who cannot shoot with a bolt-action rifle on the ranges while deer-stalking or for vermin control will be able to possess a weapon for those purposes. Some people cannot use their right arms, or they may have no fingers on one hand. Paraplegics are similarly affected. If the Bill is passed and the Minister does not back his quasi commitment, those disabled people will be deprived of their sport. That would be very wrong.

I remind my hon. Friend that we had conversations together on many occasions. I recall a dark night back in March when we were up together quite late. He said that if I supported him on clause 1 stand part he would do all that he possibly could to come up with a concession on self-loading rifles. I said that I would support him on clause 1 stand part if he came up with the concession. He knows as well as I do that if there had been a vote on clause 1 stand part in Committee he would have lost it. He gave us a commitment and I feel bad and appalled that he has not produced a suitable amendment on Report. That is very sad. He cannot be surprised if we feel very disappointed that he has not delivered on this crucial point.

There is a way out. My hon. Friend can reconsider the matter now. We should like him to go all the way with new clause 1, but if not, we hope that he will go some way and adhere to what I believe was a semi-commitment that he made in Committee. He has the answer before him this evening and I hope very much that he does not want to destroy completely a sport and cause grave offence to many disabled people. I hope that he will consider this issue very seriously when he replies to the debate.

Mr. Frank Cook: Hon. Members who served on the Committee on the Bill will recall that I arrived on the Committee without a particular opinion about the proposed legislative changes. I was conscripted to Whip the Committee and I had no opinions any particular way. However, I gradually realised what the proposals contained. I had to do something in Committee apart from prepare my Christmas cards, so I read the proposed legislation.

It became apparent that the legislation was ill-thought out and ill-prepared. We have considered many different aspects, including the size of shot, possible modification of different weapons, the verification of how those modifications have taken place, whether they should be reversible, what kind of weapons cabinets should be used and how weapons should travel from gun club to grouse moor.

We have gone into all kinds of detail, but behind it all there remains one unexplained—but I hope not inexplicable—aspect. This evening, the House heard a most moving contribution by the hon. Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson), who spoke with feeling and real concern about the occurrences at Hungerford. There seems no doubt that the proposed legislation has come about as a direct result of the sad and tragic incidents of that day. No one denies that there is cause for deep concern and a need to find a way of dealing with circumstances such as those that arose at Hungerford.

The hon. Member for Newbury reminded the House that eight of the Hungerford victims were shot with a Kalashnikov self-loading rifle, but that eight others were shot with a Beretta 9 mm hand gun. What troubles me is why there should be so much concern about the self-loading rifle, which is a weapon difficult to conceal, troublesome to transport and not easy to use. The Bill appears to be deliberately structured to handle that class of weapon, and that class alone—or little else. However, the Beretta can be tucked into a waistband, slipped under an armpit or otherwise concealed and carried with great ease —yet it is not covered by the Bill.

I support many of the points which have been made, such as harmonisation throughout all the police constabularies in the United Kingdom and the security aspects of keeping weapons.

The question of locking mechanisms was brought to the attention of the House by my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett). However, the question why the self-loading rifle should be covered by the Bill while the 9mm hand gun is excluded is crucial. I am not saying that SLRs should not be more tightly controlled; controls on all types of weaponry should be tightened. However, I cannot for the life of me understand why one class of weapon should be singled out for inclusion while another is left untouched.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: New clause 6 is defectively drafted, so we cannot pass it. It reads:

"Before a Chief Constable issues a firearms certificate to a person who has never previously held a rifle or pistol".

What on earth does that mean? I think that it was meant to mean, "who has never previously been authorised to possess a rifle or pistol", but that is not what it says. So I do not think that we need waste much more time on it.

New clause 1 certainly has my support, but it would need an amendment in another place because it has one very obvious shortcoming. For instance, it would prohibit an instructor in small arms from the armed forces who has been serving abroad and who would not therefore hold a firearms certificate, because he would not be subject to a civilian police force in Britain or meet the qualifications for so doing. He probably will not belong to a rifle club if he is serving overseas—nor would he need to, because he would attend rifle meetings as a member of the armed forces.

What needs to be added to any new clause of this kind —if necessary, in another place—is "who has been a member of Her Majesty's armed forces during the preceding three years." It is manifestly absurd that somebody who has been properly instructed in the armed forces, or indeed who has been instructing others, and who has participated in numerous rifle meetings in the armed forces, should be forbidden from holding a firearms certificate for a self-loading rifle that he has been using for years in competition as well as daily in the armed forces, because he has not held a firearms certificate for at least three years.

Paragraphs (a), (b), (c) and (d) in new clause 1 are not alternatives; they are all necessary conditions for holding a firearms certificate. Although the clause is certainly an improvement on what is in the Bill, and on that basis it will have my support if it is carried to a Division, it would need an amendment in another place. It is so easy to forget the needs of members of the armed forces—for council houses when they leave the forces, and for many other such

[Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop]

things. In drafting the new clause, my hon. Friend had in mind civilians, but not the position of those leaving Her Majesty's armed forces.

12.45 am

Mr. Marland: After hearing so many speeches in a similar vein, we cannot pretend that there is not considerable disappointment in the House at the state of affairs this evening. Not only have we had a very long Committee stage, but there seem to be so many loose ends in the Bill as it comes before us now, and there is so much dissatisfaction with it, that I cannot help wondering how much confidence it will inspire outside the House. After all, the object of a great deal of the legislation is surely to encourage those outside that the world will be safer as a result of its passage.

I speak unashamedly in support of new clause 1. As I see it, the object of the legislation is to try to stop accidents. We want more safety, but without—as the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett) said—being seen to be introducing a nanny state. In my view, paragraph (b) of the new clause would ensure competence in the operators, owners or users of firearms.

My question to my hon. Friend the Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson) about how much instruction was given at Home Office-approved clubs has produced an interesting answer. The club rules state:

> "A minimum period of 6 weeks and maximum of 6 months probation including a minimum of 12 × ½ hours details shall normally be served by all Probationary Members. On the completion of the above period the secretary shall review the Applicant's number of attendances, depth of interest, apparent character and conduct."

If, in the secretary's opinion, these are satisfactory, he is able to confer full membership on that person.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: Unless I have misunderstood him, that seems rather different from what my hon. Friend the Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson) was saying. Did my hon. Friend refer to a minimum of six weeks' and a maximum of six months' probation? That is rather different from a six-month probationary period.

Mr. Marland: The club rules lay down a minimum of six weeks' and a maximum of six months' probation, including a minimum of 12 half-hour details—which presumably means shooting lessons, or time in which the person is instructed in how to handle the guns.

I believe that introducing legislation of this sort would go some way towards reassuring the public, which, after all, is what we are trying to do.

I echo what my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North-West (Mr. Bellingham) said about the practical shooters. I believe that it is wrong to deny British sportsmen the opportunity to go forward in a newly emerging sport so that they can compete on the world stage. I also agree with my hon. Friend that we must spare a thought for those who are disabled and unable to use any sort of rifle, other than a self-loader.

I hope, like others, that my hon. Friend the Minister will consider new clause 1 very carefully, and possibly give it his support at the end of the debate.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: This has been a long debate and it has covered a range of subjects. At the heart of the debate is the Government's attitude to the self-loading rifle, and I shall therefore begin with that.

I think it desirable that we should make plain what we are talking about. We are talking about whether it is right to allow private people to possess full-bore, fast-firing, paramilitary guns.

Sir Hector Monro: No, no, no.

Mr. Hogg: I hear my hon. Friend saying "No, no, no." It is perfectly true that both tonight and on other occasions he has limited his advocacy to self-loading rifles—five-shot and eight-shot—but that is not incorporated in new clause 1. It is unlimited.

My hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North-West (Mr. Bellingham) made a strong case on behalf of practical shooters. I have had discussions with practical shooters, who say that the only equipment that will serve their sport is a large, detachable magazine, full-bore rifle. For practical shooters the integral self-loading rifle of the kind advocated by my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) is useless. We have to be absolutely certain about what equipment it is that we are discussing. We are discussing fast-firing, full-bore, large-magazine, paramilitary guns.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: My hon. Friend is referring to fast-loading paramilitary rifles because it suits him to do so, but we are referring to new clause 1. This has to be read in conjunction with the later group of amendments, which we hope will also be agreed to, which would limit rifles to the shotguns that we are discussing. When read in conjunction with the clause, that would produce the right effect.

Mr. Hogg: There is a difference of view between us on this matter. I am prepared to accept that my hon. Friends the Members for Upminster (Sir H. Bonsor) and for Dumfries are concerned only to secure either a five-shot or an eight-shot integral magazine gun, but that is not the only argument on this side of the House. In order to sustain the case that he has made on behalf of practical shooters, my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North-West must hold out for the large, detachable magazine, full-bore rifle. We cannot otherwise serve the interests of practical shooters. New clause 1 is unlimited in terms of the size of the magazine and the number of bullets that it can hold.

I do not dispute for a moment that a self-loading rifle can be used for a variety of lawful pastimes—for deer stalking, culling deer and shooting foxes at night—but the question that we have to ask is not whether it can be used, but whether we need to use it. Is it necessary to use a full-bore large-magazine, fast-firing gun for those purposes? The answer is no.

I agree that a self-loading rifle can be used for traditional target shooting, but the question is not whether it can be used, but whether it needs to be used. The answer, once again, is no. The National Rifle Association has made that clear on a number of occasions. The use of self-loading rifles for international, traditional target shooting is positively prohibited. It is interesting to note that at its Bisley meet the National Rifle Association provides a number of competitions in which self-loading rifles are used, but last year only five civilians participated.

It is true that those competitions are essentially for service men, but only five civilians participated in that class of sport.

I now turn to practical shooting, the cause which my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North-West has made his own. I agree that if we prohibit full-bore, fast-firing, large-magazine guns we shall destroy certain parts of practical shooting that rely on a self-loading rifle. We shall not destroy it entirely, because about 80 per cent. of its members use self-loading pistols, but I agree that it will destroy the sport for those who depend on the self-loading rifle. The question is whether the public interest requires us to do that. The House has to make that judgment, but I believe that it does.

Mr. Corbett *indicated assent.*

Mr. Hogg: I am glad that the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett) shares my view on the matter.

I shall now deal with my comments and undertakings in Committee. I have never tried to pretend otherwise to hon. Members: I am a settler, a compromiser. If I can reach a compromise, I like to do so. I make no apology for that. In Committee I made it plain that I thought there was no need for a self-loading rifle of the kind that I have described and that in my opinion there were insufficient numbers of self-loading rifles to justify their retention in clause 1. I said that I would look seriously and sympathetically at whether it would be right to retain them in clause 1 if they had integral magazines containing no more than 3, 4 or 5 rounds. That is what I did. I looked at it seriously, I challenged the issue and I reached what I consider to be a fair conclusion. I have described my conclusion tonight.

Hon. Members who think that I misled the House in some way should look at *Hansard*. I recommend that they read columns 323, 324, 325, 330, 363 and 396. As my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North-West thought it right to recount to the House a conversation that I may have had with him—I do not recall it, but I do not dispute it—it would be profitable for him to read column 396. He said:

> "I am grateful for what my hon. Friend the Minister has said. We shall come back to this matter on Report . . . My hon. Friend has made it clear that he is prepared to accept that a class of self-loading rifles will remain in private hands."

I replied:

> "I do not want to prolong the debate. What I have said is what I mean. I shall consider carefully the range of rifles to which I have referred. It is not a commitment, I have to clear it with colleagues. It is not a guarantee. My hon. Friend has heard what I have said and I propose to do what I have said. He must not try to enlarge on it."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee F,* 10 March 1988; c 396.]

I have made that statement in different words at different times in the debate. Anybody who says that I ratted on a commitment is wrong. I resent that imputation.

The other thing that I said very strongly in Committee was that there was not a range of self-loading rifles of the kind now argued for—3, 4 or 5-shot integral magazines —sufficient to make the amendment sensible. That is what I argued in Committee, and that is the case. It may be of interest to the House to know some facts.

I have a list of such guns, and I shall remind the House of them. The Ruger .44 is a sporting rifle. It has a four-shot tube and was last made in 1985. The Browning Sporting is still being made and has a detachable magazine containing no more than three or four rounds. The Savage .170, a pump-action rifle, was made up to 1985. The Remington Gamemaster, with five shots, was made up to 1950. The Browning Sporting, with five shots, is so old that it can only be identified as old. The only relevant military rifle is the French St. Etienne, which was not made beyond 1918. There is only one gun which falls within the classification and is still manufactured. It does not seem to make much sense to found legislation on one gun.

1 am

The House has to come to a conclusion on this important issue. I share the view of the hon. Member for Erdington that we should not legalise self-loading rifles. There is no justification for doing so. The Government's stance on the matter is correct.

The views of my hon. Friend the Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson) are to be respected, and I entirely understand his concern. What the hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Campbell) said is, however, correct. There are a variety of reasons why people need a gun and do not necessarily belong to a club. The most notable reasons are vermin control and deer stalking. Such people do not belong to clubs, for the most part. That problem goes to the root of my hon. Friend's new clause 6, although I understand why he tabled it.

In new clause 8, the hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross) advocates a most complicated and bureaucratic form of appeal. He is a well-known enemy of bureaucracy, and I praise him for it. Section 44 of the Firearms Act 1968 provides for a perfectly sensible form of appeal on all the issues to which he referred, and there is no possible justification for building yet further on it.

On new clauses 9 and 11, the hon. Member for Londonderry, East made important points regarding time limits and the notification of reasons. I find myself in complete agreement with what my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths) said on the matter, so it is not necessary to elaborate yet further.

On new clause 10, the hon. Member for Londonderry, East suggested that we should ask a range of complicated questions. I have read the questions that he has asked, and I have to tell him that they would not prevent a madman obtaining a gun. Nor do they address the problem of the person becoming mad during the currency of the certificate.

As for amendment No. 147 and the standard application form, the hon. Gentleman will be pleased to know that the firearms rules of 1969 already provide for a standard application form for the granting, variation and renewal of firearms certificates, and shotgun licences. To that extent, his anxiety is already met.

In amendments Nos. 114, 115 and 146, the hon. Gentleman raised interesting questions about photographs. They are not necessary. As for the verification of photographs, why should the chief constable be involved? The rules already provide that a person of good standing is sufficient, and that is correct. We agree that there should be two photographs. We do not think that there should be three. The only justification for three is the existence of a computerised bank, and technology is capable of making as many reproductions of the second photograph as are necessary.

As for amendment No. 80, I would not advise the hon. Gentleman to set out in rule form the type of territorial

[Mr. Hogg]

conditions that he would like, because they would be too rigid. It must be possible to tailor a territorial condition to meet the circumstances of an applicant.

This lengthy debate has covered a whole range of subjects. I commend new clause 12 to the House, but I am afraid that I cannot commend the other new clauses or amendments.

Sir Hector Monro *rose——*

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. The hon. Gentleman has addressed the House once.

Sir Hector Monro: With the leave of the House.

Hon. Members: No.

Mr Deputy Speaker: The House has withheld leave.
Question put and agreed to.
Clause read a Second time, and added to the Bill.

New Clause 1

CONDITIONS ATTACHING TO THE POSSESSION OF SELF-LOADING RIFLES

'No firearm certificate shall authorise a person to possess, purchase or acquire a self-loading or pump-action rifle to which section 5(2) (ab) of the principal Act applies unless that person—

(a) has held a firearms certificate for at least three years, and
(b) has been a full member of a rifle club for at least three years, and
(c) is a member of a club which is affiliated to the National Rifle Association or the United Kingdom Practical Shooting Association and which has been approved by the Secretary of State as a club suitable for target shooting with self-loading rifles, and has satisfactorily completed a course of service rifle or practical rifle shooting approved by either of these Associations, or
(d) has a reason to possess such a gun because of disability or participation in vermin control or deer-culling.'.—[*Sir Hector Monro*]

Brought up, and read the First time.
Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:-
The House divided: Ayes 26, Noes 217.

Division No. 319] **[1.5 am**

AYES

Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*	Monro, Sir Hector
Beith, A. J.	Moonie, Dr Lewis
Bellingham, Henry	Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas	Skinner, Dennis
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*	Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick	Wall, Pat
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*	Wallace, James
Colvin, Michael	Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*	Whitney, Ray
Cryer, Bob	Winterton, Mrs Ann
Dixon, Don	Winterton, Nicholas
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*	
McAllion, John	Tellers for the Ayes:
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin	Mr. Jerry Wiggins and
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James	Mr. Paul Marland.

NOES

Alexander, Richard	Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Alison, Rt Hon Michael	Ashby, David
Allason, Rupert	Atkinson, David
Amess, David	Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Amos, Alan	Baldry, Tony
Arbuthnot, James	Batiste, Spencer
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*	Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*	Hawkins, Christopher
Bevan, David Gilroy	Hayes, Jerry
Biffen, Rt Hon John	Heathcoat-Amory, David
Blackburn, Dr John G.	Heddle, John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter	Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Boswell, Tim	Hind, Kenneth
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia	Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*	Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*	Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Bowis, John	Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Brandon-Bravo, Martin	Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Brazier, Julian	Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Bright, Graham	Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon	Irvine, Michael
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter	Jack, Michael
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*	Janman, Tim
Burns, Simon	Jessel, Toby
Burt, Alistair	Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Butcher, John	Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Butler, Chris	King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Butterfill, John	Kirkhope, Timothy
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*	Knapman, Roger
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*	Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Carrington, Matthew	Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Cash, William	Knowles, Michael
Channon, Rt Hon Paul	Lang, Ian
Chapman, Sydney	Latham, Michael
Chope, Christopher	Lawrence, Ivan
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*	Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*	Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Conway, Derek	Lightbown, David
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*	Lilley, Peter
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*	Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Couchman, James	Lord, Michael
Cran, James	MacGregor, Rt Hon John
Currie, Mrs Edwina	Maclean, David
Curry, David	McLoughlin, Patrick
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*	McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*	McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Day, Stephen	Malins, Humfrey
Dorrell, Stephen	Mans, Keith
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James	Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Dover, Den	Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Dunn, Bob	Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Durant, Tony	Miller, Hal
Emery, Sir Peter	Mills, Iain
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*	Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Fallon, Michael	Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Farr, Sir John	Moate, Roger
Fenner, Dame Peggy	Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*	Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Fookes, Miss Janet	Moss, Malcolm
Forman, Nigel	Nelson, Anthony
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*	Neubert, Michael
Forth, Eric	Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Franks, Cecil	Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Freeman, Roger	Oppenheim, Phillip
French, Douglas	Page, Richard
Gale, Roger	Paice, James
Gill, Christopher	Patnick, Irvine
Goodhart, Sir Philip	Pawsey, James
Goodlad, Alastair	Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles	Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Gorman, Mrs Teresa	Portillo, Michael
Gorst, John	Powell, William *(Corby)*
Gow, Ian	Raffan, Keith
Gower, Sir Raymond	Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*	Redwood, John
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*	Renton, Tim
Gregory, Conal	Rhodes James, Robert
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*	Riddick, Graham
Grist, Ian	Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Ground, Patrick	Roe, Mrs Marion
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn	Rossi, Sir Hugh
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*	Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*	Ryder, Richard
Hanley, Jeremy	Sackville, Hon Tom
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*	Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*	Sayeed, Jonathan
Harris, David	Shaw, David *(Dover)*

Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walden, George
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

Question accordingly negatived.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson) wish to press new clause 6?

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson: No, Sir.

New Clause 8

APPEALS IN CASES OF REFUSAL OF REGISTRATION

'(1) An appeal under section 20, 29, 30, 34, 36, 37, or 38 of the principal Act lies in England and Wales to the Firearms Appeal Tribunal and in Scotland to the Scottish Firearms Appeal Tribunal and an appeal from a decision of any such tribunal on a point of law shall lie in England and Wales to the Divisional Court of the High Court of Justice and in Scotland to the Court of Session.

(2) The Home Secretary shall by regulations provide for the establishment of a tribunal or tribunals to determine appeals by persons in England and Wales aggrieved by any decision of a Chief Officer of Police under the principal Act or under this Act.

(3) The Secretary of State for Scotland shall by regulations provide for establishment of a tribunal or tribunals to determine appeals by persons in Scotland aggrieved by any decision of a Chief Constable under the principal Act or this Act.

(4) Regulations made by the Home Secretary or the Secretary of State for Scotland may include provision for summoning persons to attend and give evidence and produce documents and for authorising the administration of Oaths to witnesses.

(5) There shall be defrayed out of moneys provided by Parliament any administrative expenses incurred by the Home Secretary or the Secretary of State for Scotland for the purposes of the principal Act or this Act.

(6) Section 14 of the Firearms Act is repealed.'.—*[Mr. William Ross.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 10, Noes 232.

Division No. 320] **[1.16 am**

AYES

Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Dixon, Don
McAllion, John
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Skinner, Dennis
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Bob Cryer and
Mr. Pat Wall.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Beith, A. J.
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gill, Christopher
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Monro, Sir Hector
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony

Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wallace, James
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

Question accordingly negatived.

New clause 11

RENEWAL OF AND TEMPORARY CERTIFICATES

'After section 26(1) of the principal Act (Application for, and grant of Certificates) there shall be inserted:—

"(1B) When an application for the renewal of a firearm or shotgun certificate has been made in the prescribed form to the Chief Officer of Police for the area in which the applicant resides no less than twenty-eight days prior to the date of expiry of the existing certificate and subject to the certificate holder not having been served with a notice of revocation then the Chief Officer of Police shall either:—

(a) grant a renewal of the firearm or shotgun certificate subject to subsection X below in either the terms of the expiring certificate, and/or

(b) issue a temporary certificate in the same terms and conditions as the expiring certificate, subject to subsection X below, and/or

(c) state in writing the reasons for refusal to grant the authority to possess each individual firearm/ammunition or shotguns and ammunition additionally stating the relevant section(s) of the Act in each case and notify the applicant of his right to appeal to Crown Court within twenty-one days from the date of receipt of such notification, subject to subsection X below, and/or

(d) state in writing any difficulty for delay external to the Police Service preventing the granting or the formal refusal to the processing of the application, subject to subsection X below, to the issue of a certificate.

(X) To be received by the certificate holder 48 hours prior to the expiry of the existing certificate".'.—*[Mr. William Ross.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 13, Noes 220.

Division No. 321 **[1.29 am**

AYES

Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Beith, A. J.
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Corbett, Robin
Dixon, Don
McAllion, John
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Skinner, Dennis
Wallace, James
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Bob Cryer and
Mr. Pat Wall.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gill, Christopher
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Grist, Ian
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*

Knowles, Michael
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Monro, Sir Hector
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

Question accordingly negatived.

New Clause 14

REGISTER OF FIREARMS ETC

'Each chief officer of police shall establish within three months of the coming into force of this Act and subsequently maintain on a daily basis, a register of shot guns, firearms and ammunition, and licences and certificates, reported lost or stolen which shall include a description of such weapons and ammunition with the name and address of the certificate holder entitled to possess the weapon, on a separate register, details of which shall be passed to the police national computer.'.—*[Mr. Corbett.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mr. Corbett: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss new clause 17—*Firearms officers*—

"Where in the opinion of the chief officer of police the number of firearm certificates and or shot gun licences warrants it, two officers, not below the rank of superintendent, shall be designated as firearms officers whose duties shall include regular periodic checks upon the number and type of weapons and ammunition held by authorised dealers in the area of their police force.'.

Mr. Corbett: It will probably be for the convenience of the House if I deal with the new clause briefly, although it is an important clause on an extremely serious topic. If the Government have anxieties about the time that Ministers and Conservative Back Bench Members go to bed tonight, they should reflect on the fact that they could have accepted the motion to recommit the Bill for further consideration in Committee, which would have been a better way to proceed. The Government had a choice.

The purpose of new clause 14 is to require each chief officer of police to establish within three months a register of shotguns, firearms, ammunition, licences and certificates that are reported lost or stolen, and to ensure that it is maintained daily. It is amazing that no register in this form is maintained now.

Paragraph 26 of the White Paper of December 1987 on proposals for the reform of firearms legislation states:

"It is remarkable that the police at present have so little information either about individual weapons or about the number of shotguns legally held."

I do not doubt that there were many within this place, and certainly outside it, who found that statement an admission of the most outstanding complacency. Everything that we heard on Second Reading and in Committee supported that view. The Government can only guesstimate the number of self-loading rifles that are knocking about. It is a frightening fact, and one that will bring no comfort to those who are properly concerned with public safety.

If that is the position with legally held shotguns and firearms, I suspect that it is probably the case with weapons and ammunition that are reported lost or stolen. I suspect that in many instances weapons that are reported lost or stolen and not recovered find their way fairly easily into criminal hands, and are those that are more commonly used illegally and perhaps criminally. The most meticulous attention should be paid to lost or stolen weapons, ammunition or certificates. I know that thousands of replacement certificates, for example, are issued each year when the originals are reported lost or stolen. When I asked the Under-Secretary of State in February how many duplicate shotgun and firearm certificates were issued by each police force area in the last year for which figures were available, and the preceding year, I was told that the information that I had requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

That means, if that phrase has any meaning, that those responsible for overseeing firearms control—Ministers take responsibility for this—do not have a clue about the number of legally held weapons that are knocking about and the number of duplicate certificates that have been issued. This is extremely worrying. There is ample scope for misuse because as things have stood since the Firearms Act 1968 was enacted certificates do not have to bear an up-to-date photograph of the holder. There can be few other countries beset by terrorist activities in one part of its boundaries that can behave in such a manner that is at best careless.

The purpose of the new clause is to ensure that such a register is maintained and updated and the information passed to the national police computer so that the police can be more quickly helped to trace the lawful owner of a weapon which is used in violent crime. Everything that can

[Mr. Corbett]

be discovered about the route between the lawful owner, and presumably the person who reports the weapon lost or stolen, and the weapon discovered at the scene of a crime can be extremely helpful to the police.

1.45 am

New clause 17 asks a question which has been asked before but which did not get a satisfactory reply. That is why it has been tabled. It provides that, where significant numbers of applications for firearms certificates and shotgun licences are dealt with, the police should be able to designate firearms officers whose only job is to handle these matters and, as important, to make periodic checks on the number and type of weapons and ammunition held by authorised dealers in their police force area.

Suppose that there is a gun shop that employs two or three staff and that, at the end of every day's transactions, there is no physical check of the stock room, although someone may look through what has been sold that day. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that someone in the gun shop owner's employ could be approached and offered money to steal a weapon from those premises. It could be days, if not weeks, before that theft is uncovered by the owner. That should not and cannot be tolerated.

As I have said repeatedly, we want to do our best to ensure that one of the Bill's ambitions—properly to look after the public safety aspects of our legislation—is achieved. The new clauses will help to do that.

Sir Eldon Griffiths: I agree with the spirit of what the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett) seeks to achieve in new clause 14. I suspect that the measure is not necessary, because the police will do what he wants. It would not have been practicable for them to do so until this legislation, because previously firearms were not required to be described or numbered. The numbers of guns held by an individual did not all have to be contained on the certificate. The Bill will bring those details forward. From now on, it will be possible for the police to maintain the type of register that the hon. Gentleman seeks. I am not sure that it is necessary to require the police to do that by statute; I suspect that they will do it anyway.

Mr. Corbett: The hon. Gentleman knows as well as I do that the police nationally maintain a stolen property index. As I understand it, it does not have a separate compartment for weapons and ammunition reported stolen. I assume that that index is computerised—if it is not, it should be. I am asking only for another two or three files to be opened in that record to identify those items separately more quickly.

Sir Eldon Griffiths: That may well be true, but in the past it was not practicable for the police to maintain such a register, because the details that the Bill prescribes were not available. It will be practicable to do so in future. I agree with what the hon. Gentleman seeks to do, but I am not certain that it is necessary to prescribe it by statute.

I oppose new clause 17. I am not sure that it is appropriate to prescribe the very high ranks of officers that the hon. Member for Erdington wishes to do this job. That would cost the country something like £4 million a year in additional policing costs.

With regard to both new clauses 14 and 17, it is not appropriate for the House to tell the police how to deploy manpower. That is an operational judgment. It is right that the law should indicate the will of Parliament, but it should not get into the details of prescribing the ranks of officers to be used or how they should be used. Those are operational matters for the chief officer to determine.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths).

The hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett) moved the new clause briefly and was to the point. I agree that it is desirable that the police should have additional information of the kind referred to by the hon. Member for Erdington and that that should be centrally stored.

It is perhaps necessary to remind the House that a register of the kind proposed would not prevent crime. At the very best, it would facilitate the recovery of weapons, the tracing of owners and preparation to ensure better records. I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds that that should not be a mandatory requirement imposed by Parliament. It must be for the judgment of the police to determine where that particular suggestion ranks in order of priority and that is not a matter for Parliament.

I agree with the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds about new clause 17. That is an operational matter for police forces. In particular, it is an operational matter to decide how many, and of what rank, the officers in question should be. The dealers are already under a duty to permit police who want to make inspections, and the memorandum of guidance urges the police to do just that. Although I understand the force of the arguments presented by the hon. Member for Erdington, I am afraid that I cannot commend new clauses 14 and 17 to the House.

Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 14, Noes 208.

Division No. 322] **[1.51 am**

AYES

Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*	Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Beith, A. J.	Skinner, Dennis
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*	Wall, Pat
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*	Wallace, James
Corbett, Robin	Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Cryer, Bob	
Dixon, Don	Tellers for the Ayes:
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James	Mr. Frank Cook and
Moonie, Dr Lewis	Mr. John McAllion.

NOES

Alexander, Richard	Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Alison, Rt Hon Michael	Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Allason, Rupert	Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Amess, David	Bowis, John
Amos, Alan	Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Arbuthnot, James	Brazier, Julian
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*	Bright, Graham
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*	Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Ashby, David	Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Atkinson, David	Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*	Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Baldry, Tony	Burns, Simon
Batiste, Spencer	Burt, Alistair
Bellingham, Henry	Butler, Chris
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*	Butterfill, John
Bevan, David Gilroy	Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Biffen, Rt Hon John	Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Blackburn, Dr John G.	Carrington, Matthew
Boswell, Tim	Cash, William

Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Grist, Ian
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Monro, Sir Hector
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Riddick, Graham
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Stephen Dorrell.

Question accordingly negatived.

Further consideration of the Bill adjourned.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Bill, as amended (in the Standing Committee), to be further considered this day.

RAF Search and Rescue (Scotland)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Garel-Jones.]*

1.59 am

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): This Adjournment debate is about the Royal Air Force search and rescue operation in central Scotland, which means that it is really a debate about the search and rescue helicopters at Royal Air Force Leuchars, Fife.

Since June 1955, there has been a permanent 24-hour-a-day search and rescue helicopter standing by at RAF Leuchars. The bright yellow helicopter of B flight of No. 22 Squadron is easily the best-loved, and most highly regarded and respected, of the flying machines that can be seen around the east coast of central and north-east Scotland. The yellow helicopter brings hope and confidence to all who may find themselves in peril in the freezing cold and the cruel North sea, or who may be lost or injured in the mountains of central and northern Scotland.

The skill, courage and professionalism of the helicopter crews have become a legend. The people of my constituency who are subjected daily to the noise of the low fast jets know that from RAF Leuchars they have a lifeline in the search and rescue helicopters. They know that in times of emergency, whether it is injured climbers or walkers, skiers or residents of the remote glens who are in need of hospitalisation, a Leuchars helicopter will be scrambled within 15 minutes. That is important. Response time for rescues in the North sea and in the mountains of Scotland can mean the difference between survival and death.

The helicopters of 22 Squadron RAF Leuchars have made a total of 2,049 rescue flights. In 1987, 104 of the flights were to assist the civil population. Ten were for military purposes. Ninety-five people were rescued and only 10 were found to be dead. Time is of the essence in rescues. Longer flight times will increase the risk and reduce the chances of survival. So far this year the Leuchars helicopters have carried out 68 rescue missions, of which 18 were carried out at night.

Leuchars is the main air defence base of the northern United Kingdom. The pilots and navigators who fly the Phantoms are highly skilled and expensively trained professional aviators. It costs £8 million to train a pilot to the required standard to fly Phantoms. Soon the Phantoms will be replaced by the Tornado F3, whose pilots will be the elite of fighter pilots. I submit that the helicopters will only have to rescue alive one pilot a year from the freezing North sea and from sub-zero mountain temperatures to justify the cost of maintaining the helicopter operation.

I remind the House that in the winter and early spring during the period of the easterly gales a helicopter from Prestwick or from Lossiemouth, flying into the teeth of the gale, would take a long time to reach the east coast. A helicopter from Boulmer would take 47 minutes in still air. We all know that emergencies never occur in still air—quite the opposite. Most emergencies happen when weather conditions are at the margins for operations, so response time is increased.

In March 1988 three crewmen were rescued by a Leuchars helicopter when their motor vessel went aground off Montrose. The water temperature at the time was so low that the rescue services knew that they had to complete the evacuation beforethe men succumbed to the cold. If the helicopter had been unable to lift off the three men, a breeches buoy was the only very risky possible alternative. Fortunately, the RAF Leuchars helicopter flying at night arrived in time and executed the rescue. A helicopter from Prestwick or Boulmer would not have arrived in time.

Ever since the news that Leuchars may lose its search and rescue helicopters became known, the people of Scotland have expressed their concern. Aviators, both service and civil, professional seamen, and fishermen, amateur sailors of all kinds, skiers, mountaineers and hill walkers, as well as police, coastguards, lifeboat men and ambulance men and mountain rescue teams have written, phoned or spoken to their respective Members of Parliament and councillors. There can be few issues that have united so many different groups. All of them are of the view that RAF Leuchars must retain its search and rescue helicopters.

As an aviator, I have flown for a large number of hours, over many years, throughout the Highlands and the east coast of Scotland in the knowledge that the Leuchars search and rescue helicopters were on a 15-minute alert and that if I were unfortunate enough to get into difficulties the yellow helicopter would quickly arrive.

I do not wish in this debate to be seen to be trying to second-guess the highly competent and capable people who have studied the deployment package of military search and rescue helicopters. However, I must draw attention to the experience that was obtained in Korea, where it was discovered that response time could make the difference between recovering highly skilled air crew alive or arriving to find them dead. Water and mountain conditions in Korea can be very like the conditions of Scotland in the winter.

I am also unable to see the logic of having a clutch of Sea King units within 90 nautical miles of each other in the north-east of England when, if Leuchars is to lose its search and rescue helicopters, there will be a gap of 200 nautical miles between Boulmer and Lossiemouth. The Tay estuary is notorious for is treacherous sandbanks. Often surface ships cannot operate or carry out rescues. More than one lifeboat has been lost at the bar of the Tay. In such conditions the only hope of rescue is the helicopter from RAF Leuchars.

I cannot believe that it is wise to have the major northern United Kingdom air defence base within this 200 nautical mile search and rescue helicopter gap. I remind my hon. Friend that the main runway at Leuchars points out towards the Tay estuary, and also that many of the malfunctions of systems or errors of judgment occur during take-off and landing. Ahead of the runway is the treacherous Tay estuary. I leave my hon. Friend to ponder on that.

I wish to thank my hon. Friend for his courtesy in this matter. I should also like to thank him for his letters of assurance and for arranging the visit to RAF Leuchars for me and for the hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Campbell). We were able to visit the helicopter facilities and see the superb new hangar and the crew accommodation, much of which was paid for by NATO, which obviously appreciates the work carried out by B flight crews and helicopters. I should also like to place on record my thanks for the way in which Group Captain Tony Bagnell and the members of 22 Squadron made our visit so interesting and instructive. I should also like to

thank them for the traditional RAF hospitality extended to us. I leave it to the hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East to say what was interesting about that.

I also thank my hon. Friend for his letter, dated today, which I received today, which assured me that no final decisions have been taken. I do not expect my hon. Friend to give the final decision this evening, but I hope that he will take back to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and to his Department the genuine concern that has been so clearly articulated and reported in the Scottish media. In particular, I hope that he will note the many well-informed articles which have appeared in the Dundee *Courier* and a number of other publications.

I conclude by reminding my hon. Friend of the public relations aspect of the search and rescue helicopters. The RAF could not buy such massively good and positive public relations. If it spent all the money it spends on the helicopters it could not get such superb public relations. The image of the modern Air Force is of low, fast, noisy jets. Many of my constituents have to put up with that week in and week out. They do so because they are reminded by me and others that the yellow, life-saving search and rescue helicopters come from the same Air Force and often from the same airfield. If we lose the search and rescue helicopters at Leuchars and the response time is inevitably increased, the number of complaints will increase and it will be increasingly difficult for my hon. Friend to justify RAF expenditure. In a world of tightening budgets, any savings would be minute compared with the damage that could result from the loss of the good public relations generated by the yellow helicopters of B flight, 22 Squadron at RAF Leuchars.

2.12 am

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) for allowing me two or three minutes in this important debate to support him and the hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Campbell) in his plea for the retention of the search and rescue capability at RAF Leuchars. It amazes me that it was ever in doubt, and I am sure that the final decision will be made in favour of that outstanding unit, coupled with the other Scottish unit at Lossiemouth with which I have much closer Royal Auxiliary Air Force connection.

During the war, during the many hours of maritime reconnaissance flying, we would have loved to have thought a search and rescue helicopter squadron was not far away. Of course they were not available. We hoped, if we were lucky, to be picked up by a Walrus, which had the hazardous operation of landing in the open sea. Subsequently, the Royal Auxiliary Air Force was still awaiting the arrival of helicopter squadrons for search and rescue.

Now that they have existed for many years, and, as my hon. Friend said, they have given outstanding service to the Royal Air Force, and to Scotland generally in terms of mountain rescue and other hazardous "outward bound" activities that happen in our country, the pilots, navigators and air crew of the squadrons involved deserve the highest praise from the Scottish people and from the United Kingdom.

I cannot believe that it is seriously contemplated that the squadron should move from Leuchars, leaving an enormous gap from Lossiemouth to the English coast. The squadron has a tremendous reputation for fine work, which will stand it in good stead during the deliberations in the Ministry of Defence. I hope that the decision will be to keep the squadron and search and rescue at Leuchars.

2.14 am

Mr. Menzies Campbell (Fife, North-East): I am grateful for the opportunity to make a brief speech.

I count myself highly privileged to represent the constituency which contains a military air base of such significance as RAF Leuchars. Relations between the military personnel and the community have always been extremely good. A measure of that was the tremendous hospitality which was extended to the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) and me on Sunday. It happened to be my birthday. The commanding officer, having discovered the fact, caused it to be celebrated in an entirely appropriate way, but one which did not cause any of us who partook of the hospitality to be at any risk of breaking the law.

The whole community supports the campaign. The district council, the regional council, all political parties and all interests, political or otherwise, are determined to do their utmost to ensure that the search and rescue capability remains at RAF Leuchars.

Mr. Andrew Welsh (Angus, East): In his fight to save this very important facility, is the hon. and learned Gentleman aware that he has the support of the people of Angus, East, the fishermen of Arbroath, the lifeboatmen of Montrose, who have contacted me, and those who use the sea or the mountains for leisure or work? I hope that the Minister notices the cross-party and cross-constituency support for this important facility.

Mr. Campbell: I am happy to note that support. It is reminiscent of the support that already exists in my constituency.

I am sure that the Minister will not mind my saying that it is unfortunate that certain information suggesting that a decision had been taken has emerged in the past few weeks. I have the Minister's assurance that no decision has been taken at ministerial level. I am happy to accept that assurance, but I am sure that the Minister agrees that the fact that certain information was freely discussed in the constituency—to the effect that a decision had been taken —was bad for the morale of the crews and their families, and disturbing for the community.

More than 2,000 missions have been flown since the search and rescue facility was established at RAF Leuchars, and more than 2,000 people have been rescued. Some 90 per cent. of those rescued have been civilians. Fishing, which is an important part of the economy of Fife, North-East, relies to a considerable extent on the fact that the Leuchars facility is available. Those who go to sea to fish have confidence in the fact that a proven service is available to them in the unhappy event of their finding themselves in difficulty. There is a tradition of co-operation between the search and rescue facility and the lifeboat at Anstruther and, no doubt, other nearby stations.

As might be expected, I have had many letters from people who have an interest in this matter, but one has touched me more than all the others. It came from a constituent who told me that, but for the Wessex helicopters at RAF Leuchars, he would not be around to

[Mr. Campbell]

write the letter and be part of the campaign to retain the facility. He had suffered a severe medical complaint, and was taken at short notice to Edinburgh where more sophisticated medical facilities were available.

There is little doubt that the contribution made by Leuchars goes far beyond the military requirements and it is one that the civilian population value extremely highly. That service does the RAF great credit and it gives it a profile that all the low flying ever practised could never achieve. Quite simply, that base is regarded as part of the community. I hope that no ministerial decision will be taken that will deprive the community of that most important and significant service.

2.21 am

Mr. John McAllion (Dundee, East): I am grateful to the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) for allowing me the opportunity to contribute briefly to the debate and to lend my support to the campaign that is being waged by the hon. Gentleman and the hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Campbell) to try to stave off any decision to withdraw the sea and air rescue service at Leuchars.

The threat to safety as a result of such withdrawal was brought home to me today when I received a copy of a letter from one of my constituents, Mr. Michael Silvers of West Ferry, Dundee. He wrote to the Secretary of State for Scotland on behalf of the Tay pilots to express their concern about the threat to safety that would ensue from such a decision. He said:

"Should help have to come from Boulmer or some other base there would be too big a delay to help anyone in grave danger, perhaps shipwrecked or immersed in winter temperature seawater. In fact only last Friday all hands were removed from a grounded tug at the river mouth.

We also feel that far-away crews could not have enough local knowledge to do rescue work to an acceptable standard."

Mr. Silvers and the Tay pilots know what they are talking about. I hope that the Minister will consider their views when he replies.

There is a strong case in Dundee for retaining the services at Leuchars. The Broughty Ferry lifeboat has a long, distinguished and heroic record of saving lives along the north-east coast of Scotland—a record that has been achieved at the cost of great loss of life among the crew of that lifeboat. In the past 30 years that lifeboat has worked in close relationship with the helicopter service at Leuchars. The helicopters and lifeboats often complement each other when they take part in combined operations to save stranded boat crews in peril at sea. In the future I believe that there will be an expanded scope for such operations.

The Royal Tay yacht club at Broughty Ferry in Dundee continues to prosper and that means that there will be a continued demand for the protective cover that is provided by Leuchars. The hon. Member for Tayside, North has already said that such cover is especially needed, given the dangerous nature of the waters in the Tay estuary.

The growing part that is played by tourism in the local economy of Dundee means that more and more holiday-makers will be attracted to the area. They will take part in water sports, hill walking, climbing and skiing and, therefore, there will be an increased need for the sea and air rescue service operation out of Leuchars.

All the evidence points towards a continuing and growing need for the rescue service at Leuchars. The spectrum of local opinion supports the retention of the service. I believe that it would be sheer folly and an act of supreme irresponsibility if the Government withdrew for financial reasons a service that has made a valued and effective contribution to civilian safety in the north-east of Scotland.

If the Minister had been considering such a move I am sure that, having listened to the unanimity of opinion across all political parties and the entire community of the north-east of Scotland in support of the service, he will think again.

2.23 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces (Mr. Roger Freeman): This has been a well-attended Adjournment debate and it is an obvious indication of the high regard that the House has for the search and rescue service provided by the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force. It also highlights the specific concern there is about Scotland. I have listened carefully to the debate and I am sure that not only my ministerial colleagues, but officials from the Ministry of Defence will study the record of the proceedings tonight.

I shall respond briefly to some of the points raised in the debate. It is a rather strange and refreshing experience to wind up an Adjournment debate by seeking to answer some of the points raised.

I pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) for his interest in the subject and for his support for the RAF search and rescue services and for mountain rescue services provided by six teams in the United Kingdom. We should not forget the mountain rescue teams which consist of volunteers. My hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North referred to the new hangar at RAF Leuchars. It is NATO-funded but I should put on record the fact that the excellent hangar and office facilities could well be used for a wide variety of tasks. I am not suggesting that it will be or would be but I felt that I should respond specifically to that point.

The hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Campbell) referred to speculation within the RAF about the possible closure of the search and rescue flight —the two Wessex helicopters at RAF Leuchars. For the sake of the record, I repeat the fact that there was speculation about that within the RAF. I regret that it happened. No decisions have yet been made on the deployment of search and rescue helicopters in Scotland and the west coast of England. We have announced the new deployment for the east and south coasts of England. Any decisions for Scotland will be taken by Ministers alone, and no such decision has yet been taken. Therefore, the speculation to which the hon. and learned Member referred is nothing more than that. I regret the inconvenience and alarm that that caused.

The hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East also raised the question of delay as did the hon. Member for Dundee, East (Mr. McAllion). If one had search and rescue facilities all round the coast at 15, 20 or 25-mile intervals, the delay in getting any aircraft, whether a Sea King or Wessex, to anyone in difficulties in the water or on land would be minimal. However, unfortunately, we cannot provide that sort of service. There will inevitably be some delay for a helicopter coming from Lossiemouth,

Leuchars, Prestwick or wherever to a particular incident. Therefore, because the deployment of the search and rescue helicopters is primarily for military purposes, we try to ensure that we meet, as a minimum, the criteria laid down by the helicopter coverage group, which reports to the Department of Transport. Therefore, in any redeployment of our facilities—this was the case with the east and south coast redeployments we announced to the House several weeks ago—we have to consult comprehensively the Department of Transport. The Department made a decision about augmenting the military cover at Lee-on-Solent.

I remind the House that many RAF stations do not have helicopter search and rescue facilities. Even some of the RAF stations close to the coast do not have such facilities. Several in East Anglia suggest themselves immediately. Ideally, we would have such helicopters at all stations but, obviously, we cannot.

The review that is still in process—Ministers have yet to reach a decision—will take account of the factors that have been mentioned in the debate and the written representations received. I am well aware of the interest of the fisheries industries, the local authorities and recreational interests, including mountain rescue.

I take the point raised by my hon. Friends the Members for Tayside, North and Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) about low flying. It is something about which the public is concerned. The extent to which search and rescue facilities are provided in a particular region or country to a certain extent militates against the criticisms of low flying.

I am also grateful for having been reminded that sea survival in the north of Scotland is perhaps a little less than off the Welsh coast in terms of the impact on military or civilian casualties. The purpose of the fundamental review that is under way is to improve helicopter coverage. We have at our disposal the dedicated personnel of the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy—do not let us forget the Royal Navy—and the combination of Sea King and Wessex aircraft. The new Sea Kings arriving for service with the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force enable us to augment the service, particularly with night-time cover.

This has been a helpful debate. Everyone has praised search and rescue. When our decisions are announced I hope that the House will agree that coverage of this excellent service will have been enhanced.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty-nine minutes past Two o'clock.

House of Commons

Tuesday 24 May 1988

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

PRIVATE BUSINESS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

TOR BAY HARBOUR (OXEN COVE AND COASTAL FOOTPATH, BRIXHAM) BILL

Considered; to be read the Third time.

Oral Answers to Questions

DEFENCE

RAF Dishforth

1. **Mr. Curry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give further details of the future military use of RAF Dishforth.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces (Mr. Roger Freeman): Dishforth will become the base of an Army Air Corps helicopter regiment which is being formed to support the newly titled 24th Airmobile Brigade, which has its headquarters at nearby Catterick garrison.

Mr. Curry: Is my hon. Friend aware that Dishforth is a prime site near the A1, which is developing rapidly and being significantly improved? Does he realise that there are more than 150 houses and other extensive facilities on the site? Does he accept that it is important for the project to go ahead without delay? If it were to fall foul, there are many other uses for the site. Will the military get on with it, or get out?

Mr. Freeman: I can give my hon. Friend the assurance that he is seeking. The Army will get on with it, and we plan to have the first squadron of helicopters there by the summer of next year. I confirm that all the empty married quarters, and a good part of the barracks, will be used by the Army Air Corps.

Cruise Missiles

2. **Mr. Norman Hogg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with the United States Defence Secretary about sea-launched cruise missiles.

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. George Younger): Mr. Carlucci and I discuss a wide variety of defence and security matters. The details of our discussions are confidential.

Mr. Hogg: Is it not clear that the Secretary of State has sanctioned the use of Holy Loch for sea-launched cruise missiles without the House being consulted? Is it not a fact that the occasional visits of these submarines will become frequent visits? Is that not very different from what the Secretary of State told the Defence Select Committee? Has not a major strategic defence change taken place? This is a serious matter that the House should discuss on a future occasion.

Mr. Younger: The hon. Gentleman is wrong. There has been no change in the practice or status of Holy Loch. The Government would be consulted by the United States' authorities if they wished to base a new class of nuclear weapon in the United Kingdom. United States' SSNs visit Holy Loch occasionally, but no decisions for any change of principle have been taken.

Mr. Bill Walker: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the advantage of bases on the west coast of Scotland is that they offer access to deep water so that submarines can come and go without potential enemies being able to track them down? It would be nonsense not to use them effectively and properly for the NATO deterrent.

Mr. Younger: I agree with my hon. Friend. The many military advantages of the bases on the west coast of Scotland have been recognised by all Governments, both Labour and Conservative, in the past.

Sir Antony Buck: Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is a good thing that United States' ships pay frequent visits to our ports? They increase the deterrent capability of NATO, and that should be so.

Mr. Younger: My hon. and learned Friend is correct. The United States is one of our principal allies in defending western Europe and this country, and visits by its ships are very welcome.

Dartmoor (Live Firing)

3. **Mr. Steen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will take steps to ensure that red flags do not fly on Dartmoor when live firing is not taking place.

Mr. Freeman: When live firing is not planned, no danger flags are flown. When firing is cancelled, for example due to bad weather, we aim to remove the danger signals as quickly as possible to permit maximum recreational use of the moor. We try to remove them in these circumstances by midday.

Mr. Steen: I thank my hon. Friend for his interest in this last great wilderness in Britain and for his courtesy and helpfulness to the conservationists, but is he aware that the 8 million people who visit the moor each year are deprived of using 70 per cent. of the high moor because of live firing, 52 weeks a year, Monday to Friday, other than in August? Will he try to persuade the Army to end its somewhat dog-in-the-manger attitude, which results in the flags flying for far longer than is necessary? Will he please do something to have them taken down when they are no longer needed?

Mr. Freeman: As I have said, the moor is used for Army training and for recreational purposes. If it would be helpful, I should be happy to meet my hon. Friend, together with representatives of interested bodies, to discuss the future of Dartmoor and to listen to their suggestions and representations.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: Is my hon. Friend aware that those who have spent their lives in Devon, unlike my hon. Friend the Member for South Hams (Mr. Steen)—[HON. MEMBERS: "Withdraw."] No, it is a fact—are aware that the presence of all branches of Her Majesty's forces in Devon is part of Devon's history, livelihood and ethos, which is greatly appreciated by those—other than some, only a few—who have come there recently?

Mr. Freeman: I agree with my hon. Friend's sentiments. The Army has been using Dartmoor for training for over 100 years.

BAOR

4. **Mr. Shersby:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with the German Minister of Defence concerning improvements in peacetime support for British forces in Germany.

The Minister of State for the Armed Forces (Mr. Ian Stewart): My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has regular discussions with his German counterpart on a wide range of subjects of mutual interest.

Mr. Shersby: Is my hon. Friend aware that the foreign exchange cost of British forces in Germany is running at an annual rate of £1·2 billion? Does he accept that unless the Federal Republic is prepared to share part of the burden savings must be limited to good housekeeping? As the Government have reserved their position with a view to finding an alternative solution to the former offset arrangements, can my hon. Friend now say what solutions he proposes to solve this difficult problem?

Mr. Stewart: I know of my hon. Friend's interest in this and, in particular, of the part that he played in the evidence that was taken by the Public Accounts Committee on host nation support a month or two ago. Following that, we have set up, in the logistics division at the Ministry of Defence, a special section to look into all these questions, including the matter of foreign exchange and the other things that my hon. Friend has mentioned.

Mr. Duffy: Will the Minister confirm that the improvements for which Dr. Wörner will be looking on the part of British forces in Germany, both as Secretary-General elect and as the current German Defence Minister, include sustainability, stockages and spares, shortfalls in standing ground forces, reinforcement and counter-air, certainly not the urgent modernisation of short range nuclear forces, to which the Prime Minister attaches so much importance?

Mr. Stewart: Dr. Wörner appreciates as well as any Defence Minister in NATO the importance of both nuclear and conventional forces for the defence of the West. It is fortunate that NATO is getting the services of someone who has been such a distinguished Defence Minister in Germany. He certainly appreciates the importance of all those matters that the hon. Gentleman has raised. I should add that he made a point of choosing British forces in Germany for his last official visit before leaving his office and on that occasion said:

"The British make a decisive contribution in Germany and without BAOR and RAF Germany the defence of our country would be unthinkable."

That is a great testimony from the German Defence Minister.

Mr. Wilkinson: Will my hon. Friend confirm that the Government will implement in full the recommendations of the National Audit Office on ways of reducing the support costs of British forces in Germany? Will the Government review the Brussels treaty commitment, as the United Kingdom plays a major part in the defence of the east Atlantic and Channel areas—that is, in NATO's reinforcement—and Britain's air power can be a vital determinant against armour on the central front?

Mr. Stewart: The points put forward in the National Audit Office report will be considered carefully by my Department, particularly by the new section that we have established. I have serious doubts about whether reducing the number of dependants would be the right thing to do. It seems to me that having a substantial number of unaccompanied postings to Germany would be against the interests of the armed forces and their families and would, over time, decrease the effectiveness of those forces.

Mr. Sean Hughes: If the Government are so aware of conventional needs, does the Minister share the view of Sir Martin Farndale, who, in January this year, identified a long list of deficiencies, including tanks, and the need for more and better artillery, helicopters and armoured engineer support as well as other equipment?

Mr. Stewart: Any good commander-in-chief—General Farndale was certainly that—can identify improvements that he would like made in the equipment and back-up of the forces. All those matters are of concern to this country and our allies in western Europe, and we continually measure what we regard to be the priorities. We shall take all those matters into account.

NATO Nuclear Planning Group

5. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what decisions concerning modernisation of nuclear weapons were made at the last North Atlantic Treaty Organisation nuclear planning group meeting.

8. **Mr. Bradley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what decisions concerning nuclear-capable aircraft were made at the last North Atlantic Treaty Organisation nuclear planning group meeting.

Mr. Younger: No specific procurement or deployment decisions were taken, though further guidance was provided on the way ahead and of the need to keep our forces up to date. A copy of the communiqué issued after the Brussels NPG meeting has been placed in the Library of the House.

Mr. Pike: Why did the right hon. Gentleman choose to announce the replacement for Britain's RAF freefall nuclear bomb on "Panorama" and not to the House? Will he state categorically whether the cost of that replacement —and all other replacements—is fully included in the Defence Estimates to be announced next week? Will he also state whether he believes that this will place in jeopardy the agreements being reached under the INF treaty?

Mr. Younger: It will certainly have no effect on the agreements reached under the INF treaty, as this refers only to ground-based missiles with a range of 500 to 5,500 km. We have made a general allowance in our forward costings for possible weapons systems to replace the

freefall bombs. The hon. Gentleman is not as well informed as he usually is if he imagines that I announced anything new on "Panorama". No decision has been made on what would replace the freefall bombs, but the need to decide on a replacement has been referred to many times, most notably on 4 March 1988—the hon. Gentleman will find the reference in column 1288 of *Hansard*—when my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister made it clear that we have to find a replacement for these freefall bombs in due course.

Mr. Bradley: Is not the combination of more nuclear capable aircraft, more air-to-surface missiles and more United States nuclear-capable strike aircraft merely a replacement for the INF weapons cuts? Does NATO not already have superiority in such aircraft? Rather than increasing the number of such weapons, would it not be better to trade them against further Soviet arms cuts?

Mr. Younger: There has been a great reduction in the number of warheads in our provision for nuclear deterrence. More than 2,000 have been removed unilaterally over the last year or two. That is progress. With regard to the range of weapons systems, we shall in no sense be breaking the spirit or the letter of the INF treaty. We welcome that as a great achievement which our steadfastness and our unity have produced. Nevertheless, we have to maintain a range of possible options to deal with any likely attack. We must keep a range of different options—large, medium-sized and small.

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith: Is my right hon. Friend aware that there is unqualified support for his policy of modernising the British nuclear deterrent—*[Interruption.]*—from Conservative Members at any rate, as always? Will he confirm that it is the policy of the Soviet Union to modernise its nuclear defence forces, including its short-range missile systems?

Mr. Younger: Yes, my hon. Friend is correct. I think that support for this policy has been amply demonstrated in at least three general elections, and that goes very much wider than just support from Conservative Members. The Soviet Union has recognised the common sense of keeping its weapons up to date. It is modernising its missile systems with the more accurate SS21 system. Furthermore, it is planning shortly to launch two types of sea-launched cruise missiles. These are sensible modernisations of systems which, as far as I know, are not in breach of the INF treaty.

Miss Widdecombe: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the policy of NATO is still to maintain only a minimum deterrence and that this modernisation is within that policy and meets that criterion?

Mr. Younger: I am glad to confirm what my hon. Friend has said. Our deterrent systems are always at the minimum that they can be, and that goes for the Trident system as well. It all comes back to the basic point. Although there might be arguments for or against having various kinds of weapons, I see no argument for having out-of-date ones.

Mr. Wallace: Will the Secretary of State clarify what he said on "Panorama" about stand-off nuclear missiles for Tornado aircraft? How much has been allowed for any modernisation in the general costings to which he referred? Will he give an assurance that any sum that might be spent will not in any way jeopardise projects such as the European fighter aircraft, the new generation of tanks or the surface fleet being maintained at about 50 vessels?

Mr. Younger: We expect to maintain all our main defence commitments with the present budgetary arrangements. There is no difficulty about that. No decisions have been taken on the replacement for free fall bombs. We are examining possible options. We have allowed a generalised amount of money in our forward costings for replacement, but we cannot do anything accurately until we know broadly what the cost of the systems will be.

Mr. Mans: Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is vital to update the RAF's nuclear capabilities? The tasks that it has to perform at the moment, and will have to perform in the future, are not the same as those that cruise missiles have performed in the recent past. Further, will he confirm that the USSR already has a nuclear stand-off capability for some of its aircraft?

Mr. Younger: Yes, I confirm my hon. Friend's last point. I understand that the Soviet Union has nuclear capable short-range air-to-ground missiles on its Backfire bombers. It is taking a precaution which some Opposition Members maintain we should not. My hon. Friend is correct in saying that the general provision of weapon systems, as part of our nuclear deterrence, is the vital part of our defence.

Mr. Denzil Davies: Will the Secretary of State say when the decision was taken to replace the freefall bombs on the Tornado aircraft? Was that decision taken at Montebello in 1983, or later? Secondly, in view of the answers that he has given, could he also tell the House the generalised sum involved in the defence budget for modernisation, as he calls it?

Mr. Younger: We are at far too early a stage to be able to put any definite figure on this. That is not surprising, as we do not yet know the price, the quantity or what type of missile would be available.

As the right hon. Gentleman has asked, it would be helpful if I clarified the position on Montebello. There were three points in the communiqué' issued following the Montebello meeting. First, the Ministers agreed a reduction of 1,400 warheads in NATO's nuclear stockpile in Europe. Incidentally, that has now been completed and has brought NATO's stockpile in Europe to its lowest level for 20 years. Secondly, Ministers agreed on the need for improvements to ensure the responsiveness, effectiveness and survivability of remaining forces. Thirdly, Ministers instructed SACEUR to develop proposals that would implement what Ministers had agreed. Ministers took no decisions on specific weapons systems, but SACEUR came back at the Luxembourg meeting in 1985 with proposals, among which there was the proposal for the deployment of a tactical air-to-surface missile. That is now being pursued as a possibility by the United States, ourselves and France, but no decisions have been taken or are in prospect in the short term.

Maritime Strategy

6. **Mr. Stott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proposals concerning maritime strategy he will be taking to the Eurogroup meeting of Defence Ministers in Brussels on 25 May.

Mr. Younger: None, Sir.

Mr. Stott: I am interested to hear that reply to my question. If the Secretary of State is not considering a maritime strategy, perhaps he could pay some attention to the importance of the British merchant fleet in the development of a maritime strategy. Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the merchant fleet figures in his defence White Paper make depressing reading? How many more ships, and how many more British-trained merchant seamen, are we to lose before the Secretary of State acts in the national interest?

Mr. Younger: We watch trends in the British merchant fleet with considerable concern because we rely on being able to take ships from trade for military purposes from time to time. However, in spite of the steady reductions in recent years, which now appear to have levelled off, the position is that, apart from one or two specialist types, sufficient vessels would be available for any likely defence needs. We watch the matter carefully and would be worried if there were too few for our needs.

Mr. Holt: Does my right hon. Friend accept that his answer that we do not have a strategy is alarming? Does he admit that unless we know how many ships we have we will not know how many we might need in any eventuality? There is great concern that the Royal Navy is being run down to a level that would be unsustainable in the event of hostilities anywhere in the world.

Mr. Younger: I should correct the impression that has grown up because of the supplementary question asked by the hon. Member for Wigan (Mr. Stott). I did not state that we had no maritime strategy. I said that I would not be taking any proposals on such a strategy to the Eurogroup meeting, which is a very different thing. We have a well-known maritime strategy, which is part of the NATO strategy, to which the Royal Navy makes a great contribution.

Mr. Clay: Returning to the Secretary of State's answer to the question asked by my hon. Friend the Member for Wigan (Mr. Stott), will the right hon. Gentleman look at the age profile of what is left of the British merchant fleet, because surely he knows that what is left is, on the whole, very old? New ships will have to be built in the 1990s because the remaining ships will not be seaworthy by then. It is simply a question whether the new ships that will be required will be built in other countries or in Britain. In the interests of his own Department, should not the Secretary of State persuade his colleagues in the Department of Trade and Industry to wake up, pull their fingers out and save British merchant shipbuilding?

Mr. Younger: My concern is to ensure that at any time sufficient ships could be taken from trade to be used for military purposes. That is still the case today, but we watch the position carefully. We in the Ministry of Defence cannot construct merchant ships. We have to rely on their being available. We keep a close check on what is available and, as I have said, at present it is still adequate for our needs.

Mr. Ian Taylor: Does my right hon. Friend agree that West German interest in our maritime fleet is great, particularly in the ability of our submarines and, in due course, Trident to attack Soviet territory, and that that is important, given the INF agreement which otherwise would limit all land-based nuclear action to taking place on German soil? Has he received representations from the West German Government to that effect?

Mr. Younger: In my discussions with the West German Government they solidly supported the provision of the British nuclear deterrent—the Polaris system as it now is, or the Trident system in the future. It is widely agreed throughout NATO that that is an extremely valuable contribution to NATO, as well as being a safeguard for our own defence. I have noticed recently with interest that Mr. Gorbachev has agreed that the British Trident system should not be included in the START negotiations.

Mr. O'Neill: The Secretary of State has concentrated on the number of ships. Is he not concerned about the figures in the White Paper relating to the number of cadets in training, which, in the last six years, has fallen from 4,000 to 550? That drop suggests that in the future there will not only be an insufficient number of British or, indeed, European, ships, but, more important, that there will be a dearth of British seamen capable of manning those ships and fulfilling the role that the merchant marine has carried out so valiantly in the past.

Mr. Younger: Yes, we believe that a possible shortage of British crews is a greater problem than the possible shortage of British ships. We are considering both those matters carefully and examining ways in which we could build up a reserve of crews for that purpose.

Mr. Hind: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the maritime defence strategy is to keep enemy forces at arm's length and to deny them freedom of operation? Will he also tell us what plans his Department has for ordering further Trident submarines?

Mr. Younger: Of course, NATO strategy is to ensure that we have the ability to range on international waters and the high seas and to ensure that we can keep them safe for the passage of our shipping and of international shipping generally. There is no doubt that that is a prime factor in NATO strategy.

SAS

7. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the role of the SAS in Europe.

Mr. Ian Stewart: No, Sir.

Mr. Dalyell: Under what and on whose authority does the SAS operate?

Mr. Stewart: It has long been the policy of this Government and their predecessors not to comment on the activities of, or arrangements for, our special forces. To depart from that policy would, in my view, be against the

interests not only of members of our armed forces but of British citizens who may be exposed to danger at home or abroad.

Mr. Conway: Does my hon. Friend accept that the SAS has a fine tradition of serving not only this democratically elected Government but their predecessors of a Socialist persuasion, and that its expertise and courage is held in the highest esteem, not only in this House but among the general public who will deny the whingers opposite who sell the SAS short?

Mr. Stewart: I welcome my hon. Friend's support for the proficiency of our armed forces.

Mr. Cryer: Surely the Minister accepts some sort of principle of democratic accountability. Does not the absence of such democratic accountability suggest that the SAS could institute a shoot-to-kill policy of its own without any control whatsoever? Is the Minister trying to claim that that is what happened in Gibraltar, or was that planned? All that the House wants to know is who planned it, who made the decision and who gave the orders. Surely we are entitled to know that.

Mr. Stewart: All military operations and activities in this country or by our armed forces are ultimately under political control. I should emphasise that our soldiers are highly trained to operate within the law and according to strict rules.

Departmental Insurance

9. **Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he takes to ensure that his Department uses the services of the insurance industry so as to mitigate its annual losses in equipment and facilities.

Mr. Freeman: The Ministry of Defence does not generally insure against the risk of any loss to property, buildings or equipment. Over the long term, the cost of insurance should exceed average losses. Although the risks are potentially very large and widely distributed, they can never produce losses maturing in any one year so as to have a significant effect on the overall financial position of the Exchequer.

Mr. McNair-Wilson: Will my hon. Friend give the House the figures for the loss, particularly by fire damage, to stores and buildings at the Ministry of Defence over the past five years? Can he estimate the likely cost of the fire damage to the central ordnance depot at Donnington, the second fire that it has endured within the past two years? Does he not think that the time has come for some of those risks to be borne by the insurance industry?

Mr. Freeman: The answer to the first question is, over the past five years, approximately £152 million. The answer to the second question is that it is still too early to provide estimates, but the figure is probably in excess of £100 million. The answer to the third question is no. We have no plans to insure specific losses, but we have plans to extend the principle of insurance where the insurance industry can offer a service, such as settling claims. We do that with third party motor vehicle insurance and civilian employers' liability.

Mr. Foulkes: What is the position about aircraft such as the Tornado that was recently lost in Germany? Will the Minister reconsider the arrangements, particularly in relation to relatives of the people who were killed.

Mr. Freeman: We always regret aircraft accidents. The aircraft accident trend is down. Last year was the best year on record for the number of aircraft lost. The service men who lose their lives or who are injured are covered by the armed forces pension scheme. If negligence is involved then, following the repeal of section 10 of the 1947 Act, they can claim against the Ministry of Defence.

Ex-Government Employees (Outside Appointments)

10. **Mr. Litherland:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received about former civil servants and members of Her Majesty's forces accepting outside appointments with defence contractors.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement (Mr. Tim Sainsbury): The Government have received the House of Commons Defence Committee's report on the acceptance of appointments in commerce and industry by members of the armed forces and officials of the Ministry of Defence. As usual, a Government response will be made to this report in due course.

Mr. Litherland: Can the Minister explain why the Ministry of Defence hindered the inquiry of the Select Committee on Defence into the increasing number of civil servants and military staff who have taken up cosy, lucrative positions with commercial defence weapon contractors? When will the Government come clean and lift this shroud of secrecy on a matter that is of legitimate public concern?

Mr. Sainsbury: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will understand when I say that it would not be right for me to anticipate the Government's response to the report, which, of course, we are taking very seriously.

Mr. Latham: Will my hon. Friend confirm that one of the benefits of Mr. Levene's appointment is that it will try to bring to an end some of the cosy relationships that existed in the past? Is my hon. Friend aware that the next time I get a letter from an admiral on behalf of a defence company it will go straight into the wastepaper basket?

Mr. Sainsbury: I agree with my hon. Friend that there are many benefits in the more competitive approach of defence procurement that we have introduced. I hope he will accept that, on the face of it, it would not seem very sensible completely to deny to the country and, indeed, to industry and commerce, the benefit of people who have experience of the armed forces.

Mr. Rogers: Does the Under-Secretary of State accept that the Opposition have grave misgivings about the relationship to major defence contractors not only of service men and ex-civil servants but of ex-Cabinet Ministers such as the right hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit)? When will the Government draw up a more effective code of conduct so that politicians do not step out of jobs in which they give contracts into companies where they place contracts?

Mr. Sainsbury: I shall confine my answer to the points arising from the question. I assure the hon. Gentleman that we take very seriously the issues about which he speaks. We try to take the greatest care to avoid approving any appointment that could give rise to a suggestion of a conflict of interests. We shall be replying to the report in due course.

Weapons Purchasing Policy

12. **Mr. Stokes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what action he is taking to maximise weapon purchasing economy through collaborative ventures with North Atlantic Treaty Organisation allies.

Mr. Sainsbury: In order to derive maximum benefit by co-operation, we play a full role in the relevant multilateral forums—essentially the Conference of International Armament Directors, CNAD, and the Independent European Programme Group, IEPG—and in our various bilateral contacts.

Mr. Stokes: I am grateful for that answer, but I am not exactly clear about what it means. Has any progress whatever been made in the last five years or so?

Mr. Sainsbury: I am happy to assure my hon. Friend that we all get perplexed by these numerous initials by which the MOD confuses things. I am glad to say that there has been substantial progress. We very much recognise that major benefits of increased collaboration accrue not only from the reduced costs to each country of developing complex weapons systems, but from lower unit production costs that result from longer production runs.

Mr. Douglas: Will the Minister examine carefully the respective economies arising from our purchase of AWACS from Boeing? Will he give some clear information to the House about the nature of this contract and tell us why we have not obtained £80 million-worth of firm orders to offset purchases in excess of £1·5 billion? What economies will accrue to the United Kingdom in relation to that particular collaborative purchase, and when will the Ministry of Defence get off its backside and ensure that British industry gets its fair contractural share of offset purchases?

Mr. Sainsbury: The purchase of the AWACS from Boeing is not part of a collaborative programme but is simply the purchase of equipment produced overseas. It carries a substantial offset of 130 per cent. of the cost. We have absolute confidence that on this occasion, as previously, Boeing will fulfil its obligations under that agreement.

Mr. Brazier: I put it to my hon. Friend that deals of the Goalkeeper/Rolls-Royce type, in which effectively the swap of one type of equipment for another takes place, offer the same benefits as collaboration in terms of longer production runs, and so on, but without all the bureaucracy that so besets collaborative ventures—especially smaller ones.

Mr. Sainsbury: My hon. Friend is right. There are other ways of obtaining the benefits of longer production runs and of enjoying co-operation among NATO allies than through collaboration. Reciprocal purchasing is clearly one of them.

Arms Levels

13. **Mr. Fatchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with his North Atlantic Treaty Organisation counterparts about conventional arms levels.

16. **Mr. John Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with his North Atlantic Treaty Organisation counterparts about conventional arms levels.

Mr. Younger: I have regular discussions with my NATO colleagues on conventional arms levels, both in terms of our approach to conventional arms control and the conventional defence improvements exercise.

Mr. Fatchett: Does the Secretary of State for Defence accept in principle that any reduction in conventional arms should be on the basis of reciprocity. In other words, those weapons in which the West has superiority should be bargained against those weapons in which the Soviets have superiority. Is the Minister prepared to accept that principle?

Mr. Younger: Not exactly. The objective in conventional arms reductions is to work down the considerable imbalance which exists. We are clear that, for that purpose, asymmetrical reductions will be necessary.

Mr. Denzil Davies: Will the Secretary of State for Defence tell the House whether NATO has now agreed upon its negotiating position in respect of the conventional arms stability talks? Can he say, in particular, whether it has been agreed by both the British Government and NATO that ground-based attack aircraft will be included in those negotiations? If they are not, it will make a mockery of the talks.

Mr. Younger: In the negotiations we have made it plain that the proposed talks are to be about conventional armed forces, including all conventional forces and equipment based on land, regardless of what other capability they may have. We have explicitly stated that nuclear and chemical weapons, together with naval forces, are excluded. There is no need to single out for inclusion any one type of conventional armament solely because it has the additional capability to deliver nuclear or chemical weapons.

Mr. Sayeed: Does my right hon. Friend agree that it would be perfectly possible for the Soviet Union to offer to withdraw Warsaw pact forces, but not the equipment, which would make little actual difference to the Soviets' fighting capability on the central front?

Mr. Younger: I agree. We believe that the conventional imbalance can be redressed through a set of measures including reductions, limitations, redeployment provisions and related measures, as well as the establishment of equal ceilings. That outcome will require highly asymmetrical reductions by the East and will entail, for example, the elimination from Europe of tens of thousands of Warsaw pact weapons relevant to surprise attack—among them, tanks and artillery pieces.

Mr. Baldry: Does my right hon. Friend recall that before the last general election the Labour party was exhorting us to strengthen our conventional weapons? Now it seems to be suggesting that we should weaken our

conventional weapons. The only inference to be drawn from that is that the Labour party is interested, not in the defence of Britain, but in her disarmament?

Mr. Younger: As my hon. Friend points out, many strange things were said by the Labour party before the last election, and the ones that he has mentioned are certainly among them. I think, however, that even those are not as strange as the doctrine that we should have out-of-date weapons, to which the Labour party seems now to attach itself.

Merchant Shipping (Wartime Use)

14. **Mr. Doran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he last reviewed arrangements for the use of merchant shipping in time of war.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Arrangements for the use of merchant shipping in time of war are kept under regular review.

Mr. Doran: Has not the Government's wilful neglect of their merchant shipping fleet and merchant seamen severely reduced the country's capacity to defend itself?

Mr. Stewart: No, Sir. We judge that there are sufficient British and British-dependent territory ships for the needs of the British forces. In the Merchant Shipping Bill we have included powers to assist with the training of merchant seamen, and, as the hon. Gentleman will know, provision for a Merchant Navy reserve.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Sims:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 24 May.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House I shall be having further meetings later today. This evening I hope to have an audience of Her Majesty The Queen.

Mr. Sims: Is my right hon. Friend aware of the degree of support in the country for the sentiments that she expressed in her speech to the Church of Scotland? Would she care to take this opportunity to reassert that one of the principles of the Christian ethic is personal and individual responsibility, and that some of the other principles, such as care, compassion and tolerance, can be, and are, shared by people of all political parties—including the party to which she and I are proud to belong?

The Prime Minister: I am most grateful to my hon. Friend for his kind words. It was, of course, an expression of personal beliefs and views—*[Interruption.]* On that occasion I agreed with what my hon. Friend said. As I pointed out at the time, there may be others who disagree, but it is a mark of Christian manners and courtesy to do so in a very mannerly way.

Mr. Kinnock: Will the Prime Minister now unfreeze child benefit and restore the 70p cuts that she has made in the past two years?

The Prime Minister: Child benefit is reviewed each year. This year we chose to give a great deal more to children in families who had low earnings, so that we helped those who needed it most.

Mr. Kinnock: It did not make up for the child benefit cuts. When I heard the Prime Minister on Saturday saying that she considered that children were "a precious trust", I wondered whether she meant it in practice. Now I know that she does not. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

The Prime Minister: Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will do me the courtesy of reading the speech. I do not believe—and it is a personal view—that one discharges all one's duties by casting them off on to the state.

Mr. Kinnock: The Prime Minister has cut child benefit. She has stopped free school meals. She has ended single payments. Can she tell us which passage of the Bible inspired her to do all that? Could it have been Matthew 27:24,

"Pilate . . . took water, and washed his hands"

The Prime Minister: I believe that the right hon. Gentleman debases everything—*[Interruption.]*—that he and I both probably believe in if we try to exchange quotations across the Chamber. I made it perfectly clear in that speech that we simply cannot delegate the exercise of mercy and generosity to others, and that therefore there is a very important place both for help through the state—which we operate—and personal help and personal responsibility. The right hon. Gentleman asked me personally. Perhaps he will kindly look at the amount which I have voluntarily forgone from my salary over the past nine years. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Key: May I congratulate my right hon. Friend on the international lead that she has given in arranging for the historic meeting between British and Soviet scientists at the chemical defence establishment at Porton Down in my constituency? Will she join me in praising the work of the scientific and industrial civil servants, without whose dedication and loyalty our role in those talks would not be so important?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I will gladly do that. As my hon. Friend is aware, there were visits from this country and from our allies to the Soviet Union with regard to chemical weapons. We have no chemical weapons in this country. We gave them up a very long time ago, and this is a return visit under the agreement that we have to inspect each other's premises.

Dr. Owen: In view of the importance of a revising second Chamber for this Parliament, does the Prime Minister accept that it is now time to look at the proposals of Lord Home in 1978 for an elected and nominated second Chamber? The reform of the other place is now right. If we are to have a sensible revisory process, it requires a change in the voting membership of the other place.

The Prime Minister: As the right hon. Gentleman will be aware, the community charge Bill for Scotland went through their Lordships' House completely, and was revised in their Lordships' House, before the election. We put in our manifesto plans that went into far greater detail because a similar Bill had already been through their

Lordships' House. I believe that there is no such difficulty as the right hon. Gentleman suggests. I believe that yesterday we won on the argument—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. It takes up a great deal of time to have so much noise.

The Prime Minister: During the debate 75 Cross Benchers were present and voting; 43 Cross Benchers supported the Government and 32 voted with the Labour Opposition.

Mr. Colin Shepherd: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the SAS regiment based in Herefordshire has served this country with quiet distinction, not least for the past 13 years, during which it has been deployed in Northern Ireland? Does she agree that that success has been due largely to the anonymity with which it has worked? Does she not agree, therefore, that it is highly irresponsible for hon. Members to seek to name names, not least because of the jeopardy in which soldiers' families would be placed?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I join my hon. Friend in paying warm tribute to the work of the SAS. I agree with him that for it to continue to protect our security it must not be discussed in detail in this House or anywhere else.

Q2. **Mr. Tom Clarke:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 24 May.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Clarke: Has the Prime Minister had time to glimpse at "Just Sharing", one of the books that was presented to her by the Church of Scotland on Saturday? Does she agree with its conclusion that the reality of one and a half million men, women and children who live on the borders of poverty represents a sick society in Scotland? In view of the charity which the Church demonstrated by listening to the right hon. Lady's speech, will she respond by showing some humility and offering a real challenge to poverty, if only because pious words do not always represent Christian values, but positive policies and a caring approach in a meaningful sense often do?

The Prime Minister: I was glad to receive the pamphlet "Just Sharing". It gives me an opportunity to point out that because of the Government's policies there is far more available for sharing among those who need it.

Mr. David Evans: In condemning the violence at Wembley at last Saturday's match between England and Scotland, does my right hon. Friend agree that it is time the Football League and the Football Association stopped pussyfooting on the members only issue and copied the scheme at Luton where, during two full seasons and 80 matches, there was not one single arrest inside or outside the ground?

The Prime Minister: Once again we had violence and hooliganism, which disfigures football and will make it much more difficult to get back to playing in Europe. I agree with my hon. Friend that the scheme he introduced to Luton, which was members only and no away spectators, is excellent and has brought families back to football, to their great joy. I wish that more would follow his excellent example.

Q3. **Mr. Roy Hughes:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 24 May.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Hughes: Does the Prime Minister recall that in her speech to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland at the weekend she attempted to reconcile the creed of greed with morality? In that speech she also pointed out that "each one counts." Can she confirm that yesterday that was the moral imperative uppermost in her mind when she whipped in hundreds of backwoodsmen in the House of Lords to get her over her troubles on the poll tax?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Gentleman will not be surprised to hear that I do not agree with him about the premise which underlines his question. *[Interruption.]* I do not believe that people, such as nurses and doctors, are exercising the creed of greed when they ask for more.

Mr. Lawrence: Does not the standing ovation which the Royal College of Nursing gave to our right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services show that the angels believe the NHS is safe in her hands?

The Prime Minister: Yes, Sir. Again, because of the policies carried out by this Government, there is more money to distribute for social services and far more money to distribute to the Health Service. The reception that my right hon. Friend had yesterday was well deserved.

Q4. **Mr. Allan Roberts:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 24 May.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Roberts: Since 1979, during the nine years that the Prime Minister has been in power, homelessness has doubled in Britain. Can she tell us why?

The Prime Minister: If the hon. Gentleman reads the speech of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment he will find an explanation. First, the population of working age is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ million more than it was 10 years ago. Secondly, unfortunately, as my right hon. Friend set out in his speech, the number of broken marriages and single parents greatly increases the need for housing. Therefore, more houses are having to be provided for approximately the same number of people.

Mr. Bill Walker: Is my right hon. Friend aware that many people in Scotland are delighted to see her coming to the Church of Scotland General Assembly because it is a pleasant change to have a leader who is a practising Christian, who believes in what she is doing and who clearly demonstrates this every day of the week, not least by the courage with which she carries out her duties?

The Prime Minister: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. The Opposition would not have attacked what I said so vigorously if it had not been as well received as it was.

Mr. Steel: Does the Prime Minister remember that when I asked her last month about the Church of Scotland report on poverty in Scotland, showing that 31 per cent. of the population were living at or near the margins of poverty, she said she had not seen the report? Does she recognise that that was the report handed to her by the Moderator at the end of her interesting speech, and does she now accept that the Government have a direct and unavoidable duty to do something about it?

The Prime Minister: As I have indicated many times in the past few minutes, because of the policies of this Government there is more money available to share, there are more houses, there is a better Health Service and there are better salaries; in fact, life is better off all round, precisely because of our policies.

Mr. Allason: Given the conviction yesterday of Mr. Martin Chilvers, will my right hon. Friend tell the House when the recommendations of the Security Commission report—published three years ago—to introduce polygraph testing into GCHQ and other establishments will be implemented?

The Prime Minister: As my right hon. Friend indicated in a reply, which I think was given some time during April, and as my hon. Friend is aware, we have asked for a scientific assessment of the phase 1 experiment on the polygraph. However, there are different views from the scientific body as to how useful that is. When the report has come in, we shall assess it and make an announcement to the House.

Seafreight Freeway (Fire)

3.30 pm

Mr. Jonathan Aitken (Thanet, South) *(by private notice)*: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the fire and subsequent air-sea rescue operation involving the Channel ferry Seafreight Freeway.

The Minister for Public Transport (Mr. David Mitchell): At 9.45 pm last night, the Sealink ferry Seafreight Freeway, en route Dover-Zeebrugge, reported a serious fire on board, and indicated that it might be necessary to abandon ship. There were 75 persons on board: 41 passengers plus 34 crew.

An RAF Wessex helicopter based at Manston was immediately scrambled to the scene to airlift one badly burned engineer to Canterbury hospital. Dover, Ramsgate and Calais lifeboats were launched. Two Sea King helicopters from RAF Coltishall proceeded to Manston, and the coastguard helicopter from Lee-on-Solent was also dispatched. At the same time, a fire-fighting tug, Dexteros, sailed from Dover and a second tug, Deft, stood by at Dover to take on a team from Kent fire brigade. Calais lifeboat and a French tug, Astral Fish, also sailed for the scene.

By 11.30 pm the vessel was anchored 28 miles east of Ramsgate, and reported the fire contained but not out. The tug Deft left Dover with a fire-fighting team and equipment at this time. Just after midnight seven Kent fire officers were winched on board by one of the Sea King helicopters. A further eight fire officers were standing by the ship in the coastguard helicopter. By this time the fire was becoming under control, and shortly afterwards the master reported that the fire was out, and the coastguard helicopter, having winched extra fire fighters on board, returned to Manston. One person was still missing. His body was subsequently recovered from the engine room, and returned to Dover by the Dover lifeboat. I very much regret this sad loss of life and injury and I am sure the whole House will join me in extending its sympathy to the relatives and friends concerned.

The tug Astral Fish is currently towing the Seafreight Freeway to Dunkirk with passengers and crew, plus 13 fire officers on board.

Police and fire liaison officers were in attendance throughout, at the Dover coastguard rescue co-ordination centre, whence the rescue operation was organised. The contingency plans for such major operations appear to have worked well. I congratulate all those involved in carrying out the operation swiftly and professionally.

Two principal surveyors from the Department of Transport have been appointed on behalf of the Bermudan authorities to investigate the accident and have already started work. It would not be sensible at this time to make any further comment until all the facts have been established.

Mr. Aitken: I join my hon. Friend in his expression of sympathy to the bereaved and injured and in his appreciation of the skill and courage of the air-sea rescue services. May I particularly commend the medical rescue work of my constituent, Dr. John Beale, a Ramsgate general practitioner, who was winched on to the blazing ship through heavy smoke from the first RAF Wessex helicopter on the scene? I also commend the exemplary fire-fighting by the well-trained crew members on the Seafreight Freeway, which probably saved many lives.

At a time when safety on cross-Channel ferries is a matter of public concern, could the inquiry report as speedily as possible? May I express the hope that its findings will soon confirm the view of many of those on the scene last night that the fire was a one-off accident that is unlikely to reveal any inherent weaknesses in the overall standards of safety on such vessels?

Mr. Mitchell: I join my hon. Friend in commending the bravery and care for the injured of Dr. John Beale, who joined the vessel from a helicopter while it was still at sea and on fire. As for the report, we should wait and see exactly what it says. In the first instance, the publication of the report is a matter for the Bermudan authorities. However, if any lessons emerge, I shall ensure that a report is made available.

Mr. David Young (Bolton, South-East): Is it not time that we asked the inquiry to consider that there should be a statutory obligation on transport companies such as ferry companies to pay money in respect of people who are killed or disabled while being transported, irrespective of whether there is a direct responsibility for blame? The families of people who die in such circumstances face severe problems. Is it not time, particularly after the two disasters one after the other, that there was a statutory obligation for responsibility for payments to be made to the relatives of the deceased?

Mr. Mitchell: That is somewhat outside the original question, but I shall write to the hon. Gentleman and set out the position for him.

Mr. Robert Adley (Christchurch): Is my hon. Friend not slightly concerned that since Mr. Sherwood acquired Sealink from British Rail we have, shall I say, no more than coincidentally, had an increasing number of such incidents that cause some of us to remember the debate we had a few weeks ago on safety at sea? Will my hon. Friend look into the whole question of the operations of Sealink in the light of the legislation on safety at sea currently passing through Parliament? Would he not be doing us all a service if he did everything he could to ensure that the Channel tunnel was built as fast as possible?

Mr. Mitchell: Any fire must be considered to be a serious matter and I join other hon. Members in expressing regret over the loss of life and injury in this case. Any lessons that emerge will be taken fully into account when we decide what follow-up action is appropriate. International regulations for the protection of ships and those on board from the effects of fire are detailed and comprehensive. Nevertheless, I can assure the House that if this unfortunate accident produces any lessons, we shall not hesitate to act on them. I remind my hon. Friend that the merchant shipping regulations have recently been introduced in a number of areas.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Is it not significant that only a few years after privatisation a Tory Member should complain in the House about the fact that Sealink has a query against it on safety matters? Would it not have been more unfortunate if one of the P and O ferries were placed in the same predicament as the ferry last night because the numbers of staff available would have been much reduced?

Is it not also worth noting that at this time P and O is allowed to use the commando base at Deal free of charge to train some of its personnel because of the battle that it is having with the National Union of Seamen? If he is going to hold an inquiry——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman is going very wide of the subject.

Mr. Mitchell: I regret that the hon. Gentleman should make a rather squalid attempt to introduce politics into a matter to which they are not relevant in any way. As for his remarks about the safety aspect, I have said that the matter is under investigation.

Sir David Price (Eastleigh): Is it not clear that among the many people who deserve the congratulations of the House is the master of the ferry, who behaved in an exemplary manner, and that, in answer to the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) and everyone else, in no way can the responsibility of a master for the safety of his ship be handed over to anyone else? All the evidence is that on this occasion the master behaved admirably.

Mr. Mitchell: I have no reason to disagree with my hon. Friend.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): Will the Minister tell us, in view of the praise that has been given to the crew of the Sealink vessel for its efficiency, what difference in conditions, manning and terms of employment there would have been if that ship had been a P and O vessel? Will he look at that as part of the inquiry?

Mr. Mitchell: I do not think that it would be right for me to speculate on that matter. The level of manning will be a matter covered by the investigation, and if any irregularity is revealed consideration will be given to whether there should be a prosecution.

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): It is no surprise to Kent Members that the Kent fire brigade should be singled out for praise for being efficient. Does my hon. Friend agree that this is a further dramatic example of the way in which the rapidly growing cross-Channel traffic puts strains on the Kent fire brigade, and will he give the assurance that as the tunnel comes on line the additional responsibilities that will be carried by the Kent fire brigade will be taken fully into account?

Mr. Mitchell: Yes, certainly; and I should add, of course, that in this case the whole operation was co-ordinated by the coastguards, who also deserve the congratulations and appreciation of the House.

Mr. Eddie Loyden (Liverpool, Garston): Does the Minister agree that nobody will take the Government seriously while they continue to ignore the need for statutory manning of vessels, as happened in the past under the Board of Trade, and that, until there is statutory manning, and while it is left to market forces, incidents of this kind will happen again and the Government will wring their hands again and weep tears as they have in the past? Does he not think that the inquiry should compel the Government to take action along those lines?

Mr. Mitchell: The question whether there is adequate manning and whether any offence has been committed will, of course, be covered by the inquiry.

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): Will my hon. Friend confirm that much of the success in the saving of lives in last night's accident was attributable to the good training of the Sealink seamen? Will he also confirm that this is the first fire on a Sealink ferry since Sealink was privatised, compared with three fires on Sealink ferries in 1980, 1981 and 1983, all in the engine room? Is this not quite a change and an improvement in safety standards since privatisation?

Mr. Mitchell: The matters of adequacy of training and any record in this matter are for the investigation rather than for me today.

Mr. Tony Lloyd (Stretford): The whole House will join the Minister in sending condolences to the bereaved and the injured. I should like to place on record my tribute to the many people involved in the rescue operation, which was highly successful. Certainly the skills of the crew members in the engine room were critical in keeping down the loss of life and injury.

Will the Minister—I should be grateful if he would pay careful attention to this—confirm that, had the fire taken place on a P and O vessel, rather than the five engineering officers and four ratings who were available, there would have been only three officers and three ratings? Will the Minister take into account the comment that has been made to me in the last two hours by an experienced officer who has regularly sailed on such vessels that, had this fire taken place on a P and O vessel, what was a human tragedy would have turned into a major disaster?

Will the Minister make sure that that point is taken firmly on board by the inquiry and that the inquiry will report in this country as well as in Bermuda, and as quickly as possible, so that we may ensure that the level of crewing of these vessels will not lead to loss of life in the future?

Mr. Mitchell: I join with the hon. Gentleman in his tribute to the crew, who clearly played a brave and distinguished part in ensuring that the fire was brought under control as quickly as possible.

The crew numbers of all the P and O ships involved in Channel ferry services have been checked and fully comply with the regulations. The hon. Gentleman need not draw any false implications from that.

[Mr. Mitchell]

Business of the House

3.45 pm

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a short business statement. The business for the remainder of the week will now be as follows:

WEDNESDAY 25 MAY—Motion for the spring Adjournment.

Timetable motion on the Firearms (Amendment) Bill, followed by completion of remaining stages of the Firearms (Amendment) Bill.

THURSDAY 26 MAY—Motion to take note of the White Paper on developments in the European Community July-December 1987 (Cm 336).

Motion on the Lord Chancellor's salary order.

FRIDAY 27 MAY—Adjournment motions.

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): What we have just heard must be the most extraordinary business statement of the decade. The Government, with a majority of 100, are proposing to guillotine their own Members rather than the Opposition. We are used to Tory politicians shooting themselves in the foot, but the Tory Front Bench is now proposing to shoot Tory Back Benchers in the back—which is a novel use of the guillotine.

The guillotine is directed not at the Opposition, who broadly support the objects of the Firearms (Amendment) Bill, but at Tory Back Benchers, who do not. The Labour party will oppose the guillotine, not because it is opposed to effective gun laws but because we are in favour of fair and effective gun laws.

The Bill was ill thought out and badly drafted from the start. It has since been heavily amended by the Government. The last straw was the sudden extension of the Bill to cover Northern Ireland. Whatever views hon. Members may have about Northern Ireland, few could fail to recognise that the use of firearms is a bigger problem in Northern Ireland than it is in England, Scotland and Wales. This slipshod Bill is to be extended to Northern Ireland as an afterthought. We believe that that is no way to treat the House, and we certainly do not believe that it is the way to treat the terrible problems of Northern Ireland.

Mr. Wakeham: I hope that the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) will do better tomorrow, should he catch your eye, Mr. Speaker, than he has done today, and will address himself to the fact that when the Bill was introduced the Opposition wanted it to be implemented speedily. I regret the necessity to introduce the timetable motion. The Bill has been scrutinised carefully in Standing Committee, and I have no doubt that the right course is to allow the House to reach a decision on it in an orderly manner and at a reasonable time of day.

Mr. Jerry Wiggin (Weston-super-Mare): How often has it been the practice to guillotine a Bill halfway through its Report stage? Will my right hon. Friend explain why, with many hours available to debate the Bill last night, he drew stumps at 2.20 am? Could it be that the supporters of the Government were as irritated by the Government's activities as I am?

Mr. Wakeham: It is rare that a guillotine motion is introduced on Report, and I regret that it is necessary. As I said to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras, it is right for the House to reach a decision in an orderly manner and at a reasonable time of day, and that is why we adjourned the debate when we did.

Mr. James Molyneaux (Lagan Valley): Does the Leader of the House agree that a great deal of time would have been saved yesterday if the Bill had been applied to Northern Ireland from the beginning instead of in the most unorthodox fashion after the Committee had finished its deliberations? Is there not a lesson there for the future? Does the right hon. Gentleman further agree that, if the timetable motion is approved by the House tomorrow, it is inevitable that many of the issues raised in this ill-thought-out Bill will never be debated, never mind voted upon? Will he assure the House that he will prevail upon his Home Office colleagues to show a little more sympathy for and understanding of the issues that lie behind the new clauses and amendments that may not be reached?

Mrs. Wakeham: I shall table the motion later today, but there will be a total of five hours for the guillotine motion and the remaining clauses. That is an adequate amount of time and I am sure that Ministers will be as helpful as they can in reply to any constructive points that are made.

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire): Will my right hon. Friend give weight to the arguments from both sides of the House in proportion to the number of hon. Members who were here last night? Does he recall that last night, late at night, more than 200 hon. Members supported my right hon. Friend and the Government while 10 were raising protests? Will he bear that in mind when listening to the empty words from Opposition Members —and, indeed, from my hon. Friends sitting behind me?

Mr. Wakeham: I am in favour of an orderly debate at the proper time of day, and that is what I am seeking to achieve. The points that my hon. Friend correctly makes are an added incentive to believe that we are doing the right thing.

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): Will the Leader of the House accept from me, as one who was here at 20 past 2 this morning, that it must be of considerable concern to those who believe in true democracy that whenever the Government run into opposition, particularly on their own side, they either wake up their dormant majority in the other place or use their majority in this place to stifle debate? How rare an event is it for a timetable motion to be brought in part way through a Report stage? Does the Leader of the House propose to introduce a timetable motion on any other legislation that has completed its Committee stage without such a motion?

Mr. Wakeham: I have no desire to bring in any timetable motions. If reasonable timetabling can be done voluntarily, so much the better. The hon. Gentleman cannot have it both ways. If the Government are defeated on an amendment in the other place, Opposition Members call it a triumph for democracy; if the Government succeed, they call it an abuse of power.

Mr. Jerry Hayes (Harlow): Does my right hon. Friend agree that, apart from the rank hypocrisy of the Opposition parties, many Conservative Members find it mildly farcical that here we have a Government with a majority of over 100 and a Bill which was given its Second Reading without a vote, and yet the business managers seem to be held to ransom by 10 hon. Members, mostly on the Conservative Benches? Those of us who wish to see our wives and children from time to time are rather annoyed.

Mr. Wakeham: I hear what my hon. Friend says and I have no doubt that he will support us in the Lobby tomorrow.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): Do we detect here a further erosion in Back-Benchers' rights because there is now less time for the motion for the spring Adjournment? In order to save time, will the Leader of the House arrange for a statement on the article in *The Guardian* last Friday when the Prime Minister's principal private secretary——

Mr. Speaker: Order. With any luck, the hon. Gentleman may be able to raise that in the debate on the Adjournment motion.

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: No, I do not want to hear it now. I have given the hon. Gentleman a very good tip.

Mr. Michael Colvin (Romsey and Waterside): Is my right hon. Friend aware of the anxiety on the Conservative Benches that the Government are changing the business of the House at very short notice, which is extremely inconvenient for many hon. Members, simply to get themselves out of the mess into which they have got themselves? Mr. Speaker, my question may relate to you as much as to my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House, because it concerns the selection and grouping of the amendments that we shall consider if the guillotine motion is carried. Will my right hon. Friend do his best to ensure that the three key issues of the consultative committee, self-loading rifles and the integral magazine of five to eight rounds and compensation are grouped in such a way as to give the House an opportunity to vote on them, because they go to the heart of the Bill?

Mr. Wakeham: I shall be tabling the guillotine motion later today and the Business Committee, if set up, will determine the way in which the debates take place. We shall do our best to meet the wishes of the House.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I remind the House that we have a very busy day ahead of us. I shall call the three hon. Gentlemen who have been rising, but their remarks must be related to the business for tomorrow.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): In between his attempts to deal with his problems on the Firearms (Amendment) Bill, has the Leader of the House had an opportunity to talk to the Secretary of State for Social Services——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Not today; perhaps tomorrow.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): Much though we may disagree with the views of the hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare (Mr. Wiggin), many Back Benchers will admire the resolute campaign that he is mounting in pursuit of his interests. We hope that nothing nasty will happen to him because of that.

Mr. Michael Foot (Blaenau Gwent): Speak for yourself.

Mr. Banks: I am sure that I speak for all hon. Members on both sides of the House when I say that I hope that the hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare will not be discovered floating upside down in a local canal. Nevertheless, will the Leader of the House tell us when we will be able to debate the question of short speeches because that is a very important matter, and it might help him?

Mr. Wakeham: Far from anything nasty happening to my hon. Friend the Member for Weston-super-Mare (Mr. Wiggin), something very pleasant has happened to him. I have taken the speeches that he might have made if he had caught your eye, Mr. Speaker, from the middle of the night, when many people would not have heard them, and I have put them on in prime time instead. I do not see how he has the slightest ground for complaint.

I recognise that there is a need for a debate on the subject of short speeches, but I am afraid that it is not possible to take the matter correctly very late at night. There is limited time before Whitsun, but I hope to deal with the matter as soon as I can after Whitsun.

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Home Secretary has announced that he is not prepared to provide any extra policemen for the county of Leicestershire——

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Janner: But——

Mr. Speaker: No. That has nothing to do with the change of business.

Mr. Janner: Surely——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman must not argue with the Chair. This is a business statement dealing with the change in tomorrow's business.

Scottish Bus Group

3.57 pm

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement about the future of the Scottish Bus Group.

I told the House on 27 January that I had decided to seek powers at an early opportunity to privatise the Scottish Bus Group. I said that I was considering whether the group should be privatised as a single company or as several companies. In order to reach a decision on this matter, I appointed the Scottish merchant bank, Quayle Munro, to advise me. In the light of that advice, I have decided that the Scottish Bus Group should be privatised in about 10 units.

In reaching this decision, I have considered carefully the views of the board of the Scottish Transport Group and of its financial advisers. I have also met the chairman and the vice-chairman of the group. The board of the Scottish Transport Group is in favour of privatisation of the Scottish Bus Group, but as a single unit. However, I consider that, with 3,000 buses and providing more than half the local bus mileage in Scotland, the bus group would be too dominant to allow for fair competition with other bus companies. I have decided that my objective of introducing greater competition into the Scottish bus market would be better achieved by privatising the bus group by the method that I have suggested.

There are other important reasons for deciding to privatise the group in a number of companies. Locally based companies will be more sensitive to local needs. Management will be freer to respond to local demand on the basis of local knowledge. I am sure that employees will find it easier to identify with smaller locally based companies. An important objective of privatisation will be to give a substantial boost to enterprise in Scotland by the creation of new Scottish-based private sector companies. I hope that part of this process will be an increase in Scottish employee participation. The work force has already made it clear that it is keen to take a stake in its industry.

The detailed pattern of privatisation will be worked out in consultation with the board of the Scottish Transport Group when the companies are being prepared for sale. However, privatisation will be, broadly speaking, on the basis of the present subsidiaries, probably with a combination of pairs of subsidiaries north and south of Glasgow and adjacent to Edinburgh to provide for even competition with the public transport companies—that is, the former municipal operations.

We have already seen the benefits of competition following deregulation. There are new and innovative services. Operators have adapted to demand. Further competition will benefit the customer. What I propose will strike a balance between increased competition and stability of services. The privatised companies will be substantial bus operators with the capacity to thrive in the deregulated environment alongside the growing independent operators. They will be a valuable addition to the private sector in Scotland.

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): Few people would agree with the right hon. and learned Gentleman about the benefits of deregulation. It has brought wasteful competition in already congested areas, where provision was always adequate; poorer service in many outlying areas; and fares that have risen substantially faster than the rate of inflation. There is in the right hon. and learned Gentleman's statement a remarkable lack of detail, although many people will be disappointed by the decision that there should be fragmentation rather than the selling of the entire Scottish Bus Group.

I shall ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman a number of specific questions. He says that there will be about 10 units. Will they all be operating bus routes? I ask that because there is no mention of SMT Insurance, *Sanderson Travel* or, indeed, the Scottish Bus Group Engineering business, which is of importance. I would like the right hon. and learned Gentleman to be more specific as to what will happen to them and whether the 10 units will be operational in the way I have described.

Secondly, the right hon. and learned Gentleman puts great stress on new Scottish-based private sector companies. Will he tell the House how he intends to ensure that, when this happens, there will be Scottish ownership or Scottish control? All the evidence of the English experience shows that there will be bids from south of the border and, indeed, perhaps from abroad. What protection will be offered during the break-up and during the subsequent period? As the right hon. and learned Gentleman will remember, in England there were about 70 companies at the time of deregulation. There are now 11 dominant companies, many of which have been put together by consortia, which have recreated operations that the Government deliberately split up at the time of deregulation. What will be in the Bill to prevent that happening in Scotland?

The right hon. and learned Gentleman puts particular emphasis on scale. For example, would Stagecoach, which already has about 900 buses in operation and is made up of four English companies, and widespread of Scottish operations, be able to buy one, two or more of these new fragmented parts of the Scottish Bus Group? If Front Source, perhaps in a joint venture with Icarus or some other big international group, bought the Scottish Bus Group Engineering business, what would be the result in terms of competition?

Perhaps the right hon. and learned Gentleman could say a word or two about the key to the scheme. The key is the criterion on which bids will be assessed. Will it simply be the price offered, or will competition, service cover for the travelling public, safety standards and employee participation be taken into account?

What effect will there be on the four former municipal undertakings? Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman rule out—as I hope he does—any further restructuring of those?

Finally, there is a startling silence on the fate of Caledonian MacBrayne. Is it to be sold? Is it going out to management tender, as rumour has suggested? After all, it is a vital lifeline to the islands. It inevitably needs and deserves substantial public support. It seems to me, and I am sure to my hon. Friends, to be an unhappy and inappropriate candidate for privatisation and the so-called discipline of the profit motive. Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman tell us his intentions for Caledonian MacBrayne?

We shall look critically at the legislation. Perhaps the Secretary of State will confirm that there will be legislation before the sale of this major public undertaking, with a

turnover of over £180 million and 11,000 employees. When can we expect the Bill to come to the House? What is his estimate of the windfall profit to the Treasury of this asset-stripping exercise?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) began with some uncomplimentary comments about the effects of deregulation. His comments added up to assertions without any evidence. I shall now supply him with some of the evidence. Since deregulation was introduced, although subsidies for buses have been reduced from £27 million to £15 million to the benefit of the taxpayer and ratepayer, up to May 1987 the actual vehicle mileage in Scotland had already increased by 4 per cent. In Scotland, there are 16 new operators providing services and the number of vehicle miles provided by independent operators has increased by 7 per cent. On those routes now subject to competition, there have been significant fare reductions and the overall effect has been highly beneficial to the travelling bus public.

Further, the hon. Gentleman asks whether the 10 units referred to included the engineering, insurance and other minor interests of the Scottish Bus Group. They do not. Those will be privatised, but will be in addition to the operational units that I primarily referred to.

On the question of ownership and control of the bus group after privatisation, I have said that we hope that management and employees of the group will—as evidence already suggests that they will—have a great interest in acquiring ownership of a significant number of those companies. If Opposition Members say that that is a pious hope, I ask them to look at what happened south of the border. Seventy-two companies were privatised out of the NBC, 38 were the result of a management or a management employee buy-out. That is something which will also be a feature in Scotland, and I am sure will be welcomed by Opposition Members. It is something that the employees of the Scottish Bus Group welcome and something on which they should be congratulated.

The hon. Member for Garscadden asked me about the municipal PTCs and the implications for them of the privatisation of the Scottish Bus Group. The hon. Gentleman is right to draw attention to the somewhat anomalous position that they find themselves in as a result of privatisation. It is important that we consider the future of the PTCs, but I have no statement to make at present. The hon. Gentleman is right to raise that matter, because there must be implications for them arising out of the privatisation of the Scottish Bus Group.

On the question of Cal Mac, I repeat the assurance that I gave previously. I am conscious of the lifeline to island services that Cal Mac represents. We are not yet in a position to say what the future will hold for Cal Mac. I assure the hon. Gentleman that, whatever structure is finally recommended to the House, it will be one that will guarantee the present quality of service that the islanders rightly enjoy.

Mr. Speaker: May I remind the House that we have a busy day ahead of us with Lords amendments? I ask the hon. Members who are rising, or will be called, to put single questions and not to repeat questions that have been asked.

Mr. Alick Buchanan-Smith (Kincardine and Deeside): Since my right hon. and learned Friend is seeking to create a number of companies, and thereby creating local opportunity, will he say whether help and assistance will be available to local management and work forces where there is interest in buying out those local undertakings? I understand that that was the case in England and Wales. Will my right hon. and learned Friend be more forthcoming in relation to the future of the local authority bus undertakings? In Lothian and Strathclyde, because of their size, those undertakings could pose a considerable threat to some of the companies that my right hon. and learned Friend is seeking to create. This point needs clarification.

Mr. Rifkind: With regard to the first question of my right hon. Friend the Member for Kincardine and Deeside (Mr. Buchanan-Smith), assistance was given in the form of help with advice and consultancy to management and employees in existing NBC activities, which in some cases enabled them to put forward successful bids for management or management employee buy-outs. We would wish to give at least comparable assistance to local management and work forces in Scotland.

My right hon. Friend is correct to say that the PTCs, particularly in Strathclyde and Lothian, are a substantial size. That is one of the considerations that led me to suggest that it might be appropriate for some combination of the existing subsidiaries of the SBG to be achieved so as to ensure effective competition between them and the PTCs in those localities.

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): In accepting that this privatisation is to take place, I say that there is some logic in the way that the Secretary of State is proposing to carry it out. However, first, I have a question about rural subsidies. Some of the units that he has said he will create will find it difficult to survive in a commercial free market.

Secondly, what protection will be given to the companies to ensure that predatory bids do not come from firth of Scotland?

Mr. Rifkind: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his general welcome of the structure that I am recommending to the House. Rural bus services will be in the same position as at present. Regional councils will be free, as at present, to provide a subsidy for any rural bus service in which interest was not expressed by the private sector. That is the present position and it will continue to be the case after the privatisation of the bus group.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that many of us are delighted that there will be a monopoly privatisation? Will he confirm that Stagecoach, which is based in my constituency, which has done so well for the private sector and buses and which has brought down prices on so many routes, will have an opportunity to participate in the privatisation programme?

Mr. Rifkind: I confirm that Stagecoach has played an active part and was successful in acquiring a number of companies of the privatised NBC. Like other companies, Stagecoach will be free to make known its interests in possible subsidiaries of the Scottish Bus Group. Obviously we shall have to wait to see the extent to which that company is successful in achieving control of any individual company. I have stated that, as a general

[Mr. Rifkind]

preference, we wish to encourage management and management-employee buy-outs but, as with NBC, there is likely to be a varied outcome in Scotland.

Mr. David Lambie (Cunninghame, South): Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that most people in Scotland will be disappointed that he has replaced his right hon. Friend the Member for Ayr (Mr. Younger) who, while he was Secretary of State for Scotland, managed to protect the public sector Scottish Bus Group against attacks on it by the English Tory Government when they were privatising the public sector in Scotland?

In spite of the assurances that the Secretary of State has given that he does not yet have any plans to announce to the House about the future of Cal Mac, will he assure us that if Cal Mac is privatised it will not be privatised in the way in which he is privatising the Scottish Bus Group and be divided into 10 or so independent sectors, but that he will privatise it as a group because it depends on cross-subsidisation to make it efficient?

Mr. Rifkind: I repudiate the hon. Gentleman's initial remarks. He will be aware that the principle of privatisation has been welcomed by the Scottish Bus Group and by the Scottish Consumer Council and other organisations in Scotland.

On the hon. Gentleman's latter remarks, I accept that any future structure recommended for Cal Mac must take account of the fact that some substantial public subsidy element must remain because most, although by no means all, of the routes serviced by Cal Mac could not operate without a significant degree of public support.

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire): Does my right hon. and learned Friend believe that the users, managers and employees of the Scottish Bus Group will respond with interest to the challenge before them, or does he think that they will be negative in their response and follow the monopolistic, conservative and traditional route that is followed by the Opposition in trying always to defend the inefficient status quo? Is my right hon. and learned Friend an optimist or a pessimist in that regard?

Mr. Rifkind: The evidence so far suggests a great degree of interest by the employees of the Scottish Bus Group in enjoying the opportunity to acquire either shares in or the ownership of their individual companies. I recollect, for example, that bus drivers at the Bannockburn depot dissociated themselves from statements that were alleged to have been made on behalf of the employees and said that they looked forward to acquiring a stake in the ownership of the industry in which they worked.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing (Moray): Given that there will be an extensive period of negotiation following the Secretary of State's statement today, will he assure us that there will be full discussions with local authorities, especially with Grampian regional council and Highland regional council because of their understanding of the needs of rural communities? Given that the statement referred specifically to Edinburgh and Glasgow, will the Secretary of State assure us that the twin northern capitals of Inverness and Aberdeen will be involved in all discussions?

Mr. Rifkind: I shall be happy to hear any views that those local authorities may wish to put to us. However, most of the detailed discussion will be with the Scottish Bus Group about the details of individual subsidiaries and the form that the privatisation might take. I hope that the hon. Lady will agree that the decision to split the Scottish Bus Group into smaller units will ensure that the units serving, for example, the north-east of Scotland are likely to be more responsive to the needs of the north-east of Scotland than a single Scottish Bus Group with its headquarters elsewhere.

Mr. Roger King (Birmingham, Northfield): I congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend on bringing the benefits of privatisation, which have been experienced in England, to the people of Scotland in terms of improved services for the passenger and more work for those who supply vehicles to the industry. Will he tell the House the time scale within which he will operate and say by what date the whole transaction will have been completed?

Mr. Rifkind: It is difficult to give an exact date, but we certainly anticipate the possibility of introducing legislation at an early moment. Thereafter there should be no major bar to an early disposal of the individual companies.

Mr. Alistair Darling (Edinburgh, Central): Is it not the case that the Secretary of State is offering no guarantees whatsoever that those small companies will not be snapped up by predators from outside Scotland or even by companies such as Stagecoach, which does not enjoy a good safety record? Is it not also the case that as no such guarantees are being offered regional councils might be well advised to think twice before continuing the subsidies that they currently give bus group companies if those companies are to be based outside Scotland?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman should make up his mind. In recent months regional councils have been attacking the Scottish Bus Group for what they claim to be unfair competition against them and Strathclyde region was critical of the Scottish Bus Group in Glasgow following deregulation. However, the hon. Gentleman is now claiming that they will be upset because we are ensuring that there will not be any unfair dominance by any one unit in the aftermath of the privatisation. The hon. Gentleman is a difficult customer to satisfy, irrespective of the policy that is put forward.

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): I congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend on the action that he has taken. Will he take this opportunity to assure the people of Scotland that the experience of England has been that, where there is competition on routes, it is possible to run subsidised routes to meet social needs and that the overall provision has resulted in more and better bus services south of the border?

Mr. Rifkind: That is the experience not only of England, but of Scotland. It has been a substantial time since deregulation was introduced and, as I commented earlier, there is solid evidence in terms of the route mileage provided by the bus services and in the implications for fares that deregulation has been an almost uninterrupted benefit to the Scottish public.

Mr. David Marshall (Glasgow, Shettleston): The statement is deeply disappointing and worrying to bus passengers and bus workers in Scotland. What guarantee can the Secretary of State give to protect the wages and

conditions of employees in the bus industry? Why did he choose to refuse to accept the advice of the management of the Scottish Bus Group?

Mr. Rifkind: There is not the slightest evidence to suggest that the interests of employees are better served by publicly owned bus companies than by independent operators. There has been substantial growth among independent operators, thus providing better opportunities for their employees.

As to the reasons why we did not accept the advice of the Scottish Bus Group, the hon. Gentleman should acknowledge the fact that it is in the interests of the employees and the bus industry as a whole that there should not be a single dominant company with over half the bus route mileage in Scotland because that would be very much against the interests of the employees.

Mr. Calum Macdonald (Western Isles): Will the Secretary of State acknowledge that his failure yet again to say anything definite about the future of Caledonian MacBrayne will be greeted with dismay throughout the islands as will his failure to respond to the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Cunninghame, South (Mr. Lambie) about keeping Caledonian MacBrayne as a single entity? Will he respond to information that I have received to the effect that if Caledonian MacBrayne were privatised it would not have access to the substantial amounts of EEC money to which it has access at the moment and that, therefore, the privatisation of Caledonian MacBrayne would be not only socially irresponsible but financially foolish?

Mr. Rifkind: If the hon. Gentleman was wishing to be entirely objective, he might have prefaced his remarks by recognising that this Government have given more additional support to Cal Mac during the past 10 years than at any previous time in the history of ferry services to his constituency. Therefore, the interests of the Government in the well-being of island services to the Western Isles can hardly be doubted. It is precisely because we wish to be sure that the quality of services to the Western Isles and to other island communities will be properly safeguarded by the structure that we eventually recommend to the House that it is taking longer than the hon. Gentleman might like for us to reach a conclusion. The hon. Gentleman should see that as a source of reassurance, not concern.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): Would the Secretary of State care to be a little more forthcoming with the House about his economic and social strategy? Although it may be appropriate to divide the Scottish Bus Group into 10 sub-companies so that it may be digested by the financial markets, should we not consider Scotland as a whole, in economic and social terms, as a market for bus operations and to argue the case, in terms of safety, employee interests and customer satisfaction, in the face of private enterprise and various public authorities, for one integrated Scottish Bus Group, so as to have a countervailing power to preserve acceptable, publicly endorsed standards? Is not the Secretary of State running away from that in his statement?

Mr. Rifkind: There was no problem about whether the Scottish financial community could absorb a single privatisation of the Scottish Bus Group. After all, the Scottish Bus Group, even as a single unit, has some 3,000 buses and it would not have been beyond the wit of the financial community to absorb that as a single unit. I can therefore assure the hon. Gentleman that such a consideration did not lead to the recommendation that we are making to the House.

We were anxious to ensure a structure that was fair to bus operators throughout Scotland. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will appreciate that the creation of a single private sector bus company with over 40 per cent. of all the buses in Scotland and over 50 per cent. of the route mileage would have been grossly unfair to all the other operators, both in his constituency and elsewhere in Scotland.

Mr. John McAllion (Dundee, East): The Secretary of State has argued in favour of privatisation as a means of devolving real power and control back to Scotland. Does he not realise that, in disposing of the Scottish Bus Group on a fragmented basis, he is opening up the way for cash-rich predators from outwith Scotland to pick off the individual Scottish Bus Group companies one by one and that, far from devolving control back to Scotland, he is really facilitating that control being passed out of Scotland and into England?

Mr. Rifkind: On the contrary, if I were to recommend the privatisation of a Scottish bus company, and that company was then taken over by an outside owner, ownership would automatically go elsewhere. The fact that there will be a number of companies makes that ultimate outcome that much less likely and, if each of those individual companies is healthy and viable, there is no reason why they should not continue to have deep roots in Scotland. I have suggested, for example, that employee and management buy-outs are likely to occur in Scotland, as they have south of the border. That is also a way of ensuring a continuing control within Scotland and, therefore, should be welcome to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Richard Holt (Langbaurgh): May I— *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is a United Kingdom Parliament.

Mr. Holt: May I remind my right hon. and learned Friend—perhaps this is one reason why Opposition Members are seeking to shout me down—of the experience in Cleveland since privatisation? The rate has been reduced by the best figure that we are able to obtain from £4 million to £1 million. That is the sum with which the ratepayers have had to subsidise the bus services. With privatisation, we now have a saving and better services for the people of Cleveland.

Mr. Rifkind: My hon. Friend need not worry about the reactions that his intervention has caused among Opposition Members. We have all noticed a multiplicity of Scottish Labour Members taking part in English debates on the community charge legislation and, therefore, my hon. Friend should feel quite confident.

Dr. John Reid (Motherwell, North): Does the Secretary of State realise that the irate comments by Opposition Members were due to the fact that the hon. Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) was commenting on and questioning a statement to which he did not have the courtesy to listen? As I sat through that statement, perhaps the Secretary of State will answer my question and that

[Dr. John Reid]

asked earlier by my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Shettleston (Mr. Marshall) which he pointedly refused to answer. What guarantees will he give to the present employees of the Scottish Bus Group regarding their future conditions, wages and pensions? Is it not the case that he can and will give no such guarantees?

Mr. Rifkind: There are no guarantees that one can give to employees under the present nationalised Scottish Bus Group that one cannot give to them about the future. However, Opposition Members know perfectly well that, in every previous privatisation of any industry, the pensions of all employees have been properly protected. In each case, the Opposition have sought to scaremonger and claim that the pension rights of employees would be damaged as a result of privatisation. In every case, they have been found to be wrong in the aftermath, and the same will apply in this case.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): The Secretary of State referred to the Government's record in terms of subsidies given to Caledonian MacBrayne. In future, what assurance will there be that its successor, a privatised company, will continue to receive financial assistance from the state to meet the cost of new vessels? Is it not the case that the company will require several new vessels within the next 10 years?

Mr. Rifkind: Today's statement is not about Caledonian MacBrayne, but I have already stated, and repeated today, that the continuing requirement for Government funding for at least part of the activities of Caledonian MacBrayne has already been entirely accepted. In many cases, those ferry services to the island communities simply could not continue without significant Government funding. As we have recognised from the start, those services are a lifeline to the island communities, and I can assure the hon. Gentleman that whatever structure we eventually recommend will take into account that important consideration.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): As a Member representing a rural constituency, may I give the Secretary of State the evidence, which he obviously does not have, that deregulation is cutting services? Sunday services in my constituency have gone, as have late night services, and some services have gone completely from such places as Dailly, Dalmellington, New Cumnock and Rankinson. That is happening all over rural Scotland. How does he expect Strathclyde regional council to continue to subsidise and, indeed, to increase its subsidy for those vital rural lifelines when he is clawing back £80 million or more from its expenditure in the current year? How can it continue to subsidise those routes when this new piece of highway robbery goes through?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that, if individual routes in his constituency have ceased to operate, that was because Strathclyde regional council declined to provide the subsidy required. That is a matter within the power of regional councils. Regional councils have found that, as a result of deregulation, vehicle mileage in Scotland has increased by 4 per cent. and the subsidies that they have decided to give to bus services in Scotland have gone down from £27 million to £15 million. The hon. Gentleman might not like that, but, if he has any complaints about individual routes, he should address them to his local regional council.

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West): The Secretary of State said earlier that he was looking for evidence. Perhaps I could invite him to my constituency when I should be delighted to meet him. I could take him to the splendid Alexander resource centre which is used by elderly and disabled people who have already experienced great difficulties as a result of deregulation. Their difficulties have not been eased because the Manpower Services Commission is withdrawing its funding from the dial-a-bus scheme. Before the Secretary of State made his statement, did he consult any organisations for disabled or elderly people, apart from the organisation that he appointed? Did he speak to anyone who genuinely represents consumers?

Mr. Rifkind: I look forward to meeting the hon. Gentleman whenever I visit his constituency.

Obviously my statement today was primarily concerned with the structure of the privatised industry and whether it would consist of only one company or several companies. The hon. Gentleman asked whether we had had the benefit of the views of anyone representing consumers. We did, because we had the benefit of the published views of the Scottish Consumer Council. In its submission, the council said:

> "A decision to sell the SBG as a single unit would send all the wrong messages and would reverse what growing confidence there is among the smaller independent operators. A privatised monopoly of this scale could seriously undermine competition in the Scottish bus industry."

I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will welcome the fact that we are following the advice of the Scottish Consumer Council.

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): We all know who appoints the Scottish Consumer Council.

This proposal to decimate the Scottish Bus Group has nothing to do with the interests of passengers or employees. It is another case of public asset-stripping. Is the Secretary of State aware that we reject his selective assertions about the benefits of deregulation? Will he take notice of the Scottish majority's opposition to the thinly veiled threat that he made about the future of municipal passenger transport companies? Can he offer any credible guarantee that the privatised companies will remain under recognisable local control? For instance, will there be any safeguards in the criteria for the sale of these undertakings, or is this just another charter for predators to cream off lucrative business while public authorities are left to protect essential but unprofitable routes by subsidy? Will the Secretary of State reply to my hon. Friend's question about the timing of legislation in connection with this announcement?

Mr. Rifkind: The timing of legislation is not primarily for me. I can certainly tell the House that we expect early legislation about the proposals that I have announced today. The hon. Gentleman seeks to discredit the views of the Scottish Consumer Council on the ground that it is appointed by the Government and at the same time the Opposition seek to draw support from the views of the Scottish Bus Group, the board of which is appointed by the Government. Both organisations fearlessly put forward their views, which were based on their own

convictions. The Scottish Consumer Council, which has not been hesitant about criticising the Government in other areas, has said that it unreservedly supports what the Government are seeking to do over the Scottish Bus Group.

The hon. Gentleman asked about the future control of individual companies in the bus group. Of course at this stage I cannot predict the degree of interest that there will be among the employees and the Scottish people about acquiring these companies. However, I do say—and the hon. Gentleman should welcome this—that on the precedents that we have available there is likely to be substantial management and employee interests. That will certainly be one way of ensuring that the individual companies retain their decision-making in Scotland.

Perhaps Scottish companies such as Stagecoach will also express considerable interest. Perhaps companies south of the border will also do so. This is a United Kingdom economy and, just as Scottish companies occasionally acquire companies south of the border, the reverse may also apply. We have said quite clearly that one of the purposes of privatisation is to provide an opportunity for the employees and the management of the Scottish companies to acquire the ownership of the companies in which they work. Whether they respond to that opportunity is clearly a matter for them. I hope that they will.

Mr. Home Robertson: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, arising out of the statement. You will have noticed that there was some protest when you called the hon. Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) to ask the Secretary of State for Scotland a question. You quite rightly asserted his right to ask questions of any Minister. Is it not a normal courtesy for an hon. Member to listen to a statement before putting a question about it?

Mr. Speaker: That is correct and I was in error. I am afraid that I had not noticed that.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Ordered,

That the Companies (Fees) Regulations 1988 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—*[Mr. Dorrell.]*

Vaccine Damage (Compensation Arrangements)

4.35 pm

Dr. John Reid (Motherwell, North): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Vaccine Damage Payments Act 1979 in order to facilitate arrangements for the assessment of compensation of victims of vaccine damage.

I want to draw to the attention of the House the injustices caused by the Vaccine Damage Payments Act 1979 which was introduced to compensate that minority of tragic victims who are adversely affected by vaccinations. It has manifestly failed to achieve that.

I also seek the support of the House for two amendments to the Act, which will, I hope, alleviate the suffering of many people, including some of my constituents. The Vaccine Damage Payments Act and the system of compensation were introduced on 9 May 1978 by the then Secretary of State for Social Services, now Lord Ennals. The aim of the Act was to compensate those who had suffered damage directly caused by one of the vaccines listed in the Act. The thinking behind the scheme was that vaccine damage was a special case since vaccination was carried out as a matter of public policy. However, the Act specified that a victim would have to be at least 80 per cent. damaged according to the scale used for assessing industrial injuries disablement.

As the Secretary of State said on 9 May 1978, this marked the recognition by both sides of the House of what a terrible personal tragedy vaccine damage is for the families involved. It was right, when all the legal principles had been studied, that the Government should accept some responsibility for helping these victims. These words must have filled the families involved, including a family in my constituency, with some relief in 1978. In many cases, the reality of 1988, 10 years later, is shattered hopes and inadequate assistance.

The signs were there in the prophetic remarks 10 years ago by my right hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South (Mr. Ashley) who said that the £10,000 offered by the Government was a drop in the ocean

"in respect of children who are irretrievably damaged for life? . . . Will my right hon. Friend consider introducing a viable scheme for all vaccine-damaged children?".—[*Official Report*, 9 May 1978; Vol. 949, c. 977.]

Today, even though the Social Security Act 1985 has arbitrarily increased that lump sum to £20,000 in recognition of the general inadequacy, my right hon. Friend's demand is one that I repeat in the House today.

This is not, and should not be, a party issue. Since the introduction of the scheme, the Government, like their Labour predecessors, have refused to implement the recommendations of the Pearson Royal Commission, which I and many hon. Members feel would have been most welcome. I do not have time to discuss the many legal implications of the Pearson commission's report or the legal reasoning behind the scheme that it proposed. However, it is time to recognise that not only is the compensation of £10,000, which has been increased to £20,000, totally inadequate but that the standard of proof required is too high. In addition, to award payments only to those who are more than 80 per cent. damaged is arbitrary, unnecessary and grossly unjust.

[Dr. John Reid]

I seek leave to introduce the Bill and commend to the House two recommendations about the Vaccine Damage Payments Act and the amendment thereof. First, I urge the House to recognise the inadequacy of the payment of £20,000 currently being offered under the Social Security Act 1985. I base my criticism on first-hand knowledge of the suffering of the family of one of my constituents. Mr. and Mrs. Whyte of Bell's Hill, Lanarkshire, have endured that suffering of a loved one, Mrs. Whyte, since as far back as 1960.

The award of £10,000 made for the loss of earnings of a professionally qualified woman and the consequent home conversions and essential provisions that are necessary for a disabled person meant that the small sum that the family was granted under the provisions of the 1978 Act justified the comments of my right hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South. He spoke about three years' average earnings in respect of children who are irretrievably damaged for life simply being too little. Such compensation was certainly too little for my constituent.

My constituent brought this to my attention with no hope whatever of retrospective payment, but merely so that those who suffer in future may not have to undergo the financial deprivation that she has had to suffer. To put the present £10,000 in perspective, I must explain that in 1978 it was accepted by the whole House that an independent actuary would have estimated compensation based on principles of strict liability for child damage to this extent to be not £10,000 but £115,000. If that figure were inflation-proofed, it would now be £250,000.

I realise the limitations of the Bill and simply ask the House to approve an increase in compensation from £20,000 to £50,000 when the proven damage as a result of vaccination is 80 per cent., with provision for review of that figure should further evidence of disability come to light. This is not too much to ask, as the financial burden on the Government would be small because of the relatively small number of claimants. Up to 8 November 1985, 812 applications for compensation had been granted. It is certainly not too much to ask, given that the Secretary of State for Social Services himself admitted at the time the "small sum" and "interim nature" of the awards.

I turn to the 80 per cent. rule. It is unjust and beside any logic, apart from the logic of saving money, to exclude all claimants who are less than 80 per cent. damaged. That rule leaves countless worthy claimants in a void, having to endure a lifetime of suffering because of an arbitrary and in some ways thoughtless ruling. Of the 2,321 claims disallowed up until November 1985, 692 were disallowed because the degree of directly caused disability was less than 80 per cent. Victims are faced with the bizarre situation that if they suffer 75 per cent. physical or mental damage caused by vaccination they can make no claim.

To deny a suffering victim any compensation on the ground that he or she is "only" 75 per cent. vaccine damaged is unacceptable and unjust. If there need be any illustration of that point it is the case of a small girl named Breege Cannon in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton), who sponsors and supports this Bill. She is paralysed for life as a result of a polio vaccination. The DHSS will not present her with a penny as she stands close to, but, tragically, on the wrong side of, the 80 per cent. rule.

I ask the Government to provide compensation commensurate with the extent of the vaccine damage sustained. That would mean that anyone who was 80 per cent. or more damaged would receive the full sum of £50,000 but those suffering less than 80 per cent. physical or mental disability would receive a proportionate amount. For example, those who are 50 per cent. damaged would receive £25,000, and so on. I am not satisfied that such a scheme would alleviate suffering completely but it would be a move towards a more just system, with scope for increasing provision in the future.

When a Committee of the whole House met on 15 February 1979 my right hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South, who has fought tirelessly on this issue, moved an amendment providing for a reduced level of payment where the degree of disablement was less than 80 per cent. but more than 20 per cent. He was refused on the now familiar grounds that such a provision would be "costly" and would cause "delay". It was also suggested at that time that the scheme was only an interim measure until something better came along. That was 10 years ago, but nothing better has come along. The cost would be wholly insignificant in terms of the numbers involved and in terms of the acute suffering it would alleviate. Victims and their families have been prepared to wait if it meant justice, as opposed to getting nothing.

Every Member of the House would fully support as a matter of public policy the widest possible encouragement of the protection of the present generation and future generations by vaccination. In a world in which scientific advance can often lead to a threat to life, vaccination has proved to be one of our most powerful weapons against crippling and killer diseases. However, it is a sad but verifiable fact that in that pursuit of the greater good a minority are afflicted. No financial gain can ever provide sufficient recompense for the mental or physical damage that they may sustain. But for their sake, as well as for the common good, we are all duty bound to ensure that those people are comforted and compensated as adequately as possible. In the absence of a full and wide-ranging scheme providing compensation for the vaccine damage, I ask the House to support the Bill and the provisions it contains.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Dr. John Reid, Mr. Sam Galbraith, Mr. John Maxton, Mr. Tom Clarke, Mr. Harry Barnes, Mr. Jimmy Dunnachie, Mr. John Hughes, Mr. Doug Henderson, Mr. Roger Stott, Mr. Rhodri Morgan and Mr. John McFall.

Vaccine Damage (Compensation Arrangements)

Dr. John Reid accordingly presented a Bill to amend the Vaccine Damage Payments Act 1979 in order to facilitate arrangements for the assessment of compensation for victims of vaccine damage: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 8 July and to be printed. [Bill 170.]

Orders of the Day

Employment Bill

Lords amendments considered.

4.45 pm

Mr. Gavin Strang (Edinburgh, East): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Before we begin our debate I wish to refer to Lords amendment No. 52. You will recall that the Green Paper, and in our earlier deliberations Ministers, sought to justify clause 12 partly on the grounds that a loophole in the previous legislation had been demonstrated by the decision of the president of the National Union of Mineworkers to have his vote removed from him, as it were, by his executive. He subsequently secured re-election to the office of president by his membership. It was clearly in response to that—and this was almost admitted in another place—that the Government tabled amendment No. 52, which is aimed specifically at encompassing the position of the NUM president and certain other individual trade union leaders.

When the Government were challenged on the matter in another place, and when the Minister was asked whether amendment No. 52 had been drawn up to catch a particular class of trade union leaders in relation to their ages, Lord Trefgarne replied that that was so. He said in response to my noble Friend Lord Murray, a former general secretary of the TUC:

"Off the cuff I cannot think of any reason why we should not."—[*Official Report, House of Lords,* 8 March 1988; Vol. 494, c. 613.]

If that is not evidence of hybridity, I do not know what is.

It is demeaning for this Chamber and for the legislative process that an amendment should be tabled, not to achieve greater accountability, but which is specifically aimed at catching particular Left-wing trade union leaders. If that is not hybridity, it is certainly an abuse of the legislative process.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): I am grateful to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang) for giving notice of his intention to raise this matter. It has been carefully considered and Mr. Speaker is satisfied that the Lords amendment is so framed as to cover a class of persons, and not any individual within the class as defined. Therefore, there is no prima facie hybridity to which the Chair should draw the attention of the House.

Clause 1

RIGHT TO A BALLOT BEFORE INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Lords amendment: No. 1, in page 1, line 9, leave out from "endorsed" to end of line 15 and insert

"any industrial action in which members of the union (including that member) are likely to be, or have been, induced by the union to take part or to continue to take part".

The Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. Norman Fowler): I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take the following Lords amendments: No. 2 and amendments (a) and (b) thereto; No. 3 and amendments (a) and (b) thereto; No. 4; No. 5 and amendment (a) thereto; Nos. 6 and 7; No. 8 and amendment (b) thereto; Nos. 23, 27 and 54.

Mr. Fowler: The purpose of clause 1 is very simple. It is designed to safeguard the position of trade union members whose union refuses to consult them before calling on them to take industrial action. The 1984 Act made proper secret ballots of those involved a condition of a union's immunity against actions in tort. This enabled employers to restrain most official industrial action called without a ballot. We believe that union members should similarly have a right to restrain their union if they are subject to inducement to take action. That is what the clause is all about.

The clause was thoroughly considered in Committee, when much of the discussion focused on the precise forms of industrial action to be covered by the balloting requirement. We thought it important that the same ballot should be capable of satisfying clause 1 of the Bill and the 1984 Act. Therefore, clause 1 was initially based on the terms describing the torts that underpin the 1984 Act. The right that it gave to members applied where they were induced to break their contract of employment or interfere with their performance of it.

In Committee it was argued that there could be difficulties in applying those terms to some circumstances of working life. We would not want individual trade union members to be in difficulty over, or uncertain about, the scope of their rights. On consideration, therefore, we concluded that the new right should apply to any industrial action. "Industrial action" is a term that unions and their members recognise and use to describe some of their activities. It is the term used in one of the statutory questions that the 1984 Act requires a union to put to its members in a pre-strike ballot. A member who had no idea whether he was being asked to interfere with the performance of his contract could not, in my view, possibly fail to recognise a call to industrial action.

There can be little doubt in practice about the scope of clause 1 on this new basis, and I believe that the House should welcome the improvement in clarity. Nor does it represent a massive extension of the balloting requirement. We can debate how much industrial action lies beyond the kind of interference with contracts that may be lawfully induced, but that is the measure of the extension.

Even if the extension of the balloting requirement were larger, that would, I think, be justified by the position of the union member. An individual who takes part in any form of industrial action and is dismissed by his employer may be unable to claim unfair dismissal. That applies whether or not he has broken his contract of employment. The question is whether he should have the right to be properly consulted before running that risk, and we believe that he should.

Our amendments introduced in the Lords make for increased clarity and certainty, and also put the union member's rights to be consulted on the same basis as the risks that he runs in respect of dismissal. They do that by applying clause 1 to any official industrial action, rather than just to action that would involve breach of or interference with contracts.

It naturally follows that some adjustment is required to the statutory questions. Under the 1984 Act and clause 1 as originally drafted, the member voting in a pre-strike ballot is required to say whether he is prepared to take part

[Mr. Fowler]

in a strike, or in industrial action, involving him in a breach of his contract of employment. It is clearly inappropriate when ballots are to be held for any form of industrial action. If clause 1 no longer refers to breach or interference, unions cannot properly be required to ask questions framed in those terms.

On the other hand, it is right that members should have a clear sense of the seriousness of the matter on which they are voting. That is why our amendments remove from the question the reference to breach of contract, but require the ballot paper to carry a statement in standard form that "If you take part in a strike or other industrial action you may be in breach of your contract of employment".

A number of Opposition amendments have been tabled and we shall listen carefully to what is said by the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang). Some of the amendments, in particular those to Lords amendments Nos. 2 and 3, would undermine the effectiveness of the clause and are undesirable for that reason. Some also have technical deficiencies.

There may be a genuine misunderstanding about the amendment to Lords amendment No. 8. I mentioned earlier the importance that we attach to the principle that a single ballot should be able to satisfy both clause 1 of the Bill and the 1984 Act. Some have assumed—and I understand the difficulty—that any extension of the liability in clause 1 must necessarily carry with it an equivalent extension of liability under the 1984 Act, and thus an equivalent extension of the rights of employers. That is not the case, and if it is the concern underlying the proposals to modify Lords amendment No. 8, I hope that I can satisfy the hon. Gentleman on that at least.

The Lords amendments represent a coherent package of improvements. They cannot be treated selectively, and any modification is liable to dislocate the interlocking provisions to which they apply. I believe that they will produce a clearer and simpler set of requirements that will effectively protect the right of union members in this important area, which is the purpose of clause 1.

Mr. Strang: The Secretary of State has rightly pointed out the importance of the clause and of the amendments that the Government moved in the other place. I believe that the amendments are of considerable importance. First, they change substantially the requirements of clause 1, and to that extent place more demands on trade unions. I would go so far as to suggest that, in one instance at least, the court may be required to make wholly unreasonable orders against the trade unions as a consequence of the amendments.

Secondly—this was to some extent implied by the right hon. Gentleman's latter remarks—the amendments make the clause less intelligible. It would be undesirable, when enacting legislation on such an important issue, to create circumstances in which, when a case went to court, neither the employer, the trade union nor anyone else could be confident of the likely outcome. The Bill's provisions are convoluted and complicated, to put it mildly.

As the right hon. Gentleman acknowledged, the importance of Lords amendment No. 1 is that it extends the definition of industrial action. Every imaginable type of industrial action, no matter how minor, will now be covered by clause 1. Anyone who is in any doubt about the effect of the Government's approach to trade unions has only to look at some of the consequences that have already arisen in the courts.

For many Opposition Members it is a matter of shame that the National Union of Seamen, for example, in legitimately advancing the interests of its members, should find itself pilloried and its funds sequestered by the court. This would not happen to any other trade union in Europe taking similar action in defence of its members' interests. That is why all these changes, and the further change to extend the scope of the Bill and thus reduce the opportunity for legal trade unionism, are against the interests of not only working people but the democratic tradition of this country.

As the right hon. Gentleman has reminded us, the purpose of clause 1 is to give an individual trade union member the right to go to court and insist on a ballot in advance of any industrial action. That extends, in a sense, the provisions of the 1984 Act whereby an employer, a customer, a supplier or some other individual or company affected by the action could go to court. The importance of that is that in practice we have found under the 1984 Act that when employers have gone to court to enforce a ballot —or for any other purpose—it has invariably meant that the trade union official is on the spot. I am talking not about a highly publicised national dispute, but about the hundreds of disputes that take place all the time but are never reported in the newspapers.

The trade union official is on the scene as soon as the employer goes to court. In a high proportion of cases the matter then becomes the subject of negotiation. The dispute is often resolved. In some instances there may be a decision to hold a ballot. Consequently, the employer no longer has an interest in pursuing the court case and therefore it is withdrawn. We do not know how frequently the measure will be invoked and how many cases will arise, because a dissident trade unionist—to whom the measure is addressed—does not have the same interest in the company. If the action is withdrawn, he does not have the same vested interest as the employer in maintaining production, or a similar concern to that of the employer about the economic consequences of industrial action.

We could be opening a Pandora's box. A considerable number of employers may find that individual trade unionists take their trade unions to court on the basis of clause 1, thus causing considerable problems which both the trade union and the employer would prefer to do without.

5 pm

The Secretary of State acknowledged that Lords amendment No. 1 extends the definition of industrial action. I shall not repeat what was said in Committee, but we thought that the initial extension from the Green Paper was unfair. The Green Paper was quite clear. When they consulted trade unions, employers and others, the Government asked:

> "Whether it is right in principle that trade unionists should invariably and automatically have a duty to their members not to authorise or endorse industrial action involving breaches of contracts of employment without first conducting a secret ballot of those due to take part in the action and obtaining a majority agreement to authorisation or endorsement."

The important words are:

> "industrial action involving breaches of contracts of employment."

The Bill went beyond that and referred to interference with the implementation, the operation and the performance of a contract of employment. We were very critical of that in Committee. We now find that the Government have decided to go even further and include the slightest action—perhaps even a think strike. Some discussion was introduced in the other place by Lord Wedderburn on the so-called think strike, which years ago one would have described as a very moderate form of work to rule. I believe that confusion will arise in the minds of trade unionists and others over whether even the most trivial action could constitute industrial action and therefore could be the subject of litigation.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Short of actually banning strikes—which is what the Government have done at GCHQ—does my hon. Friend agree that the Government are now making it as difficult as possible in law for unions to take strike action and other forms of industrial action when they consider it legitimate? Is it not ironic that at the very time when perhaps there is a chance that trade unions will have legitimate rights in eastern Europe the Tory Government are doing their utmost to undermine and erode the rights that have been built up over centuries in this country?

Mr. Strang: I agree that the Government have gone too far. That is the view, not only of Opposition Members, but of many enlightened heads of industry and others in response to the new provisions encompassed in the Bill. I believe that the British tradition encompasses basic human rights and the rights for legitimate, legal trade unionism.

Not only have the Government extended the definition of industrial action, but Lords amendment No. 2 specifies that when an individual trade unionist takes the union to court because there has not been a ballot, perhaps because of some very minor form of industrial action for work to rule, the court will have no alternative but to instruct the trade union not only to withdraw the endorsement or the inducement to take such action, but to act as the policeman of the employer. That is a monstrous requirement.

The amendment uses the word "conduct". It requires the union

"to take steps . . . for ensuring that there is no, or no further, inducement of members of the union to take part or to continue to take part in that action and that no such member engages in any conduct after the making of the order by virtue of having been induced before the making of the order".

That is an enormously draconian requirement.

It will not be sufficient for a shop steward or trade union official to say to union members, "We have been instructed by the court that we must have a ballot; therefore, we are instructing you to withdraw from any action until we have had that ballot." He will be required to ensure that conduct complies with that. That is asking the trade union shop steward to act as a police person on behalf of the employer. It is ironic that in a Bill that makes it illegal for trade unions, even in the most modest and moderate way, to discipline trade unionists who refuse to strike after a properly organised ballot and a democratic decision the Government are requiring trade unions to discipline their members for taking the most modest form of industrial action.

Nothing better illustrates the lack of even-handedness, to put it mildly, in the Government's approach to industrial relations than the fact that, having denied trade unions the right to discipline members who refuse to strike after a proper majority decision, they have the effrontery to require them to discipline members who may be taking some modest form of industrial action or working to rule.

It is not surprising that we are disturbed about the Government's approach in the Bill and, in particular, in the Lords amendments to it. Lords amendments Nos. 1 and 2 are enormously important, as I have already made clear. Lords amendment No. 3 is also important. We have tabled amendments which seek to reduce the onerous nature of the new requirements posed in the House of Lords and to modify Lords amendment No. 3.

The Employment Act 1982 provides five categories of authorisation of what constitutes endorsement of industrial action by trade unions. It lists: the principal executive committees, any person empowered under the rules to authorise or endorse acts of the kind in question, the president or general secretary, any employed official, or any committee of the union to which the employed official regularly reports. We seek to make clear what constitutes a proper authorisation or endorsement of industrial action in that context.

Lords amendment No. 5 applies when industrial action consists of a strike, lesser action or both. It lays down that a union must hold a ballot on strike action if there is an intention to have a strike or some lesser form of industrial action, such as a work to rule. The union must have a separate ballot for that action.

When it comes to seeking authority for either a strike or some lesser form of industrial action, the amendment requires the union to ballot on the basis of the action that it thinks is most likely. Clearly that is an attempt to make selective action more difficult. Certainly that seems to be the Government's motive. Under our amendment, where both strike and lesser action are being considered, only one vote, on strike action, which would cover lesser action, would be necessary.

The Secretary of State referred to our amendment (b) to Lords amendment No. 8, and I am grateful for his remarks. The point to which he referred caused confusion outside the House and in the other place. Without taking up the time of the House, I simply point out that Lords amendment No. 8 seeks to extend the definition of industrial action, which definition we believe is wholly unreasonable. The Government have sought to justify that on the ground that an individual may be dismissed for action less than strike action—as evidenced in the Faust case, which was referred to repeatedly in the other place. That is not a justification for making this amendment so broad—far from it. To use the word loosely will introduce confusion into minor forms of work to rule or industrial action.

Having made this great case to show why it is unsatisfactory to define industrial action as action that constitutes a breach of an individual's contract of employment—indeed, that it goes beyond the intentions outlined in the Green Paper and in the initial Bill—and having said that we cannot rely on either definition of "industrial action"—either a breach of a contract of employment or interference with the performance of one's contract—it is ironic that Lords amendment No. 54 lays down a requirement that when a ballot is carried out preceding industrial action the ballot paper must state:

"If you take part in a strike or other industrial action, you may be in breach of your contract of employment."

[Mr. Strang]

Having explained why a breach of contract of employment is an inadequate definition of "industrial action", and having gone on at great length, particularly in Committee, to justify this further extension of the meaning of "industrial action", it is ironic that the Government should nevertheless make it a statutory requirement that the ballot paper must state that one may be in breach of one's contract of employment.

There are other amendments relating to the new definition of "industrial action". A strike is now defined as a "concerted stoppage of work". I should be interested to know whether this is the first time that a strike has been defined in this way. It seems a bald definition of a strike. The phrase "industrial action" is used in the definition of "industrial action" as it is defined in Lords amendment No. 8. It means:

"any strike or other industrial action by persons employed under contracts of employment."

The definition seems to be tautologous.

Not only do the clause and the amendments constitute a further unfair movement against trade unions, but, to some extent, they encourage anarchy by encouraging dissident trade unionists to take their trade union to court. That is the great theme of the Bill and we shall come to it repeatedly this evening. Through the commissioner for the rights of trade union members, and all the other inducements that the Government are providing, dissident trade unionists are being encouraged to take action against their union to disrupt trade unions' bona fide activities.

The idea that trade union members do not have a full opportunity within these democratic organisations to argue their case and, if necessary, to protect themselves by going to court has never been argued persuasively throughout our proceedings, yet we are following this road. It is one which not only the trade unions, but some employers, will come to regret and, indeed, some have already made it clear that they do.

The complexity of these provisions means that there will probably be a great deal more litigation. It will be costly, will waste time and will certainly do nothing to promote better industrial relations.

5.15 pm

Mr. David Evennett (Erith and Crayford): As one who served on the Committee of this Bill and as a former trade union member, I should like to make a couple of comments.

The hon. Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang) is wrong in his interpretation of the Lords amendments. He has forgotten the basic principle on which the Bill was presented, not only in the general election manifesto, on which we fought and won the election, but in our debates on the Floor and in Committee. The Bill seeks to extend democracy within trade unions and its aim is clear and simple. Nobody on the Government Benches is saying that there is no democracy within trade unions. Some are extremely democratic and we commend the principles and procedures that they use in their affairs. But in many areas democracy is lacking, or needs to be extended. The Bill was introduced to extend democracy so that trade union members have more say in the running of their union.

I welcome my right hon. Friend's comments. He accepted the Lords amendments because they improve clause 1 and clarify the intentions behind it. I am no lawyer and we have sat for many hours in Committee listening to legal interpretations, but when we are told that the original intention is not as clear-cut as it should be obviously we must go further and include amendments which will introduce clarity.

We want secret ballots, and we want members to have more opportunity to participate in their trade union. We want the legal side to be tight on union affairs. We do not want a legal nightmare, but we want ordinary trade union members to know what the union has to do, what their rights are and how they can exercise those rights. These amendments seek to tighten and clarify the original intention behind the clause. This is not a matter of principle, as the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East has sought to depict. We discussed the principles behind the Bill at great length in Committee. This afternoon the important and overriding consideration is to ensure that the original intention behind the clause is carried through. For that reason, the Lords amendments should be supported.

Mr. Michael Foot (Blaenau Gwent): When this Bill left the House of Commons all of us on the Opposition side of the House thought it one of the most wretched and squalid measures that had ever been passed through the House. It was a Bill actuated by malice which had failed to state in legal form even the purposes that the Government had in mind. There was everything to be said against it. For all those, and a variety of other reasons, which were stated during the passage of the Bill, none of us could have believed that it would come back from the other place even worse than when it was sent there. But that is the conclusion we must reach when examining the Bill now.

What is especially scandalous, or especially illustrative, to use the mildest possible word, is that a debate on this subject should be taking place today, following the antics of the House of Lords yesterday. The contrast is one that I feel sure people in this country will note. I certainly think that we should note that contrast when we are asked by the Government to support this measure.

The Bill has been in the House of Lords for weeks and months and noble Lords have had lengthy discussions about it. Right from the beginning, when the Bill was sent there, the Government introduced some of these new clauses, as they say, to clarify the situation. However, they are making it even more difficult for the unions to operate, as I shall illustrate.

The House of Lords has been working away over the past three or four months to make the Bill even more difficult for the unions, even more vicious than it was when it left the House of Commons. Yet yesterday in the other place there was a great demonstration. We were told that there would be no interference whatsoever with the poll tax measure that was sent up there in another Bill. Lord Hailsham, in one of those extraordinary exhibitions that we used to see in this House, told the other place yesterday that if a single finger was laid upon this precious poll tax Bill the very foundations of parliamentary democracy would be undermined. If anybody thinks that I am exaggerating, I advise him to read what Lord Hailsham had to say.

I have always looked upon the noble Lord as the most charming schizophrenic in British public life. At one moment he can be charm itself. The next moment he is using, as he was in the House of Lords yesterday, all the

most contrived and labyrinthine legal arguments to sustain the most absurd and dangerous position of the Conservative party.

This same Lord Hailsham used to tell us that there was an elective dictatorship when a much more liberal regime was being operated than anything that he was prepared to stomach for many years on end when he was Lord Chancellor. Yesterday, the day before this Bill was due to come back to the House of Commons for us to examine in detail, he was telling the House of Lords that it would be absolutely scandalous for a single alteration to be made in the poll tax arrangements. Of course, most other peers who applied their minds to the problem were easily able to refute his argument, but that was no good in the end. I dare say—this is a harsh thing to say about noble Lords, but we are entitled to say it none the less—there may even have been a few who were persuaded by the ex-Lord Chancellor's argument that they were not entitled to make a particle of a change in the poll tax measure.

Now look at this measure. It is such a contrast. The same House of Lords, which is not entitled to change the poll tax measure in any degree whatsoever, has looked at this measure in detail. It saw how it could tighten the screws to make it more difficult for trades unions to operate. In my opinion, the conjunction of these two events—the passage of a measure like this and the rejection of any attempt to alter the poll tax Bill, with all its unpopularity up and down the country, which is shown by every kind of evidence—will be very dangerous for the Government. Nobody will worry very much about that, but it will be dangerous for the kind of constitution that hon. Gentlemen seek to protect.

For the House of Lords to behave in this way—spending months grinding away to get through a measure that could inflict such damage on the trade union movement, yet in a single afternoon saying that it will not interfere with poll tax, mobilising the backwoodsmen who have not been near the place for months and will not be seen there for months until there is an equal crisis—is very damaging for its future. The House has shown by this combination of events that it is quite unfit to play any part in a democratic constitution. I hope that that combination of actions will reinforce our determination to remove the old contraption at the other end of the passage. We need the space. At any rate, we might even get some decent office buildings for my hon. Friend the Member for Brent, East (Mr. Livingstone). I have always had my eye on that office building over there. I hope to live to see the day when we take it over and turn it to proper uses, to serve democracy in this country.

I am serious about my main proposition. The people of this country will not be able to understand how those who have not been elected democratically can be mobilised to say that the poll tax measure will go through unchanged, yet can send back this series of vicious measures, which will be forced through if the Government use their majority here.

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle): I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for giving way. Has he not reduced what Lord Hailsham said? Were not Lord Hailsham and Lord Whitelaw both making the same point, that the House of Lords has built up its reputation in recent years by revising legislation? The amendment to the community charge measure yesterday went to the heart of the matter. With regard to this Bill, the House of Lords has simply revised it.

Mr. Foot: I shall come to the revisions in a moment. Of course these changes are revisions, but many members of the House of Lords were arguing yesterday that the proposal for the poll tax was a revision. So confident were the Government, which the hon. Member for Gainsborough and Horncastle (Mr. Leigh) occasionally supports, that their argument was overwhelming that they mobilised all these peers, who have not listened to an argument for 12 months or more. So confident were the Government that they would win that vote that I do not think we should take the hon. Gentleman's remarks too seriously.

I notice that the Secretary of State has left the Chamber. He should stay here to listen, but I dare say that is an example of the new manners in the Department of Employment. The right hon. Gentleman might have another appointment, but he is responsible for these Lords amendments. I am not holding that against the Minister who might reply to the debate.

The Secretary of State claimed, in his opening remarks, that the Bill has been made much clearer. However, he has not answered any of the questions put by my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang). Let him take note of what was said when the new clauses were produced in the House of Lords. There are peers who know the detail of the matter. Probably the two greatest experts on the subject in the country, as I am sure those in the House of Lords will testify, are Lord Wedderburn of Charlton and Lord McCarthy. They have subjected the Bill and these proposals to detailed examination. It is no good some "junior" Patronage Secretary on the other side of the House sniggering away as if it does not matter what is said by Lord Wedderburn and others on these matters. When I read out to the hon. Member for Staffordshire, South-East (Mr. Lightbown) what the noble Lords have said, perhaps he will take the matter a little more seriously.

Mr. Winnick: My right hon. Friend has referred to the "junior" Patronage Secretary. That Whip has made it perfectly clear that he would rather close his factories than allow trades unions to operate there.

Mr. Foot: The hon. Gentleman is trying to see that the same sort of trade unionism that he operates in his factory also operates up and down the country.

5.30 pm

Let us see what was said about the clarity of the new proposals. My hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, East has already explained the general context in which they were put, but let us look at what Lord Wedderburn said. I shall not read the whole speech, but he put a series of questions to the Minister about what other judges might say about the obscure clauses. Those clauses were already obscure but, as my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, East said, they are more obscure now than they were in the first place. That is not only his opinion but the opinion of Lord Wedderburn and others. Lord Wedderburn said:

"There is a similar situation with other forms. As the noble Lord Lord Donaldson said in one of his judgments many years ago, the forms of industrial action, like real life, are infinite or are only bounded by human ingenuity, which is almost the same thing. Is the High Court to be asked to make

[Mr. Foot]

orders to abstain from all the types and varieties of conduct which may have been likely to be ineffectively induced by the statements made?"

The answer we heard from the Secretary of State today at the beginning of his remarks is that it is.

Lord Wedderburn went on to say:

"That is a first shot at understanding what the clauses mean. However, we know they mean one thing. A court is to tell a union to do something to its members. That is another example of what Lord Devlin called, in his well-known inquiry into the port industry in 1965, asking trade union leaders to be policemen. He said then that trade union leaders cannot be asked to be policemen and they cannot be called in by employers to enforce the law. The mechanism which is now being set up makes that mistake all over again. Perhaps one might say that at the very best that will produce unofficial actions and a rash of actions for which one has no officials to bring in for negotiations and to conclude an agreement."

That is how the proposals will work in practice.

Lord Wedderburn went on:

"The fragile Meccano set which was put together in the first Bill that we saw in the debate on Second Reading"——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I am reluctant to interrupt the right hon. Gentleman, but he will know that it is contrary to our practice to quote directly from debates in the other place except when quoting a Minister. If the right hon. Gentleman is quoting indirectly and reflecting the views of a Member of the other place, that might be admissible.

Mr. Foot: I am grateful for your assistance, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have quoted somewhat extensively and I apologise for that. However, I did not wish to miss anything and I am sure that the House would not wish me to do so. I shall paraphrase now because that is a good rule. We have that rule in order to protect the House from boring reiteration. I do not think that anybody would accuse me of boring reiteration in having brought to the attention of the House what was said by Lord Wedderburn. He was saying that the fragile Meccano set —the original Bill introduced in the House of Lords—had fallen apart and he said that the Government were attempting to

"stick on some Lego that makes no contact with the machinery or in many ways with real life. I know that we shall not agree on that conclusion but I ask the Minister to answer some of the specific questions that I have raised".—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 7 March 1988; Vol. 494, c. 435-36.]

Of course, none of those specific questions was answered.

The complications for trade union action were to be made even greater, and other provisions were to be piled on top of all the other iniquitous parts of the Bill. The Bill sets up a special commissioner to encourage people to take action against their trade unions. On top of the other provisions designed to make it more difficult for a trade union to take effective collective action is to be piled a special incitement for members to take legal action against their own unions if they think they have a chance of winning. Of course, they have the encouragement of the commissioner to enable them to go ahead with that process.

If the Bill is workable in that way, it will make collective legal action by trade unions much more difficult. It will mean that many more trade unions will not know whether they are acting within the law. I do not know whether the Government believe that it is sensible to pass legislation that has that effect. A number of trade unionists up and down the country—I understand their feelings—will say that the Government have acted in an outrageous, scandalous and prejudiced way when dealing with their affairs and they will be happy to take illegal action. There are large numbers of people in the trade union movement who might be persuaded to move in that direction. They can recall that under old and oppressive trade union legislation before Disraeli introduced his measures for trade unions or before the Trade Disputes Act 1906 trade unionists, including the Tolpuddle Martyrs, said, "We have to take action even though it is illegal."

The purpose of the trade union reforms that were carried through was to ensure that the trade union movement would be able to operate effectively and use its collective power within the law. Anyone who wants to see the law sustained and respected in this country should be careful not to introduce legislation that will make it infinitely more difficult for elected trade union leaders, elected under the complicated procedures that the Government are instituting, to act. We shall be dealing with that part of this prejudiced legislation in a moment.

A Government with any sense, remembering the history of the trade unions in Britain, should be seeking by their legislation to make absolutely clear what is legal and what is not. They should be seeking to make clear what a trade union can or cannot do and to make it clear that trade unions must have the right to take effective collective action sometimes. If that right is denied, as my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, East said, we shall soon reach the position where every trade union in the land is under some form of GCHQ ban. That is what some members of the Government would like.

The trade unions of Britain will not be prepared to take that. Before 1906, or the wisdom of Disraeli, people were forced to take illegal action. That is what will happen if the Government go ahead with this sort of measure. Even at this late date, I plead with them to take away this measure. Of course, they will not because they are determined to force through measures that will be deeply injurious to the trade union movement. They believe that the trade union movement is down and they intend to kick it. That is what happened after the general strike of 1926-27. The Government said, "We will use our present position to take away, by powers in the House of Commons, rights that trade unions have had for decades." That has been carried to an even greater extreme by the Government than anyone could have imagined. Of course, there will be a deep and bitter response throughout the country. The day will come when all these measures will be wiped away. I only hope that it happens without any of the stress and struggle that people have had to endure in the past.

If there is trouble, the responsibility will rest upon the Ministers who, not content with the wretched measures of the first two or three years of this Government, have said that they will twist the screw even tighter. Even at this last moment they have come back with a Bill that is worse than that introduced in the House of Commons two or three months ago. It is a shame to see the House demeaning itself in the same way as the House of Lords did yesterday. I hope that the entire country will notice the contrast to which I have drawn attention.

Mr. Ron Leighton (Newham, North-East): When the Secretary of State introduced the amended clause he made it sound as if it were modest and innocuous. He is not here to listen to the debate, but he seemed to be saying that all

it was doing was to give to individual trade union members what employers already have. If that were so, there would at least be some logic in it and perhaps there would not be a need for too much discussion.

That is not what we have before us. We have before us a major change in the clause. The clause has been completely redrawn in a most unreasonable way and we have had no explanation why that has been done. Presumably the clause was all right when the Bill was before this House and in all the hours in Committee. Something must have happened to change the Government's mind. I should like an explanation of what has changed and why the Government are looking at this matter differently.

As my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) said, this change was made in the Lords. But it was not made, as far as I know, by what might be called rank and file Lords—if there are such things. It was made by the Government in the Lords. They used the Lords as a convenience. So we cannot blame the change on the Lords. We must ask the Government to explain why they have redrawn the clause.

The original clause provided:

"A member of a trade union who claims that the union has, without the support of a ballot, authorised or endorsed . . . any . . . strike or other industrial action—

(a) to break their contracts of employment; or

(b) to interfere with the performance of their contracts of employment,

may apply to the court for an order under this section."

That has been completely changed to

"any industrial action in which members of the union (including that member) are likely to be, or have been, induced by the union to take part".

What does "likely" mean? This is a new word that the Government have introduced. It is not a word that adds clarity; it seems to add a lot of confusion. Presumably it will be for the courts and the lawyers to decide. I should like an explanation of what the word "likely" means.

The Government propose to insert

"that a trade union has, without the support of a ballot, authorised or endorsed any industrial action".

I do not know what that means. There are all kinds of industrial action—for example, action declining to do voluntary overtime, working to rule, working without enthusiasm. *[Interruption.]* Somebody refers to a "think strike". When I first looked at this clause I thought that perhaps the officials in the Department had been on a think strike and had not advised the Ministers properly. There may be a withdrawal of good will. People can stop doing work over and above the normal work that they are paid to do.

Mr. Graham Allen (Nottingham, North): There may be a slight difference of interpretation now that the Government have made their decision even clearer, but even in Committee it was apparent that this was the Government's intention. Nobody should be under the misapprehension that the Government have slipped into this approach. I do not know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if it is in order to quote from the report of the Committee proceedings at this stage, but I asked the Minister——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. It would be in order in a speech, but I hope the hon. Gentleman realises that he is making an intervention, which should, by its nature, be brief.

Mr. Allen: I shall be very brief, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I asked the Minister for Employment:

"Where overtime working is part of normal duties although not a contracted part, and it then ceases through industrial action, would that be caught by the Bill's extenion of the provisions over and above the 1984 Act?"

He replied:

"Yes, I believe that it is."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee F,* 12 November 1987; c. 7.]

That intervention occurred within three quarters of an hour of the Bill's going to Committee. The Government have intended this right from the word go.

Mr. Leighton: It is quite clear that there has been a major change in the clause; it has been completely redrawn. We had no explanation from the Secretary of State when he introduced it, because there is not a respectable or decent explanation why they have made this really major change. This is an entirely new Bill as a result of the changes in this clause.

5.45 pm

In amendment No. 8 there is a definition of a strike:

" 'strike' means any concerted stoppage of work."

That is fairly clear. But when we try to find out what "any industrial action" means, it says:

" 'industrial action' means any strike or other industrial action by persons employed under contracts of employment".

It does not mention breaching a contract of employment or interfering with the performance of a contract. So we do not know what is meant by "industrial action". The wording in this clause is a sort of catch-all that takes in everything. It seems to me that it would take in anything that an employer did not like.

I wonder whether that had anything to do with the experience of the teachers' strike. Collective bargaining has been taken away completely from the teaching profession. But let us consider a teacher who, after school hours, in his own time, organises sport. Let us suppose that that teacher is so upset by the Government that he decides that he has had enough and will not organise the cricket and football matches after hours. Is that the sort of action that the Government are trying to catch by referring to "any industrial action"?

If members of a union do what they are legally entitled to do—that is the point—why should this House impose certain procedures on them? Surely to attempt to do that is to go over the top, to go too far and act in a ridiculous way. If members of a union cannot join together to do things that are lawful, we are getting very close to being an authoritarian state where trade unionists will not have rights, will not be free and will certainly not know what their rights are, and we shall run into all sorts of uncertainties. This clause, as redrafted, introduces a very wide range of liability; indeed, unlimited liability. Its effect will be to harass ordinary trade unionists and frighten them away from meetings and from getting involved in trade union activity.

When strikes take place—they take place fairly infrequently; the idea that people spend most of their time on strike is nonsense—normally the situation will have deteriorated before hand. It could well be that members start to fret at what they see as oppressive management and their good will towards the management begins to diminish and they progressively withdraw good will. Are we to say that in all such cases there has to be a ballot?

[Mr. Leighton]

That is absurd. How do we get to the point at which we cross the line between an ordinary withdrawal of good will and a situation in which a ballot has to be called?

As I understand the clause, if individuals take industrial action, that is all right. Even if shop stewards induce the industrial action, they cannot be proceeded against. I should like an explanation of that. I also understand that it is lawful to do these things if the members do not seek the support of a union official. I should like an explanation of that. It is certainly an incitement to unofficial action; it is all right provided it is unofficial.

The Government might be under the illusion that the trade union officials are the militants who induce industrial action. That is completely untrue. When I was working in industry for my union, the only body that could authorise industrial action was the executive council. Quite often when members wanted to take industrial action they would ask for permission, but the executive would turn them down. The idea that union officials seek to stir up strife and industrial action is the opposite of the truth. Without realising it, the Government are inciting unofficial action. If a union official wanted to cause strife, instead of calling the action himself he would privately talk to the shop stewards and get them to do it.

What does "likely" to induce mean? Let us suppose that teachers at one school decided to ban taking part in football and that teachers at another decided that they did not want to take part in dinner duties and that the union journal reported those events so that all the other teachers could read what their colleagues were doing. Would that constitute an inducement? At the end of the day, I suppose that it would be left to the courts to decide. The courts are empowered to make an order, but what sort of order can they make? If in a workshop members have withdrawn good will, is it possible for a court to order them to reinstate the good will?

The Bill seeks to prevent unions from acting as unions. The ethos of the Bill is against any idea of collective action. The Government have gone over the top. There was a time when we said that Governments were not for the employer or employee but were neutral. Their purpose was to hold the ring. The Government have gone completely overboard on one side, in favour not only of the employer but particularly of the rogue employer. They are against not only so-called irresponsible trade unionists but all trade unionists.

There was a time when the Conservative party said that it was not opposed to trade unionism. There was an organisation called Conservative Trade Unionists, and the Minister of State, Home Office was a leading official of it. I do not know whether he still is, whether it exists or whether the Conservative party believes in the legitimacy of collective action and British workers combining to look after their interests, but if they do they are undermining that belief by the Bill, which goes too far and will not endure. Legislation will not endure on such a prejudicial basis as this.

Mr. David Clelland (Tyne Bridge): It appears that our arguments are falling on not only deaf ears but absent ones. The Secretary of State has decided to leave the Chamber, which does not leave much room for optimism that our arguments will be listened to. I urge the Minister to listen carefully to the arguments and, even at this late stage, to reject the amendment.

If the amendment is passed it will cause serious problems not only for trade unions—which presumably is the intention—but for individuals, employers and the courts. The amendment is not a minor revision, as was suggested by the hon. Member for Gainsborough and Horncastle (Mr. Leigh), but a fundamental alteration to the original clause that was agreed by the House.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) mentioned the inconsistencies of the House of Lords. It seems that legislation in this country depends to a significant extent on who turns up in the House of Lords on any given day. The casual passer-by yesterday could not help but notice the proliferation of Rolls-Royces and chauffeur-driven limousines outside the House of Lords as their Lordships voted themselves a reduction in their rates.

I notice that their Lordships have not chosen to make much comment about the proposal in the Bill that those utilising the facilities of clause 1 will be able to obtain legal aid by reference to the commissioner for the rights of trade union members. Hon. Members will recall that recently we considered the Legal Aid Bill, which originated in the other place. It proposes cuts of £10 million a year in legal aid so that the poorest fighting genuine cases will not be able to receive assistance, whereas people who wish to attack trade unionists will be able to rely on the support of the commissioner. Such is the nature of the attacks on free trade unionism in this country.

The amendments say that a member may apply to a court to have "any industrial action" stopped or prevented pending a ballot. If a union issues notice of a strike, an overtime ban or a work to rule, a member could exercise the clause as amended by their Lordships. A court of law, therefore, could tell members not to work to rules laid down by their employers. Yet the position in industry today—which seems to have escaped the notice of their Lordships—is that if an employee suffers an injury at work, all an employer has to do to avoid paying compensation is to show that the worker was not working to the rules. One court could say that working to rule is industrial action and should be discontinued, while another could say that a worker contributed to an accident by not working to the same rules. Are their Lordships and the Secretary of State suggesting that that should be possible under British law?

It is not only working to rule that might be caught by the amended clause. The amendment raises two fundamental questions. First, what is "any industrial action"? During the debate in the other place, Lord Trefgarne described any industrial action as that which is "designed to cause damage to the employer."—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 7 March 1988; Vol. 494, c. 465.] Lord Campbell of Alloway concluded that picketing was industrial action. That means, therefore, according to the noble Lord Campbell of Alloway, that if a trade union holds a legitimate ballot and has a strike, it must have a further ballot to picket the factory. How ridiculous can we get?

I hope that the Minister will comment on my second question. If a trade union, shop steward or a safety representative were to say to a worker, "Do not work under these conditions or use that machine or piece of equipment because it is unsafe", is that shop steward or safety representative the union in that instance, and is the

refusal to work in unsafe circumstances industrial action? It would appear from what their Lordships have said that that could be so.

Often there are disagreements between workers and their supervisors about what is safe. Sometimes that leads to a decision being made by a worker or group of workers not to carry out certain tasks or to work in a particular way. Indeed, workers are encouraged by the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 so to do. If they work in dangerous conditions, they are contributing to an accident if one happens.

Disputes on the shop floor often lead to discussion, negotiation and an eventual settlement, making for safer working conditions to the advantage of the employer and employee. There are people who will work in any conditions regardless of the risk—[HON. MEMBERS: "Sellafield."] Under the clause, if one of the group disagrees with the shop steward or safety representative a court could decide that the unsafe working practices should continue. The court would not be in a position to decide about the safety or otherwise of the working conditions. It could reach a decision only about the action being taken.

What happens if an accident occurs in those circumstances? What right will a victim have to compensation if the employer can argue that a court of law authorised the working conditions? That is surely a possibility if the amendment is passed. The court is given no discretion and must assume on every occasion that the action must be discontinued or prevented—that is, if it agrees with the complainant that the trade union has induced the action. That could lead to the court contributing to unsafe working practices and any subsequent accident. That is one good reason why the amendment should be rejected.

However, if the Minister tells us that a shop steward is not the union for the purposes of clause 1, the whole thing becomes nonsense. As my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-East (Mr. Leighton) has pointed out, unofficial action will escalate and the unions and the courts will not be able to do anything about it. The Minister will have to tell the House how that can possibly improve industrial relations in Britain.

There is little difference between the British Government and the totalitarian Government in Poland in their attitudes to trade unions. Their methods may be different, but their objectives are the same—to screw down the trade unions to prevent them from properly representing their members, to prevent them from improving their members' conditions and wages, and, most important of all, to prevent them from criticising or frustrating the Government's actions. In that respect, the Polish Government and the British Government have a lot in common.

6 pm

Mr. Winnick: The Bill is motivated by the deepest malice and prejudice against the trade union movement. To some extent, the Government's attitude was illustrated in January 1984 when, for the first time, British citizens were denied the right to belong to a trade union, and that was at GCHQ. We believe, and shall continue to believe, that that is a denial of a basic freedom in a political democracy, and we have made it clear that under a Labour Government that right will be restored to the employees of GCHQ.

My hon. Friend the Member for Tyne Bridge (Mr. Clelland) is right. The Government cannot ban strikes in general, although undoubtedly some Conservative Members would like to take that step. The hon. Member for Staffordshire, South-East (Mr. Lightbown), to whom I have already referred, has not denied that he would rather see his factory close down than allow trade unions in, as has been published in our local press. It may be argued that that is a point of view of one Conservative Member for Parliament and does not reflect the Government's attitude, but I maintain that many Conservative Members have precisely the same attitude. Their hatred—the word "hatred" is not an exaggeration—is so deep, so bitter, so much are they against the trade union movement, that they are willing to pass any legislation, however disturbing or offensive to the spirit of a political democracy.

The irony, as I pointed out when I intervened, is simply that at this moment, when there is hope that trade unions in Eastern Europe will be able to be independent, that what happened in Poland can be reversed and that in Hungary reforms will give working people the right to strike without being punished or penalised, the Government are undermining rights that have been built up over the years in Britain, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) pointed out.

I make no secret of the fact that I believe that the right to strike is fundamental to living in a free country. I do not believe for one moment—I speak as someone who has been an active member of a trade union for over 30 years—that people take strike action lightly. The amendment refers to "any industrial action". What is meant by that? Over 30 years ago, when I was a staff representative in my union, we decided to ban overtime. That action was not taken lightly. There was a dispute with the management over pay and we decided to take that action. It lasted less than a week and we got what we wanted. But under amendment No. 1, such action will not be allowed without a secret ballot.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): What is wrong with that?

Mr. Winnick: All the procedures will have to be gone through, whether on overtime or anything else, which is quite outside strike action.

The Government are trying to make it as difficult as possible for working people, not just trade unions, to protect and improve their standards, in many cases against hostile management. They are trying to take away their rights or restrict them as much as possible. That is why clause 1 is even more offensive than other parts of the Bill.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang) said, trade unions are supposed to police their members when industrial action is taken. No doubt that will result in a number of court cases.

I agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaenau Gwent. I never had the slightest illusion that the Lords would amend the poll tax. I am not one of those who think that there is some sort of inbuilt liberal majority in the other place. The opposite is the case. Therefore, it does not surprise me in the least that when the Government wanted to make the Bill even more hostile and offensive towards trade unions they had no difficulty

[Mr. Winnick]

in the other place. The majority of people who turn up in the other place would be willing to take any action against trade unions. They would be willing to ban them if the Government invited them to do so.

It is not much use today suggesting that Conservative Members should recognise the harm that will be done by amendment No. 1. I have no illusions that there will be any Conservative rebels. They will all be willing to troop into the Lobby in a few moments to vote for the amendment. In the main, we have a Tory intake in this Parliament, as in the previous one, which is completely hostile to trade unions.

It is interesting to note that on the poll tax and other measures there were at least one or two Conservative Members who expressed reservations on or opposition to what the Government were doing, but there has not been one voice of dissent from the Tory Benches on this matter. The explanation is that the House is dominated by a Tory majority which is malicious and hostile to the trade union movement. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaenau Gwent said, when there is a change of Government all this rubbish will go. There will be fresh legislation, much as the 1945 Parliament did away with the Trade Disputes and Trade Unions Act 1927.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): While my hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) was speaking, a Tory Member asked what was wrong with a secret ballot. The truth is that in this place we do not have them. We have a system whereby we have a sort of field with a No Lobby at one side and an Aye Lobby at the other.

Mr. Graham Allen (Nottingham, North): A car park.

Mr. Skinner: Yes, it could be a car park. We have shop stewards on the entrance. Because many Members of Parliament are now taking industrial action and are not here, the shop stewards, otherwise called the Whips, stand on the gates outside and say, "Never mind whether this is a secret ballot. Get in here. This is our Lobby." Yet when it comes to trade unionists it is a different ball game altogether.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett *rose*——

Mr. Skinner: Yes, it was the hon. Gentleman who made that comment. What does he want to say?

Mr. Bennett: The hon. Gentleman is mixing up his analogies. The majority of trade union members are like the electors. They are entitled to a secret ballot so that they are not intimidated in the way that they vote. We are elected Members, accountable to the electorate. We are like the shop stewards. How we vote should be clear to the public who elected us.

Mr. Skinner: Every day hon. Members get their names in *Hansard* if they turn up for work, just as those Members of the other place did yesterday. It is despicable to be talking about trade unions being hamstrung after yesterday's appalling spectacle when Members of the other place were driven here by chauffeurs, who waited in their cars outside. I stood watching them. Some of them did not stop the engine while their owners went in to vote. They nodded to the bobby, picked up their £100 a day tax-free, and voted in accordance with the shop stewards' instructions—not in a secret ballot—to carry the poll tax Bill which, I am informed, will result in one of the Lords gaining £1,400. That is not a bad round journey from Northumberland.

Today, it is a different ball game. We are talking not about Members of the House of Lords—the place that should be closed down—but about the real wealth-creators in Britain. It is another spectacle this time. Members of the House of Lords have instructed us to tighten up the laws against workers in trade unions. That is why we oppose the Bill.

I know one of the reasons why those laws are likely to be tightened up. The Government are now talking about overheating in the economy. They are talking about wage increases of 8·5 per cent.—never mind the fact that Cabinet Ministers get 20 per cent. or 30 per cent. The Government are concerned about wages having increased by about 8 to 9 per cent. in the last financial year. The Secretary of State was rabbiting on about it the other day, although he has not yet got the guts to say what he wants to say, which is that he wants to introduce a wages policy. Without any question whatever, the Government—[HON. MEMBERS:"The hon. Gentleman supports that."] Supports what? [HON. MEMBERS: "A wages policy."] You must be joking. You were not here, were you? You must be wet behind the ears if you do not know——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman does not mean to say such things about me.

Mr. Skinner: As a matter of fact, I do, because you were a Minister in that Government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and you voted for 10 per cent. and I voted against it. That is the truth of the matter and it is as well that these whippersnappers should know it.

The union laws are being tightened up in readiness for the wages policy. The Government will shade it in a different manner but one thing is certain: the Government are worried about the consequences of increases in the wages of ordinary workers. It is no accident that the Bill was tightened up in the Lords. It is no accident that the Government have accepted that tightening up. They know what will happen during the next two years. They know that a balance of payments deficit is looming larger than at any time in Britain's history. North sea oil receipts are gradually reducing—not dramatically but reducing nevertheless. The Government need to tighten up on workers and the Bill is part and parcel of that process.

Today in the courts there has been another despicable incident arising out of the Government's employment legislation. The judge refused to lift the sequestration of the National Union of Seamen's assets on the ground that he wants the mass picket at Dover removed. We are talking not about secondary picketing but about primary picketing. The judge, supported by the establishment and the Secretary of State, says that the picket must be reduced to six even though, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) knows only too well, that is not the law of the land but only a code of practice. That shows how far we have travelled. The Government are hammering workers day in and day out. That is why it is important that all Opposition Members should remember when we march through the Lobby—not in a secret ballot—we are doing it not just for today but in the knowledge

that when we get a Labour Government we shall repeal all these obnoxious Tory laws which have hammered trade unions for the past eight and a half years.

6.15 pm

Mr. Spencer Batiste (Elmet): I wish to put right one or two of the Opposition's misconceptions—*[Interruption.]* I have been in the Chamber for some time. Hon. Members have referred to the future of Conservative Trade Unionists, its reaction to the Bill and its role. As its vice-president, I should like to put it clearly on record that CTU welcomes the Bill very strongly as a package. It does so because of the interesting contrast patent in the debate. Labour Members argue for a return to the industrial relations climate of the 1970s. Labour Members' interpretation of trade unionism is that union bosses can impose their will on the membership whether the members want it or not. Conservative Members, on the other hand, look forward to a future of industrial relations and trade unionism in which trade unions respond to their members' wishes.

Every time we make a proposal that enhances the role and power of individual members of the unions we hear from the Opposition the same whingeing appeals on behalf of trade union leaders that that proposal runs against trade unionism. It does not. If trade unionism is to have a place in a successful industrial economy, as Conservative Members believe it must, it must adapt itself to the changing economic circumstances of the world and the fact that most ordinary members do not want to go on strike and disrupt their earning prospects but want to contribute to generating wealth in their companies in which they can share. That is why so many millions of trade unionists vote Conservative.

Mr. Leighton: It is pleasant to know that we have a stalwart trade unionist from the CTU gracing our proceedings. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will explain whether the CTU wholeheartedly supports clause 3.

Mr. Batiste: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the Second Reading debate, in which I was asked precisely that question. I answered it then, as the hon. Gentleman would discover if he studied *Hansard.* [HON. MEMBERS: "Answer".] I have given the hon. Gentleman——

Hon. Members: Answer.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. We are not on clause 3; we are on Lords amendment No. 1.

Mr. Leighton: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I fear that the hon. Member for Elmet (Mr. Batiste) may be misleading the House. He has told us that an organisation, the Conservative Trade Unionists, fully supports the Bill—not the clause, the Bill. As I understand it from my diligent readings of *Hansard,* he explained that, like virtually everybody else in the country, the CTU opposes clause 3.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I knew that I would get into trouble for letting the debate run wider than I ought to have done.

Mr. Batiste: I shall not get drawn into discussing another clause, Mr. Deputy Speaker, except to say that CTU made its views perfectly clear and I dealt with them on Second Reading. If the hon. Member for Newham, North-East (Mr. Leighton) is genuinely interested, he can read *Hansard* and see the answer.

Whenever Conservative Members make a legitimate point about the rights of union members we get attacked with irrelevancies and noise from the Opposition, just as trade union members get attacked by Left-wing militants who want to silence the voice of the individual. The Bill supports the voice of the individual. It gives teeth to powers that will enable the individual to have his voice heard and that is why we support it.

Mr. Andrew Welsh (Angus, East): The comments of the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) were a foretaste of the rightful indignation that will be felt by trade union members the length and breadth of the country when they find out exactly what the Bill is doing to the trade union movement.

The Government have moved a long way from the more sound principles that they originally appeared to be advancing in the Bill—the idea of accepting industrial ballots as the correct and proper way to conduct industrial affairs and the idea of a union clearly seen to have its members' support before it acts on the basis of that support. We have come a long way from that in every one of the Lords amendments. The Government have simply stifled trade union rights until one wonders how many of them still exist. They have given the courts a stranglehold on the trade unions. The original ideas centred around the concept of contracts of employment.

The Bill as drafted referred to an act to break a contract of employment or to interfere with the operation of a contract of employment. In the amendment the form of words is more vague, referring to "any industrial action". The amendment represents a clear shift from the focus on contracts of employment and mutually agreed obligations between employee and employer to the more open-ended concept of "any industrial action". Surely we can expect the Minister to define exactly what he means by "any industrial action". Is there a Civil Service list which specifies such actions? If so, we should be allowed to see it and know what the Minister has in mind.

The concept of an action, such as the breach of an agreed contract, has moved towards an assumption about possible future actions brought by trade unions. It all revolves around the word "likely". We have reached the stage where trade unions are judged, not by what they do, but by what they are likely to do. In other words, it is guilt by assumption before any action takes place. Surely that cannot be just.

The more I hear of the Bill, the more I am left with the simple conclusion that it is designed purely and simply to destroy the ability of the trade unions to operate. It is a deliberate hobbling of the trade union movement and a deliberate destruction of the trade unions' ability to act. It is definitely a Bill too far. What was said by the hon. Member for Bolsover will be repeated by trade unions throughout the country, as they are rightly indignant about what the Government are doing to the important trade union movement.

The Minister of State, Department of Employment (Mr. John Cope): The right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) and other hon. Members have emphasised the need, which we agree with, for clarity about this legislation and, for that matter, other legislation, as far as we can

[Mr. John Cope]

manage it. Further, the hon. Member for Newham, North-East (Mr. Leighton) seemed to think that something sinister had happened between Committee stage and now to cause us to change the drafting of the Bill. However, it was the Committee stage which started us on the course of action which has led to these several amendments being before us.

In Committee we had long discussions about the rather complex original drafting of the Bill, especially because of the necessity, as there was then in the Bill, for a union member to establish whether a breach of contract, or interference with a contract, was likely to be involved when deciding whether he could use the power which clause 1 gives him to insist on a ballot. As a result of the discussions in Committee about the definitions of interfering with the breach of contract, which all those hon. Members on the Committee will recall, we went back to the lawyers. I am glad to say that we induced them—if that is the word—to come up with simpler drafting to achieve what is required.

As the hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen) pointed out, I made it clear in Committee that we think that there should be ballots before all industrial action. If that is included in the Bill, as we think it should be, trade unions and their members can be sure that a member can insist on such a ballot where the union is inducing or seeking to induce industrial action.

Mr. Allen: Is the extension, not the one that the Minister referred to earlier, but the interference with the performance of contract, which was the criterion established in Committee? It is surely that that has now been extended by the Lords amendment, although, as I said, the intention behind the clause was always present.

Mr. Cope: It was interference with the performance of the contract of employment by the individual member that caused a lot of discussion at Committee. The hon. Member for Nottingham, North was part of this discussion, as were other hon. Members. We understood—and those who have read *Hansard* will understand—the complications involved in that clause. That is the underlying reason for this amendment before us.

We discovered in Committee that in certain cases of industrial action the Bill, as originally drafted, did not require a ballot. I make it clear that we think that there should be a ballot before there is official industrial action by the union. The Bill now provides for that. We think —and Opposition Members argued this at the time—that union members and officials, and others who have to work the legislation, should be able to understand what is going on. The concept of industrial action is well understood. The concept of interference with the performance of a contract of employment is much more difficult for a layman like me to understand, let alone other people who have to work it day by day.

The hon. Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang) seemed to think that it had something to do with whether the industrial action was minor or major. That, of course, is not the definition. There were many minor items of industrial action which could easily be covered—indeed were covered—by the Bill as originally drafted. It is not a question of extending the Bill to cover minor ones. It is a minor extension. Many cases of industrial action that are covered by the Lords amendment, but were not covered by the Bill as drafted, are likely to be minor. However, many other minor cases of industrial action were covered before.

Mr. Charles Kennedy (Ross, Cromarty and Skye): I have listened with great care to the Minister, as I have to the debate, but I have the greatest difficulty in understanding what he is now talking about. Will he clarify the position about the phrase "any industrial action"? How wide does it go? Further, to what extent does he concede that at the end of the day the definition will probably have to be decided in the courts?

Mr. Cope: Anything we write into legislation in the House is likely to end up in the courts. They are the ultimate arbiters of legislation, and that is how it should be. We try our best to legislate as clearly as we can and nothing goes more to the heart of doing so than these amendments, and that is why we want to introduce them.

"Industrial action" is an extremely well understood term. I do not see that there is any difficulty in understanding what industrial action is. It is defined in the Bill and in the amendments as concerted action induced by unions. After all, it is the union which has to be involved for this clause to bite against an employer and to interrupt his business.

Mr. Leighton: The Minister will correct me, but I think the word "concerted" is used to define a strike, not "any industrial action". We are asking about "any industrial action"; the word "concerted" does not come into it.

Mr. Cope: Industrial action, to be covered by this clause, must be industrial action involving the union. I agree that unions are not always concerted, but a certain amount of co-operation is involved.

I was also asked whether the courts would order that unions should police the conduct of members generally. That is not so. The court can require a union to ensure that earlier, unlawful inducement which the union may have undertaken ceases to have any influence on members' conduct. For example, it may not be enough formally to withdraw a call for industrial action or a strike which the union had previously put out. It has to go to some trouble to ensure that its inducement ceases. That is what the court may order it to do.

Mr. Henry McLeish (Fife, Central): I think we are being told that this is just a tidying up of clause 1 of the Bill that we discussed in Committee. Will the Minister comment on the fact that this is a massive extension of the powers in clause 1 relating to ballots for industrial action, because previously we were talking about breaking contracts of employment or interfering in performance? In this context, would a work to rule lead the trade union into the courts?

Mr. Cope: Yes, it could do so. By the way, it could do so under the Bill as drafted, let alone with the addition of the Lords amendments. The Lords amendments make it clearer that it could do so.

Mr. Clelland *rose*——

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South) *rose*——

Mr. Cope: Although I must make some progress, I give way to the hon. Member for Tyne Bridge (Mr. Clelland).

6.30 pm

Mr. Clelland: I am grateful to the Minister for clarifying my point about work to rule. He has confirmed that a work to rule would be industrial action. Is he therefore saying that in British law a court will now be able to order workers not to work to the rules which the employer has laid down?

Mr. Cope: It is not about ordering people to work. It is about whether there is a ballot or not. No union will have any problem with the legislation or this clause if it is prepared to organise a ballot of the workers it wants to take industrial action. We all know what we mean by industrial action and what it includes. Any union can hold a ballot if it wants to take industrial action. That is all that it has to do to avoid going to court under the clause.

Mr. Cryer *rose*——

Mr. Cope: I give way for the last time.

Mr. Cryer: Will the Minister explain how it is possible for a union to be taken to court for a work to rule if the rules are those incorporated in the contract of employment between the employer and employee? Surely a work to rule cannot result in that because the action would be carrying out the terms of the contract of employment.

Mr. Cope: In the first place, it depends on what the union has said and on what the union has done, as I made clear earlier. However, I should also make it clear that the Bill requires a ballot in all cases of industrial action or, at least, it permits a member of a union to require a ballot in all cases of industrial action. An employer or, for that matter, anyone else can claim damages only if the contract is broken or interfered with. That is a provision of the Bill.

In response to the point raised by the hon. Member for Newham, North-East, I am aware that many trade union officials do not go around inducing strikes all the time. Sometimes they do, but sometimes they are a calming influence. I fully recognise that. However, I reassure the hon. Gentleman, as my hon. Friend the Member for Elmet (Mr. Batiste) has already done, that the Conservative trade union movement not only still exists, but flourishes.

The debate was marked, to our pleasure, by an entertaining speech by the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner). He was as entertaining as usual, and, for that matter, as irrelevant as usual. He said——

Mr. Skinner: What is "work to rule"?

Mr. Cope: Well, what he said was irrelevant to the discussion. [HON. MEMBERS: "Answer the question."] The hon. Gentleman said that he thought that the Lords were giving instructions to us in some form. He need not worry about that. This House makes its own decisions and I believe that it should now make its decision on these Lords amendments.

Mr. Strang: The Minister has brought to mind some of his performances in Committee, when it was clear that he was embarrassed by the provisions of the Bill that he was being asked to defend. We have had a demonstration of a withdrawal of good will in the Minister's performance on these amendments. It is hard to believe that he is making the Government's case. I do not want to be offensive, but it is hard to believe that he ever sat through the Committee proceedings, never mind read the *Hansard* report of the Lords proceedings.

The new definition seeks to extend the provisions to cover forms of industrial action which might not have been covered as the Bill was previously drafted. It is not good enough for the Minister to say, as he did earlier:

"It is not a question of extending the Bill to cover minor ones."

—that is, minor types of action.

"It is a minor extension".

We argued at length in Committee that the phrase

"interfere with the performance of their contracts of employment"

encompassed almost any form of industrial action, whether a withdrawal of voluntary overtime, a work to rule or a withdrawal of goodwill. The proceedings in the House of Lords make it clear that the Government's motive for introducing the new definition is to go even further and make certain, beyond all doubt, that the most modest action, or the most modest withdrawal of goodwill in the performance of a worker's job, would be covered by the legislation. Therefore, the amendment represents a major extension and is, for the reasons that I argued earlier, wholly unjustified.

I do not wish to take up the time of the House for much longer, because we have had a good debate, but the second point to which I must refer is that of policing. I did not use the word "policing" in a general sense, but in relation to Lords amendment No. 2, which is utterly draconian. If a dissident trade unionist has successfully taken the union to court because the shop steward and a few others have decided that they will no longer carry out some voluntary overtime, Lords amendment No. 2 states:

"the court shall make such order"—

shall, not may—

"as it considers appropriate for requiring the union to take steps . . . for ensuring that there is no . . . further . . . inducement of members of the union".

That was the original intention of the Bill, but the amendment states:

"the court shall make such order as it considers appropriate for requiring the union to take steps . . . for ensuring . . . that no such member engages in any conduct after the making of the order by virtue of having been induced before the making of the order".

That is a reference to a member's conduct and, as I sought to argue earlier, it is an outrageous imposition. It is preposterous that clause 3 states that a trade union will be debarred from undertaking the most elementary and minor disciplining of its members who fail to comply with a strike called after a proper ballot under the terms of the Government's legislation. The shop steward or official will not just say, "We have withdrawn the instruction that there will be an overtime ban, a work to rule, a withdrawal of good will or, in extreme cases, a strike." That official will be required by the court to grab hold of the member, or interfere with his conduct, and say to him, "It is time that you started to work harder for the employer." That is what it means. Presumably the official will also be required to discipline the member if he does not comply with that. That is why it is such an outrageous imposition——

Mr. Allen: My hon. Friend may also wish to point out that this is further compounded by the fact that an employer may take action to ensure that the order is fulfilled, as may an individual member who can be supported by the new commissar for trade union rights. That is in addition to the new clause from the Lords.

Mr. Strang: As my hon. Friend knows, we must recognise the earlier legislation which enables the

[Mr. Strang]

employer to require a ballot. In that situation, the definition of industrial action is different from the definition here, which goes wider than the trade union dissident and industrial action.

It is for those reasons, and for the other reasons that have been advanced by my hon. Friends, that we shall vote against Lords amendment No. 1, and for our amendment to Lords amendment No. 2, which would have the effect of removing the draconian form of words to which I have referred.

Question put, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment:—

The House divided: Ayes 253, Noes 193.

Division No. 323] **[6.38 pm**

AYES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dicks, Terry
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
McCrindle, Robert
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
Major, Rt Hon John
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moss, Malcolm
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tracey, Richard
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Richard Ryder and
Mr. Stephen Dorrell.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Allen, Graham
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony

Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cryer, Bob
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Henderson, Doug
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Prescott, John
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Redmond, Martin
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Allen Adams and
Mr. Ray Powell.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment: No. 2, in page 2, line 1, leave out from "satisfied" to end of line 13 and insert—

"(a) that a trade union has, without the support of a ballot, authorised or endorsed any industrial action;
(b) that (whether or not the action has already commenced) members of the union are likely to be, or have been, induced by the union to take part or to continue to take part in that action; and
(c) that the members of the union who are likely to be, or have been, so induced include the applicant,

the court shall make such order as it considers appropriate for requiring the union to take steps (including the withdrawal of any relevant authorisation or endorsement) for ensuring that there is no, or no further, inducement of members of the union to take part or to continue to take part in that action and that no such member engages in any conduct after the making of the order by virtue of having been induced before the making of the order or to take part or to continue to take part in the action."

Read a Second time.

Amendment (a) proposed to the Lords amendment, in line 9, leave out from 'order' to end of amendment and insert

'as is reasonably practicable in the circumstances for requiring the Union to ensure that no member engages in any conduct which constitutes a breach of their contract of employment by virtue of having been induced before the making of the order to take part or continue to take part in the action'.—*[Mr. Strang.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made to the Lords amendment:—

The House divided: Ayes 184, Noes 262.

Division No. 324] **[6.52 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Allen, Graham
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cryer, Bob
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*

Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Henderson, Doug
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Lambie, David
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Prescott, John
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Redmond, Martin
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Wall, Pat
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Allen Adams and
Mr. Ray Powell.

NOES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beith, A. J.
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Howells, Geraint
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kennedy, Charles
Key, Robert
Kirkwood, Archy
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
McCrindle, Robert
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Major, Rt Hon John
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moss, Malcolm
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Pawsey, James

Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tracey, Richard
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wallace, James
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. Richard Ryder.

Question accordingly negatived.
Lords amendment agreed to.
Lords amendment Nos. 3 to 8 agreed to.

Clause 5

FURTHER REMEDIES FOR INFRINGEMENT OF RIGHT UNDER SECTION 3

Lords amendment: No. 9, in page 8, line 13, at end insert—

"(3A) Where the Employment Appeal Tribunal or any industrial tribunal is satisfied, on an application under this section, that it would (but for this subsection) be required by virtue of subsection (2) above to dismiss the application, it may, instead of dismissing it, transfer the application to an industrial tribunal or, as the case may be, to the Employment Appeal Tribunal; and an application transferred under this subsection shall be proceeded with as if it had been made in accordance with that subsection at the time when it was originally made."

7 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. Patrick Nicholls): I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): With this it will be convenient to discuss Lords amendments Nos. 37 and 38.

Mr. Nicholls: This is a tidying-up amendment concerning the method of applying for compensation in respect of unjustifiable discipline. Briefly, it ensures that if an individual makes his application for compensation to the employment appeal tribunal and it decides that the appeal should have been made to an industrial tribunal because the union has revoked the disciplinary finding and reversed any penalty, the appeal tribunal will have the power to remit that application to an industrial tribunal. Similarly, an industrial tribunal will be empowered to remit applications incorrectly made to it to the EAT.

Without that amendment the appeal tribunal could only reject the application, leaving the individual to make a new application to an industrial tribunal. This would be unnecessarily bureaucratic and could mean that the individual would lose his right to apply for compensation if the mistake was not pointed out before the time allowed for making a compensation claim had expired. I appreciate that Opposition Members are fundamentally opposed to such a concept in any event. However, the House has a duty to ensure that the remedies provided work properly. Amendments Nos. 37 and 38 are purely technical.

Mr. Strang: Suffice it to say that these are primarily technical amendments. While we are unhappy about the whole tenor of the Bill, we shall not detain the House any longer.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 7

RIGHT TO REQUIRE EMPLOYER TO STOP DEDUCTIONS OF UNION SUBSCRIPTIONS

Lords amendment: No. 10, in page 11, line 27, leave out subsections (3) and (4) and insert—

"(3) Notwithstanding anything in any contract between the employee and the employer, or in any agreement or consent signified by the employee, a deduction made in contravention of this section shall in all cases be treated for the purposes of Part I of the Wages Act 1986 as a deduction in contravention of section 1(1) of that Act."

Mr. Cope: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss Lords amendments Nos. 33 and 56 to 60.

Mr. Cope: Clause 7 deals with the case of an employee certifying to his employer that he has left his union and that the union is aware of his resignation. The employer must then stop deducting union subscriptions from the employee's remuneration.

In Committee, the Opposition withdrew an amendment after we gave a certain undertaking. Lords amendment No. 10 fulfils that undertaking and achieves what was asked of us by the Opposition in Committee. It ensures that if an employer, having been given notice, continues to make deductions from an employee's wages the employee may go to an industrial tribunal for a declaration and a refund of the deductions incorrectly made, instead of having to apply to a county court, as was provided for in the Bill as originally drafted.

The remaining amendments cover the same point. I recommend the amendments to the House.

Mr. Strang: These are minor and technical amendments, and we do not propose to detain the House on them.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 12

EXTENSION TO NON-VOTING POSITIONS OF DUTY TO HOLD ELECTIONS

Lords amendment: No. 11, in page 14, line 24, after "body" insert

"and subject to subsection (6C) below"

Mr. Nicholls: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss the following Lords amendments: No. 13 and amendment (a) thereto, and No. 53.

Mr. Nicholls: The amendments fulfil a commitment that I gave in Committee. I am happy to say that they were welcomed by the Opposition spokesman in another place, Lord McCarthy. They reflect consideration of the principle behind an Opposition amendment to exempt from the election requirement general secretaries and presidents if their position is occupied under the rules of the union by a different person annually and that person is not a voting member of the committee.

The essence of the amendment is that individuals holding the office of general secretary or president in an honorary capacity under the Buggins principle should not have to be elected. The majority of individuals likely to benefit from this exemption will be lay members of a union appointed or elected, perhaps by a union's conference, to serve as president.

In Committee, the Opposition described it as a moderate amendment, but it marks a significant departure from the Government's expressed intention that all presidents and general secretaries should be elected. It is made on the basis that the positions involved are normally honorary and do not carry the power and authority usually associated with such offices.

As to the Opposition amendment, the Government accept that individuals should not have to be elected if they hold the position of general secretary or president where it is honorary and occupied under the rules of the union by a different person annually who is not a voting member of the committee. I hope that I shall not embarrass the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang) by reminding him of his expression of gratitude in Committee, because from my reading of the Opposition amendment it seems that he now wants to go further. The Opposition amendment would subvert the concession made by the Government in another place. If made, some general secretaries and presidents will be able to hold office indefinitely, without a requirement that they should face an election. We should then be back to the issue of whether unions should be allowed to continue appointing their general secretaries.

Mr. Strang: As the Under-Secretary of State has indicated, the Government amendments were made in another place in response to Opposition amendments concerning the position of honorary general secretaries and presidents. A person is exempted from the election requirement if he is not a voting member of the principal executive comittee, if he is not an employee of the union, if his term of office does not extend beyond 13 months, and if he has held no position in the preceding 12 months.

The Minister has referred to our amendment, which we see as minor. It would remove the requirement that the honorary position can be held for only 13 months. We are talking about honorary positions. I do not think it fair to treat this as a wrecking amendment or one that would extend unreasonably the concession that has been made. It is not by any means one of the more important parts of the Bill. Nevertheless, while we welcome the small concession, we feel that there is no need to maintain the stipulation of 13 months as the maximum period for which an honorary president or general secretary can hold office.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendment: No. 12, in page 14, line 33, leave out

"incidental to the carrying out by the committee of"

and insert

"taken into account by the committee in carrying out"

Mr. Nicholls: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Clause 12 is intended to ensure that union leaders are representative of the membership. It therefore extends the election requirements of the Trade Union Act 1984 to all members of the principal executive committee, general secretaries and presidents, and to those who act as though they were members of the PEC, and ensures that they are better able to represent the views of the membership. The clause also closes a loophole in the 1984 Act by means of which certain trade union leaders have been able to give up their vote on the PEC to evade the election requirements. The clause is therefore drafted tightly to reduce to a minimum any opportunity for evasion, and it is important to avoid producing any new loopholes.

Clause 12(1) adds new subsections (6A) and (6B) to section 1 of the 1984 Act. As drafted, new subsection (6A)(b) extends the electoral requirements to those who under the rules or practice of a union are entitled to attend and speak at some or all of the meetings of the PEC. To avoid any unnecessary extension of the election requirements, however, it is disapplied where the purpose for which the individual attends is to provide the PEC with factual information or technical or professional advice with respect to matters incidental to the PEC's carrying out of its functions.

Members of the Standing Committee will remember the concern expressed there about the use of the word "incidental". That concern was reflected in debates in another place, and the Government accordingly undertook to see whether the meaning of that part of the subsection could be made clearer. The Government regard it as important that individuals should not be able to play a full part in the activities of the PEC and yet be exempted from the requirement to be elected. We have therefore been conscious of the need to maintain the original distinction between an individual who offers only supporting advice and does not therefore need to be elected, and one whose contribution goes further, involving participation in the decision-making process.

We believe that that distinction has been maintained by the amendment, which replaced the phrase containing the word "incidental" with one that is more readily comprehensible. We think that the drafting has been improved in another place, and that the amendment will bring clarity where unions have previously claimed that there was uncertainty about our intentions.

Mr. Strang: The Minister has rightly reminded us of the discussions in Committee on this point. As he has said, it is a very minor change, and I agree that it clarifies the position slightly. We are still unhappy about the general

thrust of the clause, but in so far as it makes the position slightly clearer and is helpful, albeit in a small way—in that some individuals who may have been caught by the earlier wording should not be caught by this wording—we will not oppose the amendment.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendment No. 13 agreed to.

Lords amendment: No. 14, in page 14, line 47, at end insert—

"(1A) Without prejudice to section 7(4) to (8) of the 1984 Act (Part I not to apply to a trade union for a year after its formation), where—

(a) by virtue of any election (including one held before the coming into force of this subsection) a person is a member of a trade union's principal executive committee at a time after the coming into force of this subsection when that trade union amalgamates with, or transfers its engagements to, another union under the Trade Union (Amalgamation, etc.) Act 1964;

(b) under the instrument of amalgamation or transfer, that person becomes a member of the principal executive committee of the trade union formed by the amalgamation or, as the case may be, of the union to which the engagements are transferred (whether by taking up the same position as he held in the amalgamating or transferring union or by taking up any other position); and

(c) under Part I of the 1984 Act or the following provisions of this section that person would have been entitled, at the time of the amalgamation or transfer, to continue for any period, without being re-elected, to be a member of the principal executive committee mentioned in paragraph (a) above or, as the case may be, to hold the position by virtue of which he was such a member,

Part I of that Act shall not apply in relation to that person to the union formed by the amalgamation or, as the case may be, to the union to which the engagements are transferred until the end of the period mentioned in paragraph (c) above."

Mr. Cope: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this we may take Lords amendments Nos. 15 to 17.

Mr. Cope: The origins of the amendment lie in points raised with us by several unions which are contemplating merger. Initially, it was the General and Municipal Boilermakers and Allied Trades Union and the Association of Professional, Executive, Clerical and Computer Staffs. The question is what happens to their officials in relation to elections when the merger takes place.

In Committee in the other place, Lord Basnett moved an amendment on the same point. We were asked that where a merger took place the law should permit the elected members of a union's principal executive committee to hold office on the executive of the new merged union for the balance of the full term of five years from the date of their election to the principal executive committee of their original union.

We believe that the law should not stand in the way of unions merging if that is what the members of the individual unions wish. Therefore, our colleagues in another place introduced this group of amendments to give effect to the proposal put to us.

7.15 pm

Mr. Strang: As the Minister has said, this issue was debated substantially in another place. While it is possible to discuss at some length whether the amendments might have gone even further, they nevertheless address themselves to the point, and we welcome them as modest improvements to the operation of the provisions for the election of trade union officials.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 15 to 17 agreed to.

Lords amendment: No. 18, after clause 12, insert the following new clause—

Election addresses

" .—(1) The requirements which are to be satisfied for the purposes of Part I of the 1984 Act (elections for certain positions) shall, in relation to any election held after the coming into force of this section, include the requirements of subsection (2) below.

(2) The trade union in question must—

(a) subject to subsection (3) below, provide every candidate in the election with an opportunity of preparing an election address in his own words and of submitting it to the union to be distributed to the persons who are accorded entitlement to vote in the election;

(b) so far as reasonably practicable, secure that copies of every election address submitted to the union before such time as it may have determined are distributed by the sending of a copy of each such address, with the voting paper for the election, by post to each of those persons at his proper address;

(c) make such arrangements for the production of the copies to be so distributed as secure that none of the candidates is required to bear any of the expense of producing those copies;

(d) secure that no modification of any election address so submitted is made by any person in any copy of the address to be distributed except, subject to paragraphs (e) and (f) below, at the request or with the consent of the candidate or where the modification is necessarily incidental to the method adopted for producing that copy;

(e) secure that the same method of producing copies is applied in the same way to every election address so submitted and, so far as reasonably practicable, that no such facility or information as would enable a candidate to gain any benefit from—

(i) the method by which copies of the election addresses are produced; or

(ii) the modifications which are necessarily incidental to that method,

is provided to any candidate without being provided equally to all the others; and

(f) so far as reasonably practicable, secure that the same facilities and restrictions with respect to the preparation, submission, length or modification of an election address and with respect to the incorporation in any such address of a photograph or of any other matter not in words are provided or applied equally to each of the candidates.

(3) Subject to subsection (2)(f) above, a trade union may for the purposes of this section provide that election addresses submitted to it for distribution—

(a) must not exceed such length, not being less than one hundred words, as may be determined by the union; and

(b) may incorporate only such photographs and other matter not in words as the union may determine.

(4) A time determined for the purposes of subsection (2) above as the time by which election addresses for an election must be submitted to the union shall be no earlier than the latest time at which a person may become a candidate in that election.

(5) No person other than the candidate himself shall be subject to any civil or criminal liability in respect of any publication of a candidate's election address, or of any copy of such an address, which is required to be made for the purposes of this section.

(6) In this section 'post' and 'proper address' have the same meanings as in Part I of the 1984 Act."

Mr. Cope: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this we may take amendment (a) to the Lords amendment; and Lords amendments Nos. 21, 41, 44 to 48, 50 and 51.

Mr. Cope: These are significant amendments which have been discussed in Committee as well as in another place. Those who have followed our debates will know that they enact proposals originally made in Committee by my hon. Friend the Member for Colne Valley (Mr. Riddick), whom I am glad to see with us this evening. There was and is considerable support for the measure both before and after my hon. Friend introduced his amendment.

The purpose is to provide for a candidate in a union election to have an election address sent round by the union explaining his stance so that the individual union members can make up their minds, on the basis of information, whom to vote for in the various elections. There was considerable support for early-day motion 270. There was also support in another place for amendments put down by Liberal and Cross-Bench Members. Even the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang), while not supporting what we proposed, at least agreed that in principle it was highly desirable that any person voting in an election should have some knowledge of the candidates for whom he was voting.

The essence of the proposal is to give candidates the right to prepare, and have sent with the voting paper, an election address. The unions are left free to determine many of the issues, but some minimum requirements are laid down. The union, for example, cannot edit the election addresses unless the candidate expressly gives permission. Nor can it impose a requirement that they be less than 100 words. Many unions already distribute election addresses, and many permit a higher number of words. It does not mean that the candidate is obliged to use all the 100 words, but that is the minimum that the union is allowed to permit him. Another important aspect is that the candidates must be treated equally by the unions in the rules that they make for them. I am sure that everyone would agree with that.

The issue of liability if a candidate's election address contains inaccurate or libellous statements is important. We are anxious to make it clear that the content of the address is the responsibility of the candidate and not that of the union that distributes it, or those who print it on the union's behalf. The candidate must be responsible at law for what he says, and the clause provides for that and gives protection to the union against actions that might otherwise arise from statements in the address that might prove to be libellous or give rise to a court action.

The rules that we have provided for those election addresses to be prepared and sent out will be fair to the candidates and will assist union members in deciding which way to vote. I confirm that unions will be able to apply for a refund of the cost of election addresses sent out with the ballot papers under the existing trade union ballot funding scheme.

I commend the amendment to the House.

Mr. Strang: The Minister referred to our discussion in Committee. He will appreciate that, although we consider many things to be desirable about the activities of trade unions, we respect the right of trade unions to have their own rules. The point was made quite effectively in the other place that, by stipulating these matters in legislation and laying down provisions by law, sometimes in contradiction of the trade union rule book, one would encourage trade union members to have less respect for their own trade union rule books.

We consider that the democratic history and evolution of individual trade unions is such that they have developed rules that satisfy the particular circumstances of the members of that union, depending on the industry in which they are involved. Therefore, it is quite wrong for the Government to make impositions or to turn practices into law. I consider that it would have been better to put some of the detailed points into a code of practice.

As the Minister has explained, Lords amendment No. 18 relates specifically to the election address. I am grateful to him for saying that the cost of election addresses can be claimed by unions if it is their policy to seek Government funding for such activities. The majority of trade unions issue election addresses, some of them longer than 150 words, but the amendment does not seem to constitute any problem in that respect.

I shall make one point about liability for the content of election addresses. I was pleased that the Minister explained that the intention was that the individual candidate would be liable for any libel in the election address. It seemed to us that it was wrong that the author of a libel might be immune in law from prosecution. Our amendment deletes the stipulation in the Bill that only the candidate is liable to any civil or criminal action due to the content of the election address. We certainly do not want the trade union to be liable. However, if some slander were incorporated in an election address, the author or originator of that slander should not go free.

We certainly shall not make a meal of this, and we shall not divide the House. We do not regard the amendment as important, and we shall not oppose the Lords amendment. I simply make the point that it is not really appropriate for the Government to prescribe this by statute.

Mr. Graham Riddick (Colne Valley): I support the amendment and I thank the Minister for honouring his commitment. He gave a fairly clear commitment in Committee that he would examine the principle of giving trade union members a greater degree of information about what each candidate in union elections was representing. I am most grateful to him for having moved such an amendment in the other place.

The new clause is probably an improvement on the new clause that I tabled in Committee. I recall that my hon. Friend raised many of the problems relating to libel, so I am pleased that those problems have been overcome with three and a half lines in subsection (5) of the new clause. I am pleased that we have been able to overcome the practical problems.

The clause clearly outlines trade unions' responsibilities. Like the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang), I welcome the fact that unions will not have to bear any of the cost of the improvements to the process of electing their officials. If, as it is so often said, the Conservative party wanted to bash trade unions, the easiest thing would have been to make them liable for the costs and make them pick up the bill. We do not want to do that. We want to improve the electoral process. We have done that and we have ensured that it will not cost the unions a penny.

I shall briefly examine the attitude of the Opposition, as I did in Committee. We understand that they believe that trade unions should be left to run their own affairs. That is understandable, but the Conservative party does not agree with that view. As we all know, trade union officials have to be elected by the membership. It was interesting that in Committee the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East welcomed the principle of the amendment that trade union members should have more information. I found it sad and a little revealing that other members of the Committee, including the hon. Members for Sunderland, North (Mr. Clay) and for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes)—who had a bit of fun at the end of that day in Committee—were much more hostile to the idea of giving trade union members more information about candidates.

I welcome the fact that, today, the Opposition spokesman has given the amendment a grudging welcome. I am most grateful to my hon. Friend the Minister for having taken this point on board. Ultimately, we are ensuring that trade union members are given the maximum possible information so that they can make the best and most informed choice in the election of their principal officers. I congratulate the Government on bringing forward the amendment in the other place.

Mr. Clelland: I had not intended to speak in the debate, but the hon. Member for Colne Valley (Mr. Riddick) has provoked me into doing so. I, too, believe that trade union members ought to have the maximum information about the people whom they are to elect. That is quite right and no one would argue with it. However, we continue to argue that free and independent organisations should be able to make such decisions for themselves, which should not necessarily have to be written down in statute. Indeed, numerous organisations throughout the country hold elections for officials, but only trade unions have been singled out for such treatment.

I remind the hon. Gentleman that those who might be considered to be more significant representatives of the public do not have that obligation. Members of Parliament are not obliged to put out election propaganda or information. They are not even obliged to tell the electorate which political party, if any, they represent.

Mr. Riddick: I understand that no candidate is obliged to send out information. The amendment simply gives candidates the opportunity to do so by compelling trade unions to give candidates that opportunity if the candidate so wishes. There is no compulsion on the candidate.

Mr. Clelland: There is no opportunity for candidates for local government or Members of Parliament standing for re-election to have their election addresses paid for by the state, as may be the case under the amendment, or indeed to oblige any other organisation to pay for election propaganda. That is just another demonstration of the special treatment that the Government mete out only to trade unions.

Mr. Richard Holt (Langbaurgh): I seek clarification of two matters.

In the furniture industry it has been traditional for many years for candidates for elected office to have all their details submitted by the union journal, so this will come as no surprise to that industry. When a series of posts become available there may be only two candidates for one, but 10 for the other—for example, for a more lucrative regional officer's job. Are all 12 to have the same size of photograph, for example, or will the union be a limited newspaper and determine which is the more important and give it space accordingly?

7.30 pm

I fear that the 100-word stipulation may mean that after a person has been elected to office he will find himself disbarred because he has written 102 words in his election address. It is silly for any Government to insert a figure for that, especially when dealing with industrial relations. Perhaps it is too late, but I warn my hon. Friend that this will lead to unnecessary court action.

It is all very well to say that there is indemnification for everyone except the person who may have written the election address. In the fullness of time, when others have the responsibilities of those who have them today, I wonder whether that law will still be on the statute book and the courts will interpret it as it is intended to be interpreted now. We all know that courts reinterpret laws over the years. Is there to be indemnification for the publishers and printers of any literature henceforth and for all time? If so, we shall be bringing a new concept into the law of libel which may have deeper ramifications than the Employment Bill.

Mr. Allen: One hundred and one words in a manifesto would be permissible, but not 99, because the minimum is 100, so the position is even more ridiculous than the circumstances that the hon. Gentleman is describing. I imagine that that is just one of a few problems in this ill thought out, late addition to the Bill.

Mr. Holt: I have spent 25 years in industrial relations trying to work out what politicians intended. Most of them were long gone and I could not ask them. I could get only the latest interpretation of the courts, and they change their interpretations. The benchmark cases under the Industrial Relations Acts since 1963 go in leaps and bounds, which is why I am asking whether the Government are right to insert in the legislation a specific as obvious as 100 words and that people can be completely immune from a libel action, except the person who writes the libel.

Mr. Cope: I am grateful to those who have contributed to the debate. Most of them have supported to a greater or lesser degree some element of what we are trying to do.

Under common law, if two people write and publish a libel, both are legally liable. I am not speaking specifically about election addresses, but about the general case at common law. A candidate in some elections may have assistance in writing his election address. The act of giving candidates in these elections the right to prepare an election address and have it published alters the common law position to the extent that the unions, although liable under common law for publishing such an address, might have a defence in that they had done so to comply with a statutory requirement. There was a doubt and, because of that, we thought it right to make the legal liability clear. It is, after all, a privilege to have the opportunity to make an election address, and that privilege is given to the candidate alone in the specific circumstances of the election in which he is taking part. Therefore, it should be the candidate's responsibility alone to ensure that the address does not contain any libel, even if he takes advice in the course of preparing it.

[Mr. Cope]

As my hon. Friend the Member for Colne Valley (Mr. Riddick) pointed out, a candidate is not obliged to publish an election address, but the union is obliged to publish a particular number of words. He may decide to put out a short election address in the hope that more people will read it than if he covers pages with information. On the other hand, he may think that he needs to explain his views at greater length.

The union has an obligation to say that if there is to be a minimum number of words it must be 100. At present some unions permit 500 words, but they can put a top limit on it and say, "We are not prepared to duplicate reams. We cannot have a candidate sending out his life story." It would be wrong to oblige unions to do that, but at the same time they must be obliged to send out the address, hence the figure of 100.

Mr. Clelland: If it is right in principle that trade unions should give candidates the opportunity and the resources to send out an election address, albeit within the limitations of the Bill, why does the same principle not apply to local government and, indeed, to parliamentary candidates? Should the principle not apply equally? It may even be argued that it is more important in local government and parliamentary elections.

Mr. Cope: In parliamentary elections candidates have a free go at the post, but this is not necessarily relevant to what we are discussing. I think that the hon. Gentleman belongs to the Amalgamated Engineering Union, which permits candidates to send round an address of up to 500 words, so it is ahead of the Government in this. It is not alone in that, and I should not want to single it out, because many others also send round election addresses and have various figures stipulated in their rules. The limit of 100 is modest.

My hon. Friend the Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) asked about indemnification and whether it would last for all time.

Mr. Holt: The legislation states that ballot papers must be sent out with the election addresses. Many unions keep the ballot paper so that it is certified by the certification officer in exactly the same way as in local government or national Government elections. It does not get lost and there is no argument about duplication. Is my hon. Friend seriously saying that the only acceptable way of doing this is by sending a ballot paper through the post?

Mr. Cope: Yes, our intention is that an election address should go out with the ballot paper.

My hon. Friend also spoke about indemnification for all time. The House cannot pass and has no means of passing legislation that will last for longer than Parliament chooses, as these are Lords amendments. A future Parliament can pass a statute to change the law of libel. Provided that the Bill becomes an Act in the form that we are suggesting and remains on the statute book, the liability will last. I hope that it will last for ever. I see no end to this protection against libel that is provided for a union and those who print and distribute election addresses.

Although the Bill is written in this way, it is open to a future Government to propose a change, and there is nothing that I or any hon. Member could do about that. The intention is that indemnification should last for as long as the requirement to distribute the ballot papers.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 14

INDEPENDENT SCRUTINY OF CERTAIN BALLOTS AND ELECTIONS

Lords amendment: No. 19, in page 17, line 3, leave out from "person" to "are" in line 4 and insert

"who supervises the production and distribution, for the purposes of the ballot or election, of all the voting papers and the person to whom those voting papers".

Mr. Cope: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

The amendment concerns scrutineers who are provided for in the Bill to supervise elections. The amendment represents a small tightening of the scrutiny provisions that we asked for in another place, which were agreed by Conservative peers; hence the amendment comes before us for consideration.

It should be apparent on the face of the Bill, if the Lords amendment is accepted, that the scrutineer is required to supervise production of voting papers and their dispatch. We were asked to go a little further than that and to insist that the scrutineer produced and dispatched the voting papers, but we thought it best to insert this provision. Unions will, therefore, be free to opt for the scrutineer to print and dispatch voting papers if they wish. If they choose instead to print and dispatch the papers themselves or ask someone else to do it, they will do so knowing that the scrutineer is required to supervise production and dispatch of voting papers and to report thereon to members of the union. The purpose is obviously to ensure that ballot papers sent out have not been tampered with, or that some arrangement has been made to affect the result of the ballot. I commend the amendment to the House.

Mr. Strang: There is much that some Opposition Members wish to say on these matters but because there are other important matters we shall not detain the House. It is unnecessary to stipulate these provisions in statute but I accept that where a scrutineer supervises or takes responsibility for ballot papers when those are returned, it is logical that he should supervise their production and distribution.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendment No. 19 agreed to.

Lords amendment: No. 20, in page 18, line 16, at end insert—

"(8) Section 6A of the 1913 Act (application of sections 3 to 6 of that Act to employers' associations) shall apply to the provisions of this section, in so far as they relate to the requirements mentioned in subsection (1)(a) above, as it applies to sections 3 to 6 of, and the Schedule to that Act.".

Mr. Nicholls: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this we shall take Lords amendments Nos. 22, 35, 36 and 55.

Mr. Nicholls: These technical amendments are necessary for consistency with earlier legislation. The provision which presently governs political fund ballots contained in the Trade Union Acts of 1913 and 1984

applies to unincorporated employers' associations, as they apply to trades unions. These amendments ensure that clauses 14 and 15 of the Bill will apply similarly.

Amendment No. 55 to schedule 3 corrects an oversight in the drafting of the 1984 Act, which leaves trades unions and unincorporated employers' associations in a different position in one respect. The amendments will have no practical effect at present, as we know of no employers' association that currently maintains a political fund, or indeed has any intention to set one up.

Amendments Nos. 35 and 36 are technical, and are necessary to ensure that all legislative provisions in relation to political funds are consistent in their application to Northern Ireland. Their effect will be that the provisions of the Bill relating to political funds will extend to Northern Ireland, but will not apply, like present legislation, to any trades union or unincorporated employers' association that has its head office, or main office, in Northern Ireland.

7.45 pm

Mr. Allen: It would be remiss of me to let the clause go without putting on record the congratulations of the Opposition, and we hope also of Conservative Members, to the Institute of Professional Civil Servants on setting up its political fund a few weeks ago.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 21 to 23 agreed to.

Clause 16

BALLOTS ON INDUSTRIAL ACTION AFFECTING DIFFERENT PLACES OF WORK

Lords amendment: No 24, in page 19, line 39, leave out "some or all" and insert "one or more".

Mr. Nicholls: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this we shall take Lords amendments Nos. 25 and 26.

Mr. Nicholls: This amendment was tabled by noble Lords from the Opposition Benches. It was readily accepted by the Government. The objective of the clause is to ensure that separate place-of-work ballots are held, except in circumstances where all the members whose votes are to be aggregated across different places of work share one or more common distinguishing characteristic.

When the clause left this House, the exception was limited to circumstances where a group sharing such a factor or factors consisted of at least three people. However, there is no justification for excluding the circumstances where a group consists of only two members. The amendment addresses this point.

Amendments Nos. 25 and 26 were tabled by Opposition peers and were accepted by the Government, albeit with one minor drafting change. In practice the only change in the clause as it stood before these amendments were devised is to allow a ballot to be aggregated across two or more employers if there is a common and appropriate factor that applies to only one voter, and to non-voters at one employer but is shared with no voters at a second employer.

When the Government tabled amendments to the clause at the Commons Report stage it was with the intention of enabling aggregation of ballot votes across different places of work, to cover the situation of various types of bargaining groups. It is possible to envisage a bargaining group in the case that I have just described. The Government therefore accepted a change in the clause that allowed an exception in such a case to the requirement for separate place-of-work ballots. I therefore hope that the amendment commends itself to the Opposition and to the House.

Mr. Strang: We made clear on Report and in Committee that we regard this clause as a complex imposition that employers will have great difficulty in understanding. It will certainly not add to good industrial relations in this country. But, as the Minister says, these are minor amendments and we do not wish to detain the House on them.

Mr. Jonathan Sayeed (Bristol, East): I should be grateful if my hon. Friend could help me with one point. In the case of the National Union of Seamen, as my hon. Friend will be aware, ballots could take place on ships overseas. It is possible that the results of those ballots will not get back to the NUS in time. The consequence of that is that those working in home waters on ferries are in a particularly advantageous position and the NUS could follow their wishes rather than those working in deep sea waters or abroad. Will the clause deal adequately with the replacement ballot, and the time in which it will be conducted?

Mr. Nicholls: This part of the Bill will not be dealing with the time in which a ballot takes place. As the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang) has said, this is by no means an easy read. Having said that, I hope that those who have studied it in Committee, and other interests elsewhere, agree that, although the clause is difficult to read, it is at least better than it was. I recollect that in Committee there was some debate about whether, for the purposes of the definition of a place of work, which is relevant to the construction of the clause, a ship could be considered as premises. I recall that I or my hon. Friend the Minister of State, pointed out that a ship was not to be taken as a place of work in those circumstances.

If my hon. Friend has in mind the possibility of timing and matters of that sort, they would not strictly fall to be considered under this clause.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 25 to 27 agreed to.

Clause 20

PROVISIONS SUPPLEMENTAL TO SECTION 19

Lords amendment: No. 28, in page 23, line 5, at end insert—

"(1A) Where the Commissioner provides assistance under section 19 above in relation to any proceedings, it shall be his duty to do so on such terms, or to make such other arrangements, as will secure that any person against whom those proceedings have been or are commenced is informed that assistance has been or is being provided by the Commissioner in relation to the proceedings."

Mr. Nicholls: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider sub-amendment (a), and Lords amendments Nos. 29 and 30. I understand that the Opposition may wish to

[Mr. Deputy Speaker]

divide on sub-amendment (a), so I shall call the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang) to speak to that amendment.

Mr. Strang: I have to make it clear that Lords amendment No. 28 was moved in the House of Lords by the Government in response to an undertaking that the Minister gave in Committee. That undertaking related to the circumstances where the commissioner for trade union members had given, or was about to give, assistance to a trade union member. We argued, convincingly I think, that it was only reasonable that a trade union should know whether a trade unionist taking the union to court was being supported in that way. Obviously, that would be a substantial consideration in terms of the advice and funding that the trade unionist would receive from the commissioner.

In such circumstances the trade union might decide to adopt a different tack and perhaps be more conciliatory. Alternatively, the effect may be the opposite. Nevertheless, the principle is valid and the Government accepted the principle. It is fair to say that the Minister acknowledged that the argument was valid in relation to legal aid and that it was hard to see why, if someone was advised that a person was in receipt of legal aid in proceedings to which he was a party, a trade union should not be advised that a trade unionist was receiving assistance in a case to which the trade union was a party.

What is wholly unsatisfactory about the Lords amendment is that it enables the commissioner to advise a trade union after the proceedings have been commenced. We do not believe that that does justice to the undertaking that the Government gave us. I am not suggesting that this is a deliberate failure to implement the undertaking. However, the whole point of the undertaking was that the trade union would be given notice in advance of the proceedings getting under way.

Instead of the words

"against whom those proceedings have been or are commenced"

the amendment should read

"against whom those proceedings are to be commenced"

We obtained very few concessions from the Government in Committee and the one or two concessions that have been achieved, either in response to promises in Committee or as a result of changes in the other place, have been minor. It is rather unfortunate, to put it mildly, that they have failed to do justice to the undertaking they gave in this context in Committee.

Mr. Nicholls: The hon. Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang) may be doing himself less than justice by saying that he did not receive many concessions from us. I remember that he and his hon. Friends made several points very well and we did agree to make concessions. The hon. Gentleman is right to say that when he put this point to me in Committee he was pushing at an open door. I hope that he will not think that I am sliding away from the point and, if he does, I will slide straight back in a moment. However, there are obvious parallels between the commissioner's assistance and that provided by the legal aid fund. Of course, there are obvious dissimilarities as well because, as with all analogies, they are not exact. As I have said, the hon. Gentleman was pushing against an open door and, perhaps because the analogies are not exact, I was not able to come up with something there and then to what may seem a fairly straightforward point. That is indicative of the fact that perhaps it was not quite as easy as we would have liked.

The amendment places a duty on the commissioner, where he provides assistance in relation to proceedings, to do so on terms or make other arrangements that will ensure that any person against whom those proceedings have been or are commenced is informed of that assistance. However, if one were to say that the notification should take place at the moment proceedings were instituted, that would raise all sorts of difficulties, such as what would happen if that moment was missed. What would the consequences of that be?

In our amendment we have tried to ensure that if a trade union is up against a person with the commissioner's assistance, it should know about that. That obligation will be imposed by the commissioner on the assisted person to make absolutely certain that notification is given.

I understand the terms in which the hon. Gentleman tabled the Opposition's amendment (a). However, the Lords amendment makes it clear that the duty to inform will apply when the assisted person becomes party to the proceedings or when the commissioner's assistance is granted if a person is already a party to the proceedings at that time. That is an important point. It is up to the commissioner to specify any details about the timing of the notification in the terms on which his assistance is granted or to determine the timing in the arrangements he makes. In practice, it can be expected that parties against whom proceedings are taken will be informed of the commissioner's assistance when the proceedings are instituted. As I have said, that would not be possible if they began before he gave his assistance.

The Opposition's amendment would mean that notification would have to be given before proceedings began. It fails to deal with the case where proceedings start before any assistance is given. For that reason, the amendment is undesirable.

I do not want to go over the ground that was covered in Committee. However, the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East will recall that when it was put to me and to my hon. Friend the Minister that notification of the commissioner's assistance should be given as soon as that assistance was available, we resisted that.

We believe that the Lords amendment ensures that if a trade union finds that action is being taken against it by John Smith and that John Smith has the full weight of the commissioner by his side, the union should know about that. Although that may not have been achieved in the way that the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East would have liked, his justified and evident concerns are met by the amendment.

Mr. Strang: We are not satisfied with that. The amendment is a step in the right direction but, leaving aside the detailed wording of our amendment, we intend to force a vote. We shall do so if only to demonstrate our view that the commissioner should bend over backwards to ensure that the trade union is advised as early as possible that he is providing assistance to one of the union's members.

Mr. Clelland: It seems entirely unreasonable that, when a trade union is to have proceedings instituted against it, it should be informed in retrospect that the commissioner

is to assist those taking the proceedings. We object in principle to the commissioner. I pointed out in Committee, and I have mentioned again today, that the installation of a commissioner of this sort is contrary to the Government's attitude towards the legal aid system where considerable savings—about £10 million a year—are being made. I can think of a number of people living in my constituency who have been rejected when applying for legal aid for legitimate cases purely on the ground that the compensation that would result from a successful case would not be sufficient. Yet here we have circumstances in which a union member can take what might be considered to be a frivolous action against a trade union and may be supported through a sort of legal aid system by a commissioner. Also, the proceedings can begin before the trade union is informed that that is to be the case.

By the production of the Bill, the Government have already displayed their antipathy towards trade unions. Surely the legal system that is to apply to the Bill should be fair to both sides. The Government lean over backwards to assist anyone who wants to frustrate a trade union in its activities or its organisation or to take a trade union to court. Such a person will be given financial assistance and all sorts of legal advice. At the same time, the trade union is to be disadvantaged, not only in this clause but in other clauses of the Bill, by not being told until after the commencement of proceedings that the commissioner is to support the person taking the union to court.

8 pm

If the Government want to continue this charade that they are being fair to both sides—we keep hearing from the Minister that the Government are only trying to be fair to trade unions—they ought to accept our amendment. After all, trade unions are not bodies that stand aloof from their members. The trade union consists of its members and they will be disadvantaged for the advantage of a single rebellious member who, for his own reasons, might want to engage his trade union in court proceedings.

We feel that the Minister has not gone far enough to explain why trade unions are to be disadvantaged in this way and that the Government ought to give more consideration to our very reasonable amendment.

Mr. McLeish: I endorse the sentiments expressed by my hon. Friend the Member for Tyne Bridge (Mr. Clelland). It was widely felt in Committee that many of the suggestions and provisions in the Bill were in some respects quite incredible, in the proper sense of that word. We find it quite alarming that the Government should have suggested that they are tidying up certain provisions when we are faced with amendments that seek to further the attack on trade unions and put them at a disadvantage in the workplace in relation to any action that might be taken in which the commissioner is involved.

It may seem strange that the House may divide on this amendment, but, while the words are only three in number, it provides a significant insight into how the Government view the question of trade union reform. Essentially, we are seeking to ensure that there is an element of natural justice. There can be few situations in which a person—in this case a trade union—can have an action taken against him but not be informed of it until the action is started. My hon. Friend made the analogy with the legal aid system. It certainly seems inappropriate, even in such an odious Bill as this, to turn the issue of natural justice on its head.

Why on earth cannot the Government accept the reasonable, common-sense view that a person has a right to be informed before an action is started against him? This is the essential point about which we are concerned, and it seems right that we should divide on such an important issue.

My hon. Friend the Member for Tyne Bridge referred to the question of the commissioner and the clauses in the Bill that deal with his activities. We were opposed to these provisions in Committee and we remain concerned about them. That concern turned to anger when we absorbed the content of the Lords amendment, and we had to respond by putting forward our own change of words.

The discussion this evening has highlighted the continuing smokescreen that the Government seek to put up. The Government would like to convey to the nation that these are moderate, sensible reforms which bring trade unions to book in the interests of their members. There could be a debate nationally on that issue. Where there can be no debate, and where Parliament could be brought into disrepute, is when we are discussing issues in the Bill in terms of Lords amendments and our amendments in which the very nature of the right to know and of natural justice is being threatened by a Government who constantly wax eloquent about the rights of individuals and, in this case, the right of a person acting on behalf of the trade union.

I believe that we are right to divide on our amendment. I support my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang) in this commitment. It is wholly ridiculous that a Bill can come back from the Lords in a much worse state than it was in when it went to the Upper House. I shall support the amendment.

Mr. Allen: This item within this clause is a particularly obnoxious piece of legislation, and the way that it has been brought from the Lords has made it even worse. Many of my hon. Friends were very concerned in Committee about the way that this came into being, and my hon. Friend the Member for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes) made some extremely forceful interventions on this point. We are very sad that the Lords have not done the job that the Upper House is there to do—improve the legislation rather than send it back to this House in an even worse condition.

One of the major problems that we highlighted in this area of concern related to the certification officer, who has performed his duties admirably over a number of years. I say that having had some dealings with him. In creating a trade union commissar in complete opposition to that certification officer, we may find that neither function is performed adequately or properly. The great attribute of the certification officer was that, despite the ups and downs that there are always in negotiations and discussions between trade unions and semi-state authorities such as the certification officer, he had won some respect for a certain degree of neutrality. Now we are seeing as a result of this amendment a trade union commissar to assist individual trade union members to take action against their own unions, and one whose neutrality, I suspect, will not be beyond doubt. It is an unfortunate thing to say, but I believe that it needs to be put on record. I do not believe that the majority of trade unionists will receive the news of a trade union commissar with anything other than great

[Mr. Allen]

shame and suspicion. The trade union commissar will be seen as part of the whole package of legislative reforms drafted by this Government.

Mr. Holt: The hon. Gentleman referred to the commissioner as if he were a single individual. I draw his attention to the schedule, which says that we are talking about a commissioner in posts and that there are to be six commissioners, apart from 75 posts for certification officers. So we are not talking about one man and his views; we are talking about an army of bureaucrats.

Mr. Allen: I am very grateful for that intervention; it is most helpful. It is in the same way that many of us look at the certification office. There is the certification office, but there are a number of individuals working there and only rarely does the senior person get involved. The trade union commissar will operate on the same basis and, referring further to that schedule, the amount that will be expended on this office will be £1·5 million in the first year. In each of the following two years, it will be £1·7 million. The problem is that there will be pressure on the office, in these times of tight public expenditure, to justify its existence. It will have to keep coming forward with new cases, inciting and inspiring individual trade unionists to take up cases, even when they may not be cast iron cases. They may be cases that the court, in the first instance, or the certification officer will refuse to entertain. Under the new agency system in the Civil Service, a person may feel that there must be payment by results, otherwise the £1·7 million may be cut off.

Mr. Winnick: As to whether there is to be one or half a dozen trade union commissars, does my hon. Friend agree that it would be a good idea if one of the people appointed were to be Mr. Eric Chalker, who for some time has been campaigning for democracy in the Tory party? If he were appointed, he would see that trade unions are 100 times more democratic than the Tory party.

Mr. Allen: Mr. Chalker would probably be one of the first people under the hammer of the commissar.

As we often said in Committee, the trade union movement needs no lectures from the Conservative party, which denied the vote to working people. The majority of people in this country did not have the vote until 60 or 70 years ago, mainly because of the Conservative party's inability to extend the franchise. At that time, the Labour party was creating the democratic trade union movement —well in advance of the extension of the franchise that was grudgingly given to people to elect Governments.

My hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) will be aware that a book has been opened on who will be the first trade union commissar. The running was between David Hart, the Secretary of State for Social Services, who was going through a particularly bad time some time ago, Frank Chapple, who was quoted at fairly long odds, and, coming up on the rails, Sir Ian MacGregor.

Mr. Winnick: What about the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan)?

Mr. Allen: I understand from the agitation that is being transmitted that perhaps enough has been said about this matter.

Mr. Nicholls: After such a fascinating debate, it would be churlish of me not to reply.

I do not think that I can do anything to assure the hon. Member for Tyne Bridge (Mr. Clelland) about our intentions. For reasons that I have never been able to work out, he seems to suspect the worst of us. Bearing in mind the similarity of our constituencies' names, I hope that one day he will agree to pair with me.

In one sense, I should like to take the hon. Member for Fife, Central (Mr. McLeish) with me. It is one thing to be criticised for not making concessions, but, having made one, to be criticised for doing so seems harsh, even in a harsh profession. The hon. Gentleman said that his objection to the Lords amendment was based on the fact that if one is about to be sued one should know who is standing behind it. In asking for that he is asking for more than the legal aid system provides. It is possible for a person to be legally aided for months before he institutes proceedings. His solicitor is under no obligation to file a notice of issue of civil aid certificate until proceedings are instituted. We impose an obligation on the commissioner to ensure that the trade union knows who it is up against. The hon. Gentleman is being too suspicious in thinking that there is something doubtful about the fact that we cannot frame this legislation in precisely the same terms as the parallel system.

Mr. McLeish: Why can it not be before rather than after?

Mr. Nicholls: For the reasons that were canvassed in Committee. A person may go to the commissioner with a grievance that could be cleared in an initial interview. The commissioner may be able to make inquiries, do a little leg work and say to the member, "This is not worth while." It would not be useful if the moment the person went through a door the commissioner said, " Nice to see you; let me assist you. I shall just phone the union and say what I am up to."

My hon. Friend the Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) foresees a commissioner, son of commissioner and commissioners being spawned. If he reads the Bill he will see that the commissioner will have a staff, which is all that this provision relates to. The idea at present is that there should be one commissioner, who should have a staff.

Mr. Holt: I recommend that my hon. Friend looks at the debates that preceded the introduction of industrial tribunals. He will see that the tribunals were intended to be swift, non-bureaucratic and non-legalistic. It was intended that they would be based on the common sense of those who worked in the industry. What has happened in reality is that if one is fired from one's job one is lucky to get before an industrial tribunal in under 15 months. If one does not take a barrister, one will lose.

Mr. Nicholls: One could possibly take a good solicitor, but I do not want to be accused of touting.

In any judicial system there is always a possibility that it will not work as fast as one would like. My hon. Friend is concerned about the initial intention that tribunals should be as simple as possible, which is a laudable aim. Perhaps his experience in this regard is greater than mine, but industrial tribunals provide a more streamlined and simple service than the courts. However, it is not the sort

of process that might take place under a palm tree somewhere. I assure my hon. Friend that there will be only one commissioner.

I hope that the hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen) will not think it unkind if I say that I have heard his speech many times before, and will probably hear it again. He made the wild allegation that, even before a public official is appointed, he is satisfied that that public official will not act in a way that preserves his neutrality. There will be a number of sectors in which the commissioner will be entitled to intervene. He will not be under an obligation to do so, but he will be entitled to intervene. If the commissioner's track record were that he was taking every crackpot, hare-brained case to court, the hon. Gentleman would have had the best of the argument. Having listened to his speech many times—I do not commend a reading of the hon. Gentleman's speeches to anybody—I cannot accept that he is on to a winner. He based his argument on saying that a public official yet to be appointed will act in a partial way.

Amendment (a) proposed to the Lords amendment, in line 5, leave out 'have been or are' and insert 'are to be'. —*[Mr. Strang.]*

Question put, That the amendment to the Lords amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 179, Noes 220.

Division No. 325] **[8.18 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Coleman, Donald
Corbett, Robin
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cryer, Bob
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dixon, Don
Doran, Frank
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Galbraith, Sam
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Henderson, Doug
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Redmond, Martin
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Cook and
Mr. Ken Eastham.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry

Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Emery, Sir Peter
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Latham, Michael
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Major, Rt Hon John
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moss, Malcolm
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Pawsey, James
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rost, Peter
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sims, Roger
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Peter Lloyd and
Mr. Richard Ryder.

Question accordingly negatived.

Lords amendment agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 29 and 30 agreed to, some with special entry.

Clause 21

PROCEDURE BEFORE THE CERTIFICATION OFFICER

Lords amendment: No. 31, in page 23, line 33, at end insert

"; and, without prejudice to the generality of the power conferred by this subsection, the provision made by the Certification Officer in exercise of that power shall include such provision as he considers appropriate for restricting the circumstances in which the identity of an individual who has made, or is proposing to make, any such application or complaint is disclosed to any person."

8.30 pm

Mr. Nicholls: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

The amendment allows the certification officer, in regulating his procedure, to include such provisions as he considers appropriate for restricting the circumstances in which the identity of any union member who approaches him is disclosed to any person. It thus permits the certification officer to continue to fulfil his functions with a workable and self-regulated method of restricting the circumstances in which the complainant's or applicant's identity is disclosed.

Union members should certainly not be put off from making complaints about a breach of statutory duty by the union and taking them up with the certification officer because they fear the consequences to themselves of doing so. The amendment assures an applicant that a certification officer can, where appropriate, take steps to prevent his identity being revealed, so far as this is consistent with the proper pursuit of the complaint. Clause 3 may also be expected to help, because it provides that union discipline imposed because of assertions by a union member in taking a complaint to the certification officer about his union would be unjustified discipline. The amendment reaffirms the Government's commitment to a union member's right to pursue effectively complaints about his union denying his statutory right, and I commend it to the House.

Mr. Strang: We see no justification for the amendment. The certification officer is a public appointment, and if people raise matters with him, or if he acts on their behalf, I see no reason why that should be kept secret. I do not believe that there is any evidence that trade union members have been, or are likely to be, deterred from taking up matters with the certification officer on the ground that it may be to their disadvantage if the matter becomes publicly known within the union.

We do not propose to make a major issue of this amendment, because other important matters remain to be discussed. Nevertheless, we believe that it is uncalled for, and nothing that the Minister has said this evening has convinced us that it is necessary.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 24

FUNCTIONS OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND OF THE COMMISSION

Lords amendment: No. 32, in page 24, line 45, leave out from "opportunities" to end of line 46 and insert

"for employment and training that are available to women and girls or to disabled persons;"

Mr. Fowler: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

The Government have reconsidered whether the Bill should explicitly mention disabled people. The Bill already contains specific provision for disabled people, through the requirement to help people train for employment suitable for their ages and capacities. The amendment emphasises that duty and I believe that it will be an encouragement to disabled people.

All the major programmes of the Manpower Services Commission make special provision for the disabled. The entry rules for the youth training scheme are slightly relaxed for disabled people so that they can enter up to the age of 21, as opposed to 17 for the able-bodied, and if they need more time at school, similar help is given. The disabled may also be given extra assessment and up to six months extra on YTS. We provide permanent additional funding for YTS for managing agents to take on disabled young people who need extra training. Furthermore, under employment training, the new adult training programme, the normal entry rules will also be relaxed for disabled people so that any disabled person can enter the scheme, whereas the able-bodied will normally have to be unemployed for six months. There will be special financial assistance for training disabled people, just as there is with YTS.

I hope that I have said enough to establish that we believe that this is an important amendment which underlines our commitment to disabled people.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Bothroyd): I should inform the House that the amendment involves privilege.

Ms. Clare Short (Birmingham, Ladywood): The amendment concedes a point that we pressed in Committee, and to that extent it is welcome. It modifies the powers that the Secretary of State has taken to himself —powers that used to belong to the Manpower Services Commission—to make arrangements for training. Under those powers the MSC could, and the Secretary of State can, make special arrangements for encouraging increases in the opportunities available for women and girls for employment and training.

In Committee we argued strongly that, although women and girls have special needs as they are disadvantaged in the labour market and in their access to training, people with disabilities and people from the ethnic minorities have similar needs. We tabled amendments to include in the provision those with disabilities and the ethnic minorities. Pressure was repeatedly resisted. It seems that when the Bill reached the other place the Government were persuaded that there was a need to make special provision for people with disabilities. Perhaps they were shamed into it. However, that makes it all the more outrageous that the Government have made no such concession in respect of the ethnic minorities.

We all know that ethnic minorities suffer from discrimination in the job market. Various studies published by the Minister's Department show that young people with equal qualifications have to apply much more often for jobs if they are black and are much more likely to be unemployed. Furthermore, because of the nature of the migration of a large part of Britain's black population, the working population is disproportionately unskilled and in need of access to training. It is conspicuous that the Government have conceded the need to make special provision for people with disabilities, but are unwilling to concede the point on ethnic minorities. It seems to me that their prejudices are showing clearly.

The Minister touched on the special provision in the youth training scheme and to be made in the adult training scheme. Will he clarify the special arrangements to be made for women, girls and the disabled under this scheme? We are all aware that the Secretary of State recently wrote to the TUC, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and the Association of Metropolitan Authorities to make all sorts of new arrangements for the scheme that he plans to launch in September under the Bill. It is notable that there has been no announcement to the House and that we have not had a chance to comment on those changes. We know from the right hon. Gentleman's letter that he has provided for disabled people to go on his new scheme without having been registered as unemployed for six months.

The right hon. Gentleman will know, and I certainly know—I have written to Ministers in his Department about it—that many of the existing schemes that provide for disabled people have additional provisions. They are allowed to have more staff than the average scheme, because often the needs of people with more severe disabilities call for a larger number of staff. I should like to know whether there will be additional resources, exactly what they will be, and whether disabled people on the schemes will be allowed to stay on for longer than others might be.

What special arrangements has the Secretary of State in mind for women and girls? The community programme, which is to be brought to an end in September, contained special provisions which meant that women and girls were under-privileged. The Government deliberately brought in a rule that said that only those who were in receipt of benefit could have access to places on the scheme. Overnight, that massively reduced the number of women who were eligible to go on the scheme, although in the past they had only to show that they had previously been employed and had become long-term unemployed. However, that no longer mattered. It was only if they were in receipt of benefits that they were entitled to go on the community programme. That had nothing to do with the special needs of women and girls for access to temporary employment or training. It was because the Government were determined to use the scheme to reduce the unemployment figures and could not bear it if some women managed to get on the schemes and were no longer represented in the unemployment figures. The unemployment figures now are simply a count of those who are entitled to benefit, and are no longer a count of people who are available for employment.

Under the new scheme, which is based on a benefit plus regime, my understanding is that a small number of women will be allowed to take places on the scheme. However, as they are not in receipt of benefit, they will

[Ms. Clare Short]

receive only £10 a week for a full week's work. That is the kind of special arrangement to meet the special needs of women and girls that the Secretary of State is proposing to make under these powers and his scheme.

Even worse, and even more misleading, the Secretary of State has trumpeted the provision in his new scheme that there is to be an allowance of up to £50 a week for single women who have child caring needs, so that they can go on the scheme. However, when we look at the details of what the Secretary of State is offering, we realise that this is a complete and absolute con. I am sorry to say that, because there is a massive need for women who are responsible for child care to be able to gain access to training. The Secretary of State is misleading the population in suggesting that he is making such arrangements.

The women who will be eligible for this child care allowance under his scheme will be those who have signed on for at least six months as being available for work. However, under the new availability for work test, those who claim to be available for work have to show, if they care for dependants—children, elderly or disabled relatives—that they can make themselves available within 24 hours to take up work. A single parent who has responsibility for child care and is in need of the £50 a week allowance provided by the training scheme to provide for child care cannot possibly prove that she is available for work and can make alternative arrangements for her children within 24 hours. Therefore, any woman who seeks to take advantage of this great privilege that the Secretary of State keeps telling us about is likely to be found to be unavailable for work, and by seeking to sign on in order to make herself eligible is in danger of becoming ineligible for benefit.

8.45 pm

The Secretary of State has told the TUC, the AMA and the NCVO—but not the House of Commons—in a letter that he wrote yesterday that another major concession that he intends to make to women is that those who have not been signed on as available for work because they have responsibilities for child care will be able to take advantage of the £50 a week child care allowance if their children are all at school and of school age. Is this a major concession? The major need for child care support is for parents with children under five—but they are not to qualify. The Secretary of State has presumably made a judgment that women with children under five should not seek to participate in his training scheme. Therefore, only those who have children at school will be able to apply for the special allowance.

The arrangements that the Secretary of State is making under this provision of the Bill are a cosmetic pretence to assist women to take up places on his inadequate training schemes, but in practice they will not benefit them at all. In fact, the overall arrangements, and the arrangements for the payment of money, mean that women will receive small amounts of money. They will receive no more than £10 a week for participating in this scheme and working for a full working week if they live with someone who is receiving the benefit.

As we have the Secretary of State here, and as this is our last chance to deal with the Bill, I ask him to clarify the Goverment's undertaking that the programme for these disadvantaged groups will be entirely voluntary. It is an important undertaking that the Secretary of State has given to the TUC. He says that he has made it clear in the House that he does not intend to designate the employment training scheme for the purposes of section 20 of the Social Security Act 1975. Hon. Members will know that the Bill provides, in clause 26, that the Secretary of State can, whenever he so chooses, designate any scheme that he provides under its powers. Anyone who refuses a place, refuses to apply for a place or leaves early will be subject to benefit loss or benefit penalty for a period of six months. Once that is done, the scheme will in effect be compulsory.

The Secretary of State is telling the TUC and the world that the scheme will not be compulsory. In Committee we asked for an undertaking that the Government would never designate the new adult training scheme as compulsory under clause 26. The Secretary of State would not give that undertaking. All he would say—he said it repeatedly—was, "I have no plans to designate the scheme." We pointed out to him that the fact that he has no plans at present to do so does not mean that he might not make some plans in a week's time, a month's time or at an even later stage. We asked the Secretary of State specifically and repeatedly for that undertaking.

The final request that we put to the Secretary of State was for an undertaking that the Government would not designate the scheme under clause 26 in the lifetime of this Parliament. For the sake of clarification, I ask the Secretary of State to give us the undertaking that neither he nor any other representative of the Government who may hold his office will designate this new scheme under clause 26 in the lifetime of this Parliament. We shall then be sure that the Government are not playing games with words in the undertaking that the Secretary of State has given the TUC. I hope that he will agree to do that. If he does not, I think that we will be entitled to draw the conclusion that he is playing games with everyone in giving undertakings that the scheme will be voluntary, but giving the undertakings in carefully framed words in order to keep open the possibility of making it compulsory in the future, should he wish to do so. The Secretary of State would then tell us that he did not earlier have plans, but he has made the plans more recently.

We welcome the minor concession that is contained in this Lords amendment. It shows that the Secretary of State, under pressure from us and from the other place, has taken the power to make special provision for women and girls. We believe that his refusal to include ethnic minorities is a straight representation of the Government's prejudice when it comes to equal rights for ethnic minorities. This is deeply regrettable and it should be agreed by both sides of the House that everyone in our society deserves the chance of equal access to employment and training. The failure of the Government to take powers to make special provision for ethnic minorities is deplorable and sad.

What we know of the Government's actions under their power to make special provision for the needs of women and girls in employment and training—I refer to the arrangements that they made for the new wretched adult training scheme which is supposed to take effect in September—do not give us any confidence of any genuine commitment to advance the ability of women and girls to have access to training and to the employment market.

Mr. McLeish: I welcome the limited concession of Lords amendment No. 32. However, it is a pity that when the wider amendment was moved in Committee the Government comprehensively rejected the inclusion of a reference to substantial minorities and special groups.

I should like to refer to the disability aspect of the amendment. As my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short) said, we deplore the exclusion of other special groups from the legislation, because it seems to us that much could be done to meet the employment and training needs of the community. Special efforts must be made for the disadvantaged and for groups which find it difficult to have equal access to the opportunities that most of the community both take for granted and have access to.

It is important to refer to clause 24 of the original Bill, which refers to encouraging the provision of increased employment and training opportunities for women, girls and disabled people. We would have been happier if it had referred not only to increases in opportunities but to improvements in those opportunities. If we have one clear worry about the Government's new training programme, the Bill and the amendment, it is about the lack of concern for equality. I am sure that when the Secretary of State replies he will deny that allegation.

I should like to relate the issue of equality to disabled people and to their lack of opportunities in the United Kingdom. A recent report by the National Audit Office was submitted to the Public Accounts Committee and then published. It was a fairly damning indictment of what the Manpower Services Commission is failing to do for the training and employment of disabled people. It highlighted the fact that the 3 per cent. quota scheme was being largely ignored by many employers and that the scheme could not be monitored effectively. The MSC and the Department of Employment conceded that it was a system which was in place and had remained there for a number of years, but which was largely ineffective in producing the right opportunities in the right place, at the right time, for many of the disabled in our community. The report also stated that in many respects there seemed to be a lack of commitment to and concern for such a vulnerable group. That was reinforced by the Cinderella approach taken to disabled people by the Department of Employment and the MSC.

The report also highlighted the fact that in 1988 we still have a system of sheltered workshops, some of which have not improved since the early war days. We are not, in any way, promoting the integration of disabled people on the scale that we should be. Through Remploy and sheltered workshops much fine work is being done, but it does not match the needs of the community or the needs of a dynamic and modern employment service in the latter part of the 20th century.

The National Audit Office report clearly confirmed that as a nation we are not doing enough for disabled people and that they are getting a raw deal, with little prospect of significant improvements at this stage. That reinforces the Lords judgment that they should include a special reference to disabled people in the amendment. While we criticise the Government for being grudging, our real desire is that they should take on board the Lords amendment—not only the wording of the legislation, but the spirit that is required to tackle what I believe to be urgent problems.

If we are looking for guidance, the same report highlighted the work of the sheltered placement scheme. This is a system by which the Government, local authorities and private sector sponsors provide employment opportunities for disabled people. The advantages of the programme are that it is well thought through, well funded and provides opportunities in industry and the public services that are far removed from the idea of shutting people away from the community by placing them in workshops where they cannot find the social harmonisation or integration that should underpin the system.

If the Government wish to take on board the spirit of the amendment and to develop it further, they should consider the sheltered placement scheme and combine two things in one programme. First, there should be proper employment opportunities—not make-believe or made-up jobs, but real jobs in the community. Secondly, they should provide training for disabled people and give them the security of a full-time post. The lives not only of able-bodied people but of people with disabilities would be much improved if they were in employment and had received training, rather than receiving training with little prospect of a proper job at the end of it, which is what many people on the community programme or the YTS suffer.

Disabled people are a special group and require special discrimination in their favour. They require many additional resources, which are not being made available at present. The figures for sheltered placements are encouraging and increasing, but they should be measured against the many registered disabled people at jobcentres and against the disabled people who are registered at jobcentres—that is a fine distinction. Many disabled people have little prospect of improving their position in society.

If the amendment is taken seriously, we can go forward. It would be a measure of the Government's commitment if, when replying to the debate, the Secretary of State gave some encouragement and assurances that that development will be tackled swiftly, building on the work of the report by the National Audit Office and on the work of the PAC.

It would be remiss of me not to mention another factor that affects disabled people. While the Government can say that unemployment is coming down—the facts speak for themselves and the numbers of people who are claimants are certainly being reduced, although we could have another debate about how that has been achieved—finding a job is especially difficult for disabled people at a time of mass unemployment. We should remember that 2·5 million people are still unemployed. It is difficult for disabled people to find work in a dynamic job market, but when 2·5 million people are unemployed, and when unemployment is reinforced geographically throughout the nation, their plight is worsened. I should like to think that the pressing problem of unemployment, which means that disabled people are crushed at the bottom of the pile, will be taken seriously and linked to positive aspects of Government policy on sheltered placements.

Disadvantage and disability are high on our political agenda. I should like to think that after a grudging acceptance in the Lords of the inclusion of disability we can at least say that that is included. As my hon. Friend the Member for Ladywood rightly said, other special groups have been excluded, so this is a step forward. However, it

[Mr. McLeish]

is a step forward only if the Secretary of State and his Department respond positively. I am not talking only in terms of resources, because a positive response requires a top to bottom shift in the attitude of the MSC and the Department of Employment. Disability is too serious to continue to be ignored in the way in which successive Governments have ignored it. I look to the Secretary of State to say "Yes, we accept the inclusion, but, more important, we want to go forward to provide a change of attitude and resources."

Mr. Leighton: I add my welcome to this limited concession, which, as I understand it, means that disabled people can receive training without having been in receipt of unemployment benefit for the previous six months. This is a first-class idea, but, as my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short) said, there is another group of people who are not physically disabled but have a disability in the labour market because they are single parents with young children. It is difficult for them to enter the labour market.

9 pm

In the new training scheme there is the interesting and welcome idea of a child care allowance. We must all consider more seriously the question of child care. My hon. Friend the Member for Ladywood said that there had been some movement on that issue, but, as I understand it, certainly in the pilot project areas, that allowance was available only to people who had been in receipt of unemployment benefit for the previous six months and, as a result of that, only about a dozen applications had been made in all the pilot project areas. The idea had, therefore, been a complete flop, as there had been no take-up. That was because people in those circumstances did not have an employment record, and had not been in receipt of unemployment benefit. They had not been able to qualify and were therefore in a Catch 22 situation. I should like to see that position altered, so that any single parent—they are primarily young women—would be in the same position as people with other disabilities and would qualify without having an employment record.

Ideally, we should work towards a consensus in the House on training. Every other country that I visit has a consensus. It is not seen as a matter of great controversy. It has been a matter of controversy in this country because the training and other special employment projects have been tailored to have a "register effect", to take people off the unemployment register and, effectively, to massage the unemployment figures. In other countries it is just as important to take people out of the welfare figures as it is to take them out of the unemployment figures, but in this country the unemployment figures are considered more politically sensitive. I hope, therefore, that we can make a change to the £50 allowance for single mothers, and I shall be pleased to hear the Secretary of State's comments on that.

I agreed with my hon. Friend the Member for Ladywood when she referred to the assurances that the scheme would be voluntary, as there are fears about that. I expect that the Secretary of State will say that the scheme is voluntary and that he does not intend to alter that. It must be voluntary at present, if only because there are insufficient places to offer everyone in the client group—as there is, for example, in YTS. People fear that the new programme will not be a raving success and that the target figure of 600,000 will not be hit, and that if the scheme flops, as JTS did, compulsion will be exerted to bring people into the scheme. I am certain that the Secretary of State will say that those are base fears that should not be entertained, so I do not understand why he cannot say, certainly for the lifetime of this Parliament, that the scheme will be voluntary and that there is no question of it being designated under clause 26.

One attraction of that to the Minister is that it would not cost him any money. Some of the other suggestions that I should like to make would cost him money, but this would not cost a penny and, in many ways, would help to clear the air. Another way of making the new training scheme slightly more attractive, which again would not cost him any money, would be, if he could so arrange it, as with YTS or the community programme, for the allowance to be topped up by local authorities or employers. Many employers are not anxious to have industrial conscripts drafted into their plants and are willing to give a top up. However, as I understand it, anything over £5 is at present clawed back by the Department of Health and Social Security. That must be perverse. I cannot understand the advantage to the Government of that arrangement.

If we are to move to a benefit-plus arrangement rather than have some sort of rate for the job, which in itself is controversial enough, we should look at the amount of the premium. At the moment it is £10. The first £5 would go for travel, and that leaves just £5. The cost of being at work is more than staying at home so there is not much plus at all above the benefit. The Government should double the amount of the plus above benefit. I understand that that would cost £180 million, but that is not a very large sum of money and I do not see why we should spoil the ship for a ha'porth of tar.

It might be some consolation to the Secretary of State to know that last year the class 5 vote was underspent by £178 million. That means that he already has the money for one year. In the following year it might be an extra charge to the Treasury. However, if it is difficult to fill the 600,000 places, there could be slightly fewer people on the scheme and the cost to the Treasury would be reduced and he could pay for the increase out of those savings. These helpful suggestions might make the programme slightly more attractive.

The country badly needs high quality training. There should be consensus in the House on that and it should not be seen just in terms of its effect on the register. We should see that it is well funded. The scheme is under-funded and to put into it an extra 200,000 people without at the same time putting in extra money causes problems for everybody. If the matters that I have mentioned were looked at and implemented, they might make the scheme more attractive. A firm statement that the scheme was voluntary would not cost the Secretary of State anything and would be very acceptable.

I should like the Secretary of State to respond to the question of the £50 allowance for the single parent. The allowance should not just be aimed at getting people off the unemployment register. It should be a good thing in itself, because it is a good idea to look at child care and to enable young women, as single parents mainly are, to cease being welfare recipients and to become taxpayers earning their own living in the labour market.

Mr. Fowler: The amendment is very narrow but it has led to a fairly wide debate. I shall try to respond to the points that hon. Members have made.

I entirely agree with the central point made by the hon. Member for Newham, North-East (Mr. Leighton) that we should seek to try to find as much agreement as we can between all the parties about training for the unemployed. That is entirely in line with everything that the Government have sought in employment training. Irrespective of that, it is a sensible aim for all parties in the House.

The proposals about employment training from the Manpower Services Commission were unanimous. The hon. Gentleman will know from his expertise in this area that the Manpower Services Commission is made up of nine commissioners. Three are from the Trades Union Congress, three from the Confederation of British Industry and three from education and local authorities. The commission submitted to me an entirely unanimous set of proposals covering about 50 pages and I accepted those proposals in full and did not try to double-guess them.

Ms. Short *rose*——

Mr. Fowler: Perhaps the hon. Lady would allow me to continue. I shall give way to her in a moment.

As I say, I accepted those proposals in full and for that reason it is fair to ask that other hon. Members should consider their position in this important debate on employment training. It is not a matter upon which we should have the kind of divisions that, regrettably, have appeared over the last few months. I hope that we can put that behind us.

The whole purpose of training is to help the long-term unemployed. Whatever may be said by the hon. Member for Fife, Central (Mr. McLeish), and whatever may be our differences in respect of unemployment figures, the number of long-term unemployed has fallen. I announced today a record fall in the past 12 months. Even more important is the fact that there are many more jobs available in the economy than there have been for many years, with more than 700,000 vacancies around the country.

Ms. Short *rose*——

Mr. Fowler: If I may continue, I shall give way to the hon. Lady later.

My ambition is to give the long-term unemployed training that will provide them with the skills necessary to fill the vacancies which are increasingly available. It is my purpose to reach as much agreement as possible, though I must say that I do not respect what has been done by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short) in respect of the training programme.

In my meetings with the TUC, the Scottish TUC, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, the Association of Metropolitan Authorities and local authorities, I have underlined my belief that we should take full advantage of the training opportunities which exist.

Ms. Short: I am sure that the Secretary of State for Employment would not wish to mislead the House, but he described the new scheme as reflecting the unanimous proposals of the Manpower Services Commission. Does he not concede that he told the commission how much money was available to it, that the scheme would have to be a benefit-plus system, and how many people were to be covered by the scheme? No one on the committee concerned would have come up with such a scheme had the Minister not imposed those constraints upon it.

The Minister claims that he seeks a consensus on training, but he recently threatened the TUC. He knows that many unions do not believe that the scheme is good for the long-term unemployed. There is some question whether the TUC's general council will support it. If it does not support the scheme, the Minister has warned that he will close down the Manpower Services Commission. Is that a search for a consensus on training? I think not. It is in no way accurate for the Minister to pretend that such is the position he occupies.

Mr. Fowler: The hon. Lady is attempting to draw the House into a much wider debate, but I shall try to respond to her comments. The situation is exactly as I stated. The Manpower Services Commission made a unanimous report to me. The tripartite organisation of the commission is all about hammering out proposals which can be put to the Government. I emphasise again that I accepted the commission's proposals in their entirety.

The hon. Lady has a very heavy burden of guilt to bear. She will have to shoulder the burden of guilt if the scheme does not work out, although I do not want to debate that point with her today.

I could not have done more to demonstrate my willingness to seek the consensus which has been urged upon me than by accepting all the proposals which were put to me. Beyond that, and as a result of the visits to me by the TUC and other authorities, further proposals have been made which I hope will also prove attractive to those organisations. They were set out in my letter to Mr. Norman Willis, general secretary of the TUC. I have made a copy of that letter available to the hon. Lady and one has also been placed in the Library.

9.15 pm

As I have said, the Government believe that explicit mention in the Bill of disabled people has some value and will continue to do so. Even more important—I entirely agree with what has been said by the hon. Member for Fife, Central (Mr. McLeish)—in a Bill, that is a declaratory statement of what we want to do. We want to develop training provision for disabled people to the maximum possible extent, and, given the time that I spent in the DHSS, I hope that no one needs to convince me of the needs that exist and the concern that we should feel.

The normal entry rules will be relaxed so that any disabled person will be able to benefit from employment training. There will be special financial assistance for training disabled people, just as there is in the YTS, which will help towards the costs of, for instance, adapting premises and special equipment. We are also allowing supplementary grants for sponsors, which will be available to cover the higher costs in general of training groups such as the disabled.

I guarantee the hon. Gentleman that we shall do everything in our power to help further. Any programme has to evolve, but I hope that we are showing our commitment to the future.

I am of course aware of the report by the Public Accounts Committee on employment assistance for disabled adults. We have put in hand a review within the

[Mr. Fowler]

Department of the policies and programmes that we support for disabled people in employment, which will take full account of the conclusions reached by the PAC and which will be completed as quickly as possible during the current year. I also note the welcome given in paragraph 35 of the report to the

"considerable measures that the Department of Employment and the MSC have already put in hand in the six months following the publication of the National Audit Office report."

We shall certainly try to take that as far as we can.

There is nothing between us on the subject of ethnic minorities. Although it is not included in the Bill as such, we want and expect the maximum provision for them. Section 37 of the Race Relations Act 1976, for instance, allows training providers to take positive action on behalf of ethnic-minority groups, and I hope that the references that we have made to that will be taken into account. We have already announced that we will seek to allow the Training Commission to make full use not only of section 37 but of any other means open to us.

One of the criteria for achieving approved training organisation status will be the active pursuit of equal opportunities. In seeking to reach the highest possible standard in training, we have now reached a point at which people must have approval. The programme for approved training organisation status, which, for example, the YTS has at present, will also apply to employment training. I repeat that one of the criteria for achieving such status will be the active pursuit of equal opportunities. Again, if there is anything further that the Government can do in that respect, I should be happy to consider it.

I underline that I have accepted the commission's view that the scheme should be voluntary. I do not intend to designate it as an approved training. My aim and intent is that trainees should be attracted to the programme by its quality and relevance. If people have doubts about that —although I cannot see why they should have such doubts —I hope that they will realise that if they are members of the Manpower Services Commission involved in employment training, they can ensure that the voluntary nature remains part of the programme, as I intend.

Ms. Short: The Minister knows that the voluntary nature of the scheme is very important. He has said that he has no plans and that it is not his intent. Will he say now that he will not designate the scheme under clause 26 in the lifetime of this Parliament? If he says it, we shall know that he means it.

Mr. Fowler: We have had this debate time and again. I do not think that it is sensible to set down artificial time limits, because that implies that after a certain time we shall be into the approved argument and the whole scheme will become compulsory. That is neither my intent nor is it my approach. The aim of the scheme is to attract people to it. It is a voluntary scheme. Members of the Manpower Services Commission have not just the right but the absolute power to check that that is the case.

Mr. Riddick: Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Fowler: No. I should like to get on.

Payment to trainees is an important point, and I hope that I can help the hon. Gentleman. Trainees will receive a training allowance. Obviously that training allowance will be adjusted to their circumstances through their entitlement to benefit. In other words, we are aiming to ensure a position in which no one is worse off when taking part in the training programme than they would be on benefit.

That is not so important for young people. It means that for the first time we can bring into the programme families with children who have greater entitlement. That is recognised by a whole range of organisations. The training allowance will provide a lead of £10 to £12 a week more than benefit entitlement. It will also provide travel expenses over £5 a week and lodging costs for training away from home. It will provide assistance to meet the cost of special clothing and tools and child-care costs of up to £50 a week per child for lone parents. I shall return to that as a separate issue. Trainees will not be liable to income tax or national insurance contributions and those on income support will be entitled to the passport benefits which go with social security. In any event, that is a substantial package which will ensure that everyone on the new programme will be better off than they would be if they were simply on benefit.

Additional payment can be made by training managers or employers without affecting the trainee's allowance. The hon. Member for Newham, North-East (Mr. Leighton) mentioned DHSS rules which allow voluntary payments of up to £5 a week. That certainly can be done.

In addition, items such as special clothing, travel costs and subsidised meals can be provided by training managers or employers if they so wish. The importance of that would be, for example, if a trainee manager or employer decided that the £5 of travel costs which are not covered needed to be covered, it would be entirely in their power to do that without it having any impact whatever on the trainee. Therefore, that can be covered, as can the cost of meals.

In addition, we shall provide a system of training bonuses which will be paid to trainees on the basis of their successful completion of the training programme and for obtaining vocational qualifications. The bonuses will range between £50 and £200. The MSC, with Government funds, will contribute on a pound for pound basis. We have come a long way to seek to satisfy some of the legitimate anxieties that people have about the programme. I hope that our movement will be recognised by those who make the decisions.

On the eligibility of special groups, the current level of provision will be maintained in the new programme—that is for disabled people, women returning to the labour force, people whose first language is not English and ex-offenders. Those groups will be able to enter the programme without meeting the normal eligibility requirements of six months' registered unemployment.

Single parents, like other people, will be eligible for the new programme if they have been registered as unemployed for at least six months, and the child care costs of all single parents on the new programme of up to £50 a week per child will be paid, again as recommended by the MSC. I have decided to go beyond the MSC proposals. There should also be additional arrangements whereby single parents, all of whose children are in full-time education and who have received income support on DHSS order books for at least six months, should also be eligible for the programme. All such single parents entering the programme will qualify for child-care allowances.

It is perfectly fair for the hon. Lady to say that that only goes part of the way. But we have now not only accepted the MSC proposals, but gone beyond them with our proposals on finance. On all these schemes and programmes, the start is not necessarily how they will end up for all time. However, the start that we have made on child-care allowances is innovative and, even given reservations, I hope that it will be welcomed as a substantial step towards what many people on both sides require.

I have strayed rather wide of the amendment, but these are important issues which I wanted to put before the House before important decisions are taken.

Question put and agreed to. [Special Entry.]

Lords amendment No. 33 agreed to.

Clause 33

SHORT TITLE, COMMENCEMENT AND EXTENT

Lords amendment: No. 34, in page 31, line 23, leave out "Part I of this Act" and insert

"Sections 1 to 16 and 18 to 22 above"

Mr. Nicholls: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

This amendment modifies the provisions for commencement set out in clause 33. It means that clause 17 will come into effect on Royal Assent rather than, as was originally provided, on a day appointed by the Secretary of State. Clause 17 has no substantive effect in itself. It enables the Secretary of State to issue and bring into force codes of practice for certain purposes after following the statutory requirements on consultation and parliamentary approval contained in section 3 of the Employment Act 1980. As with the provisions of part II of the Bill, which are also to be brought into effect on Royal Assent, it is an enabling provision. The amendment does not modify the need for the Secretary of State to satisfy the requirements of section 3 of the Employment Act 1980 in respect of consultation or parliamentary approval before the issue of any code under the clause. The amendment therefore avoids any necessity for delay in undertaking the required process of consultation with ACAS and the publication of a draft code, so that representations can be made. I therefore commend it to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 35 to 38 agreed to.

Schedule 3

MINOR AND CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS

Lords amendment: No. 39, in page 38, line 38, leave out

"In subsection (8) of section 5 of the Employment Act 1980"

and insert

"In section 2 of the Employment Act 1980 (secret ballots on employers' premises)—

(a) in subsection (1), at the end there shall be inserted the words 'unless the ballot is one in which every person who is entitled to vote must be given a convenient opportunity to vote by post.'; and

(b) in subsection (9), at the end there shall be inserted the words '; and in this section "post" has the same meaning as in Part I of the Trade Union Act 1984.'

(2) In section 5 of that Act—

(a) in subsection (8)".

9.30 pm

Mr. Nicholls: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this we shall take Lords amendment No. 40.

Mr. Nicholls: The first amendment is a substantive one. It simply ensures that statutes are not inconsistent. Section 2 of the 1980 Act provides that where an independent trades union proposes to hold a relevant ballot and requests an employer to permit his premises to be used for the purposes of giving his workers who are members of the union a convenient opportunity to vote in the ballot, the employer shall, subject to certain conditions, comply with that request so far as is reasonably practicable.

Both union executive election ballots and political fund review ballots qualify as relevant. Employers can therefore be required to make their premises available for voting in such ballots. Clause 13 requires executive election and political fund ballots to be held only by the fully postal method. The substantive amendment accordingly removes a source of potential conflict between the 1980 Act and the Bill by removing any entitlement to use an employer's premises where ballots have to be held by the fully postal method.

The other amendment is entirely consequential and reorders paragraph 3 of schedule 3 so as to make room for the amendment. I commend it to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 40 and 41 agreed to.

Lords amendment: No. 42, in page 39, line 25, leave out "section 2(5) of that Act"

and insert

"section 2 of that Act—

(a) in subsection (5)".

Mr. Cope: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this we shall take Lords amendment No. 43.

Mr. Cope: These amendments are about balloting for union officers and other similar matters when some of the union members are overseas. The unions will be free to choose whether to ballot overseas members, as they do at present. The trade union Act 1944 and the Bill do not provide, however, for safeguards in voting to apply to overseas votes.

When we were dealing with workplace ballots, that was all very well. Now we need to provide for postal ballots. The amendments ensure that where a union enfranchises its overseas members they must use a voting paper and vote by post, and be able to do so without interference and without cost where that is practicable. Of course, they must be able to have their votes counted fairly and accurately.

The clauses concerning independent scrutiny and election addresses which we discussed earlier will apply automatically where overseas members are enfranchised. The amendments do not detract from the union's freedom of choice but simply ensure that, where overseas members can vote, they are treated in the same way as their counterparts in Great Britain. I commend the amendments to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 43 to 48 agreed to.

[Mr. Cope]

Lords amendment: No. 49, in page 40, line 11, leave out "and".

Mr. Cope: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider Lords amendment No. 52.

Mr. Cope: For reasons at which I can only guess, these amendments were thought by some Opposition Members in the other place to be sinister. In fact, they are boringly technical and simply clarify the original intention of the Government.

The amendments concern the effect of the provisions about national union elections on those who are shortly to retire. The basic principle is that those who hold office as a result of a postal ballot or of a statutory election under the Trade Union Act 1984 can do so without a new election if they are due to retire within five years. Another part of the Bill provides that those who hold office at the time of the commencement of the provisions can continue without a new ballot for two years.

Obviously the decisions about the length and application of the time limits are a matter of judgment, but I do not think that they are unreasonable. However, they were, and to some degree still are, expressed in the Bill by means of amendments to schedule 8 to the 1984 Act. The question hinges on when sections 2 and 3 of that Act apply. The Bill, as it was originally drafted, was undoubtedly difficult to follow and the amendments help to clarify the position. I commend them to the House.

Mr. Strang: I cannot accept the casual explanation that the Minister has given for the Lords amendments, particularly Lords amendment No. 52. It makes an important change to the provisions requiring certain trade union officials to stand for election and it is our submission that the amendment has been tabled to require particular trade union leaders to stand for election. I shall seek to expand on that. However, in the 17 years or so during which I have had the privilege to be a Member of the House I have never come across a more petty and vindictive approach to such matters.

Let us go back to the beginning. Our view—we have made it clear consistently throughout the deliberations on the Bill, starting from Second Reading—is that the question of which officers of a trade union, whether the principal executive committee—which is usually elected anyway—the general secretary, the president or whoever, should be elected by a ballot of all members is one that should be for the union members to decide.

The rules of our unions have evolved over many years and they are based on what the members of the various unions believe is the best approach for their circumstances. I defend again the right of any union to appoint a general secretary, to regard a general secretary as primarily a senior administrator and to want a relationship with a general secretary that makes it clear that the authority on the executive lies with the elected lay members of the executive and that the general secretary is there to carry out its decisions. Many unions take the view—I am not saying that one approach is better than another—that that clarity of decision-making and that clarity in the relationship between the senior official and the union is best served by having an appointed general secretary who is answerable to the elected lay members of the executive.

To a certain extent, that was done away with by the 1984 Act when the Government required that all voting members of executives should be directly elected. If the Government were determined to intervene—wholly unreasonably—in these matters and were determined to draw a distinction, that would be the best distinction to make. It is obvious to all trade unions that if members are to have a vote on the executive under the 1984 Act, they have to be elected, and if they do not have a vote they do not have to be elected.

We have only to read the Green Paper, which was the precursor to this Bill, to know that in the Government's view the decision of one trade union, the National Union of Mineworkers, to alter its rules to enable the president to give up his vote on the executive and thus avoid election meant that there was some loophole in the provisions. We do not accept that. The NUM was simply coming into line with the laws that the Government had introduced and in no way should that have been seen as the union somehow cocking a snook at the Government.

In response to that, quite unreasonably, the Government brought forward the provisions in this Bill that would require that the president of the NUM and many other unions, and the general secretaries, would have to be elected, regardless of whether they had a vote on the executive. That was a quite monstrous intrusion, we believe, in the affairs of the union, and was wholly unjustified. However, the Government having virtually admitted that this provision had been brought forward as a consequence of the decision of the NUM to create a situation in which the general secretary and the president did not have votes on the executive, we duly deliberated on these matters in Committee and on Report.

The president of the National Union of Mineworkers stood for election during that period. I would say in passing that this was in difficult circumstances, in the aftermath of a very damaging strike for the union. Certainly as portrayed by the mass media in this country, he was seen as something of a villain and, in the course of that campaign, was expected to be the repository of all the blame for what went wrong during the strike. Nevertheless, he won that election decisively.

It seems quite obvious now that the Government saw that the president of the NUM, having been elected in that way under the legislation as it was then drafted, might not be required to stand for election again. I should be grateful if the hon. Gentleman would clarify this because many people have suggested that part of the motivation for the Lords amendment was to ensure that the president of the NUM was required to stand again. The hon. Gentleman shakes his head, and I acknowledge that I do not think that that was the sole purpose of the Lords amendment. What makes it so distasteful, in our view, is that it seems as though the Government looked at the ages of certain general secretaries in the trade union movement and, on the basis of what they saw, decided to amend the retirement provisions. The evidence for that comes from the House of Lords proceedings. I make no apology for referring to this because it is this that leads us to argue that in some sense the Bill is hybrid.

When Lord Wedderburn asked the Minister, Lord Trefgarne:

"We may assume that this class"—

that is, of trade union leaders—

"has been ascertained by reference to the ages of particular people"—

a perfectly straightforward question as to whether they had looked at the ages of these general secretaries and decided that they would enact a particular amendment to ensure that they had to be re-elected before their retirement—Lord Trefgarne said:

"As I understand it, yes."

Lord Murray, the former general secretary of the TUC, then asked the Minister if he would be so good as to publish the list of the people considered and their ages and say how he had taken the decision whether he wanted some to be elected and not necessarily others. And the Minister said:

"Perhaps I can reflect upon that request. Off the cuff, I cannot think of any reason why we should not."—[*Official Report*, House of Lords, 8 March 1988; Vol. 494, c. 613.]

Subsequently, the Minister, I presume after having been advised by his civil servants that that was not a point that one should make public in the House of Lords, sought to retract it.

The Minister will be aware that there are different categories of trade union leaders. Some are elected by postal or workplace ballots. Much depends on whether one is a voting or non-voting member of the executive, on one's age, when one is due to retire and when the provisions are to come into force. It is perfectly clear that instead of trying to be consistent and requiring a group of people to be accountable to their membership, the Government approached the matter in a selective way. As I said earlier, that demeans the parliamentary process.

If a Labour Government introduced legislation affecting the heads of major companies, I could imagine the furore that there would be if the legislation required certain heads of companies, whose views we did not like, to be subject to certain requirements but not others. I hope that no Government would do that because we should not go down that road, but it shows the sort of comparable action that a Labour Government could take.

This is an outrageous intrusion into the affairs of trade unions. We want trade unionists to respect their rule books, which have been evolved by generations of trade unionists. Passing these laws will devalue those rules, and that is something of which the Government should be ashamed.

9.45 pm

Mr. Winnick: I said earlier that some unions—mainly white-collar unions such as mine—have always appointed their general secretary. The lay executive is the governing body in the absence of annual conference. Every four or five years, my union had a rules revision conference so that any branch could put forward suggestions about changes. It was ironic that on any number of occasions it was, for want of a better phrase, the revolutionary Left that went to the rostrum and said that the general secretary should be elected and not appointed. It was left to me, a humble, modest Left-winger in the mainstream of the trade union movement, to argue that to elect a general secretary would give that person far greater authority than otherwise, and that it would be at the expense of the lay executive. I am glad to say that, without too many difficulties, I was able to persuade conference that the office of general secretary should remain an appointed position.

The Right-wing Tory Government, with typical impertinence, are telling the trade union movement how to go about its business. The election of a general secretary has always been part of some unions' rules. White-collar unions such as mine and the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs, as it was formerly, have taken a different course. Surely it should be left to trade unionists and the rules revision body to decide whether they want to elect the general secretary or whether he should be appointed.

It is not only the general secretary but any official of a union who regularly attends meetings of the executive council who will be subject to election. There will be much legal ambiguity, to say the least, about who comes within the Act. There will be a few court test cases to decide whether an official should be elected, according to the provisions of the Act, because he may attend the executive council at regular intervals. What a stupid road the Tory Government have gone down.

Now, as my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang) has pointed out, this latest amendment seeks to ensure that one or two people whom the Government clearly do not like, such as the president of the NUM, will no longer be exempted for reasons of age, and so on—not that he is frightened of elections because, as my hon. Friend has pointed out, he stood again recently and was elected.

If we had a Government who believed in their own internal democracy, we could at least say that they practised what they preached, however much we were against what they were doing. But here is a political party that, until 23 years ago, could not even elect its own leader. It was subject to the magic circle. The late Iain Macleod wrote an informative and lengthy article on how the then Mr. Alec Douglas-Home became the Prime Minister. He was not the subject of any election. Even now, the chairman of the Conservative party is not subject to election.

The Tory party conference is more or less run on the same pattern as party congresses in eastern Europe. Here is a political party that does not practise democracy in its own ranks, that has no concern about democracy in the City or in big business—no legislation has come before us to bring any form of elementary democracy into big business or the City—but that has the impertinence to use its majority in the House to pass legislation such as this. This is a vendetta—there is no other description for it—against the trade union movement.

My hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, East pointed out how a Labour Government could reply in kind. I only wish that when the time comes they do so.

Mr. Skinner: I have said before in recent weeks that the Government are becoming arrogant and contemptuous of almost everybody in the land. Despite all the sermons that the Prime Minister preaches, we are now seeing that they are prepared to bend the rules and shift the goalposts. They are prepared to do any mortal thing to attack working class people and their representatives or anybody who stands in their way. I can just imagine someone in the Tory party asking, "What is McCluskie's age? Next time we introduce a Bill we shall have to tackle him."

It crosses my mind, Mr. Speaker, that it is just conceivable—I choose my words carefully—that there might be some mole burrowing away saying, "This Speaker has not been exactly kind to us. I wonder whether we can devise a new rule. I wonder whether we can sort him out." Such is the nature of the Tory Government that

[Mr. Skinner]

they will go to any lengths to carry out what my hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) described as nothing short of a vendetta.

Mr. Martin M. Brandon-Bravo (Nottingham, South): Disgraceful.

Mr. Speaker: Order. This has nothing to do with the Bill.

Mr. Skinner: I am not one to defend anybody in the Establishment, but when I smell a rat over matters such as this it is worth exposing. I am pleased, Mr. Speaker, that you were able to refer in your programme to the cavalry——

Mr. Speaker: Order. We are debating the Employment Bill and I am not subject to that.

Mr. Skinner: I finish on that point, Mr. Speaker. I was trying to draw an analogy between the way in which the Government's collective mind works and anybody who might appear to stand in their way. The Government devise rules to shift them, with the exception of their own people, of course.

In a few days' time, the Government will not deal out the same treatment to the ex-leader of the Social and Democratic party—the leader of the provos. He will not have rules that will allow him to be chained to the fence. They are bringing in some new rules for him—new rules that will be favourable. There are only three Members of Parliament now, but he will finish up with £53,000-worth of Short money. They are not unhappy about that. Neither are the Social and Liberal Democrats, who never stood in the election and yet will get £180,000.

Mr. Speaker: Order. We are debating the Lords amendment. That matter has nothing to do with it.

Mr. Skinner: People outside want to know how the Government are operating and just how far they will go to try to undermine the collective weight of the Labour party by feeding large sums of money to the rag, tag and bobtails who sometimes sit on the Conservative Benches below the Gangway. I shall be referring to that at greater length on another occasion when I oppose the handing out of the money.

We are witnessing the same vindictiveness as the Government showed when they decided to get rid of the GLC. They said, "What's happening over there across the river? They are causing us some trouble. They want to bring down fares for Londoners. We shall put a stop to that by abolishing the council." They have introduced the same sort of proposals—[HON. MEMBERS: "ILEA."] Yes, the same was true of ILEA. [HON. MEMBERS: "The BBC."] In their dealings with the BBC and all the rest of it the Government have shown arrogance and contempt. There is no end to what they will do to try to stop people—even democratically elected trade union leaders—standing up to them.

Conservative Members stand need talking about elections and democracy—*[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. Dickens) who has just spoken from outside the Chamber —the putative Prime Minister—stands need talking about democracy. My hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, North talked about the chairman of the Tory party being appointed by the Prime Minister of the day. The chairman of the Bank of England gets the job because he happens to be "one of us". Every quango chief, including William Rees-Mogg, gets the job because he passes the test. In between writing and preaching sermons, the Prime Minister asks the question, "Is he or she one of us?"—and it is usually a he. If the answer is yes, she says, "He's all right then. Give him the job." But when a trade union leader stands for election, the Government say, "How can we stop him holding that position?" It really stinks in the nostrils that the Tory Government can sink so low and be so contemptible as to twist the rules and shift the goalposts to try to hamper working class people and their representatives.

I am pleased that Opposition Members are going to march through the Lobbies tonight to vote against this obnoxious measure which started in another place. What a joke that it should have come from the place where 1,100 people can turn up for work on £100 a day tax free while not one of them has stood for election to get into the building. Now they are bending the rules to try to stop people being properly elected. My hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang) is absolutely right. He hit the nail on the head. They burned all that midnight oil looking for ways and means to let us down. We must make sure that when we get back to power we undo all this nonsense.

Mr. Nicholls: Perhaps I may start by returning to Lords amendments Nos. 49 and 52.

I may be able to set the mind of the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang) at rest to some extent. It would be nice if I could do that, bearing in mind the fact that this will probably be our last substantive debate on the Bill. It helps to approach the matter on the basis of those who are presently in scope for the retirement exemptions and those who we want to bring into scope. At the moment voting members of PECs are in scope. If they are there by virtue of a workplace ballot properly conducted under the 1984 Act, they could benefit by the retirement exemption if the provision comes into force within five years of their retiring. That is one category of people, and nothing in the Bill changes that.

The second category contains those who we would bring into scope. I accept that the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East profoundly disagrees with my reasons for bringing them in. However, the people who we wish to bring into scope are non-voting members of the PEC. If they are to benefit by the retirement exemption, their previous election must have been conducted by postal ballot. Ultimately it is inconsistent to say, "They should be entitled to benefit by a workplace ballot, just as voting members did."

The distinction—it is an absolutely vital distinction—is that those voting members who were returned under a workplace ballot did so in accordance with the Act. Even that workplace ballot had to be properly conducted. In other words, they conducted themselves in accordance with the legislation. Those people who may have decided, even though the Act did not apply to them, that they would nevertheless hold a workplace ballot are literally outside the law. They are not, as it were, complying with the law, because the law does not apply to them in their situation. It would mean, for instance, that in an election which was conducted in that way—not satisfying a requirement of the Act because they were literally outside

it—no member would have a right of complaint to the certification officer if he considered that ballot defective. What it comes to is that, under the 1984 Act, where workplace ballots took place because they were required to take place——

It being Ten o'clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Ordered,

That, at this day's sitting, the Lords amendments to the Employment Bill may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hour.—*[Mr. Maclean.]*

Lords amendments again considered.

Question again proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Nicholls: It was not just any old workplace ballot that had to be conducted; it had to be conducted in accordance with the Act.

The hon. Member for Edinburgh, East said in effect that there is perhaps an element of retrospection here; here is a provision which is aimed directly at Arthur Scargill, the president of the National Union of Mineworkers. It is not, because at the moment in no way could Mr. Scargill qualify for the retirement exemption, either as a voting member or, for that matter, a non-voting member, unless he reduces his retirement age. As I understand it, when his present term of office expires, he will still be only 55 years of age. Therefore, the only way that Mr. Scargill could bring himself remotely near this provision is if he decided to reduce his retirement age to bring himself within it. I do not claim to have any understanding of Mr. Scargill's inner mind, but if the hon. Gentleman knows that it was Mr. Scargill's intention throughout to bring himself within the scope of this scheme, I take the hon. Gentleman's point. That would be an entirely different matter. However, as we stand here today, Mr. Scargill does not qualify for the retirement exemption.

It is remarkable that the hon. Gentleman should feel that we conceived this particular provision to get rid of Mr. Arthur Scargill. If I could pander to the hon. Gentleman's worst suspicions for a moment, why on earth would a Conservative Government want to get rid of Mr. Arthur Scargill? The idea is ludicrous. I dare say that some of my more flippant colleagues would think that it would make far more sense to have an Arthur Scargill preservation society. The idea that Conservative Members have some vested interest in removing Mr. Arthur Scargill from the political scene is a dubious one. It is sad—I say that with all the insincerity that I can muster—that tonight we see a once great political party going into a vote in favour of Mr. Arthur Scargill on a false premise. It will carry as much conviction as a load of turkeys voting for Christmas.

The opposition to these amendments is completely ill founded. Mr. Scargill does not come within them, unless he wants to bring himself within them by particularly devious means. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will at least acquit us in this matter. The idea that Conservative Members have some interest in removing Mr. Scargill from the scene is bizarre in the extreme.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendments No. 50 and 51 agreed to.

Lords amendment No. 52, in page 40, line 16, at end insert

"; and

(d) after the said subsection (4) there shall be inserted the following subsection—

'(5) Where any person holds any such position as is mentioned in paragraph (a) of subsection (2) above by virtue of an election held at any time before the coming into force of section 13(2) of the Employment Act 1988 (requirement of postal ballot), section 3 of this Act (non-postal ballots) shall be disregarded in determining for the purposes of that paragraph whether any election is an election in relation to which section 2 of this Act has been satisfied, unless the position to which that person was elected in that election was, at the time of the election, either—

(a) a position as a voting member of the principal executive committee of a trade union; or

(b) a position by virtue of election to which the person elected would become such a voting member.'"

Question put, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment:—

The House divided: Ayes 246, Noes 185.

Division No. 326] **[10.3 pm**

AYES

Aitken, Jonathan	Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Alexander, Richard	Cope, John
Allason, Rupert	Couchman, James
Amess, David	Cran, James
Amos, Alan	Currie, Mrs Edwina
Arbuthnot, James	Curry, David
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*	Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Ashby, David	Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Atkins, Robert	Day, Stephen
Atkinson, David	Dickens, Geoffrey
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*	Dicks, Terry
Baldry, Tony	Dorrell, Stephen
Batiste, Spencer	Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony	Dover, Den
Bellingham, Henry	Dykes, Hugh
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*	Emery, Sir Peter
Bevan, David Gilroy	Evennett, David
Biffen, Rt Hon John	Fallon, Michael
Biggs-Davison, Sir John	Farr, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.	Favell, Tony
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter	Fenner, Dame Peggy
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas	Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Boscawen, Hon Robert	Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Boswell, Tim	Fookes, Miss Janet
Bottomley, Peter	Forman, Nigel
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia	Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*	Forth, Eric
Bowis, John	Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard	Fox, Sir Marcus
Brandon-Bravo, Martin	Franks, Cecil
Brazier, Julian	Freeman, Roger
Bright, Graham	French, Douglas
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*	Fry, Peter
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*	Gale, Roger
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*	Gardiner, George
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick	Garel-Jones, Tristan
Buck, Sir Antony	Goodhart, Sir Philip
Budgen, Nicholas	Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Burns, Simon	Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Butcher, John	Gow, Ian
Butler, Chris	Gower, Sir Raymond
Butterfill, John	Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*	Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*	Gregory, Conal
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*	Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Carrington, Matthew	Grist, Ian
Carttiss, Michael	Ground, Patrick
Cash, William	Grylls, Michael
Chapman, Sydney	Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Chope, Christopher	Hanley, Jeremy
Churchill, Mr	Hannam, John
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*	Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*	Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*	Harris, David
Colvin, Michael	Hawkins, Christopher
Conway, Derek	Hayes, Jerry
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*	Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney

Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
Kirkwood, Archy
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Latham, Michael
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Major, Rt Hon John
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moss, Malcolm
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rost, Peter
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wallace, James
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Tony Durant and
Mr. David Lightbown.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Henderson, Doug
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Prescott, John
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Redmond, Martin
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Wall, Pat
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan

Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Cook and
Mr. Ray Powell.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 53 to 60 agreed to.

Lords admentment: No. 61, in page 42, line 27, at end insert—

'The Agricultural Training Board Act 1982 (c. 9)

12A. In section 4(1) of the Agricultural Training Board Act 1982 (power of Board to take part in arrangements in pursuance of the 1973 Act), for the words "section 2(1) or (2), 3(4)" there shall be substituted the words "section 2, 3".

The Industrial Training Act 1982 (c. 10)

12B.—(1) In section 5(3)(e) of the Industrial Training Act 1982 (power of industrial training board to take part in arrangements in pursuance of the 1973 Act), for the words "22-23section 2(1) or (2), 3(4)" there shall be substituted the words "section 2, 3".

(2) In section 15(3) of that Act (directions in pursuance of directions under section 3(1)(b) of the 1973 Act), for the words "section 3(1)(b)" there shall be substituted the words "section 2 or 3".'

10.15 pm

Mr. Nicholls: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

The amendment is wholly technical. It alters references to the Employment and Training Act 1973, the Agricultural Training Board Act 1982 and the Industrial Training Act 1982 which would otherwise become inactive with the passage of clause 25 of the Bill. I commend it to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Elderly People (Social Security System)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Kenneth Carlisle.]*

10.16 pm

Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody (Crewe and Nantwich): It is not pleasant to be frightened and alone. It is even less pleasant when one is old, frightened and alone. In my constituency many people are unfortunately in that situation. The last census informed us that my population was becoming elderly, that young people were being forced to go elsewhere to find jobs, and that some of the difficulties they would face would be associated with long life and failing health.

It is frightening to approach the situation that we are rapidly approaching in my constituency, with many elderly people being admitted to hospital and being told, "You now have a choice. You need fairly long-term care but it is clear that we cannot provide that within the hospital service." The old people are told, "We suggest that you go into the private sector and seek to find some way of supporting yourself in one of the very pleasant private nursing homes that have grown up since the Government gave very positive encouragement to many people to look on geriatric care as a suitable field for private expansion."

As a result of the pressure on the Health Service from an elderly and growing population requiring help, the NHS has almost become a system that decants units into suitable storage depots. That is not a suitable or acceptable way of looking at the provision of health care. I get letters almost every day from people who say:

"It seems there is an almost impossible task facing me. Due to the health cuts I have to take a decision on which I have no option. [1. To nurse my very sick husband at home. He is paralysed in both legs and cannot talk or even do anything for himself, after a brain operation. He is doubly incontinent and needs turning 4 times each night. I am told I have the other choice of private care which is going to cost at least £185 per week and, possibly more, as time goes on leaving me with about £20 to live on after I have bought clothes, etc, for my husband—as the funding for this is to be made from his pension, DHSS and private pension."

That unfortunate woman is herself not very well. Her letter goes on to describe how both she and her husband served in the forces during the war and how they find it unacceptable that, at this point in their lives, this is the solution that they are asked to accept.

Another of my constituents is in her seventies and has a 38-year-old, severely mentally handicapped daughter whom she has to dress and care for. She has now been told that she must take her mother home to live with her, or alternatively place her in private care. Her mother, who is normally very spry, is blind in one eye and nearly blind in the other. She has a fractured hip but she was kept in hospital for only two days. She subsequently had to be re-admitted and was then sent to another hospital, where she was told that she must move to a private unit.

Is all that so cruel? The Department of Health and Social Security will say that it assesses every situation and does everything that it can to make the individual comfortable. However, the other side of the equation has been put to me by increasing numbers of those who, taken by the Government's attitude towards the expansion of geriatric care, have themselves set up homes for geriatrics.

They inform me that the DHSS has now fixed a cut-off point beyond which it will not pay for those in geriatric

[Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody]

care. One SRN told me of a man suffering from multiple sclerosis who had been in her care for four years. The fees she charged had now reached the level where neither he nor his family could find a way of meeting them, and the DHSS was not prepared to meet them either. The SRN running that home asked me, "What am I expected to do?" She was told that what was important was that she should decide for herself. When she asked if the suggestion was that she should put a man suffering from multiple sclerosis out on to the street, she was told, "If that is the only alternative, that is what you must do."

In another case, a general practitioner was so deeply incensed that he wrote to me after one of his patients died. He said:

"Whilst he was in hospital in a 'holiday relief' bed, [his] condition deteriorated, and at the end of the fortnight he was therefore unfit to be discharged. [His wife] is herself ill and in any case would not have been able to take him home to look after him. I think the family are relieved, in view of [his] mental state, at what has happened, and I would like to thank you for your efforts on his behalf."

But the chairman of the health authority had sent a letter saying:

"I can only presume that [the doctor] has confirmed this is not a case where the patient, for acute reasons, should stay in hospital, but could be looked after at home."

In his letter, that general practitioner went on to explain in psychiatric terms why he did not share that view, and why he had made clear from the beginning of that patient's treatment the fact that he required constant hospital care, which he could not receive in a private home.

The reality of geriatric care in my constituency is straightforward. Over the past two years, 36 geriatric beds have been closed—18 in October 1986 and 18 in March 1988. There were 3,139 geriatric admissions in 1986-87 and 3,104 in 1987-88. The continuing pattern of care shows that over the past two years the average length of stay was 23·3 days in 1986-87 and 30·6 days in 1987-88.

There is now a demand that the local geriatricians and psychogeriatricians should themselves find a way of dealing with the question of organising geriatric care in my constituency. They are told that the easiest way of doing that is to create a trust. When they produced a plan that gave them at least some control over the standards of care in private homes, they were told by the chairman of the regional health authority, Sir Donald Wilson, "That is unfortunate—take it back. It does not rely sufficiently on the private sector."

Let me say one thing very simply to the Minister. If the Government persist in a policy that deliberately cuts down the numbers of geriatric and psychogeriatric beds in the National Health Service—if they deliberately seek to expand care in the private sector—they must face up to their responsibility in some other way. First, the Department can no longer say to people, "You must be cared for in private homes, but we shall limit the amount that we pay for your stay." They must know that that places on working-class and even middle-class families a burden that many find unacceptable, and with which many are unable to deal. There is no point in saying to someone who may himself be unemployed or low paid and in need of a sufficient boost in his income to achieve a decent standard of living that he must support his aged parent —or, in some cases, both aged parents—in private homes, at a cost that they know that he cannot meet.

Few people in my constituency can meet a cost of £200 a week if they are to undertake their proper responsibilities. Yet the Department is deliberately not accepting changed plans for geriatric care that would enable such people to be dealt with in the NHS, and at the same time is throwing out any attempt by the geriatricians to ensure that private homes attain a proper standard of care.

That is a plain, simple and entirely unacceptable policy. In effect, it says to many old people, not only in my constituency—unfortunately this is happening throughout the length and breadth of the United Kingdom—"We are sorry, but you have lived too long. Our form of Christianity says that if you can obtain charity, well done, but if you cannot the state will neither provide you with proper care in the NHS nor support you within the private system over a certain point." That is now happening every day.

If the Minister has come here tonight with a plain statement that my constituency is to have increased geriatric care, I can only welcome that statement with open arms. But if he has come to reel off a lot of statistics without pointing out that the day-to-day reality for my constituents is an entirely unacceptable decision with which they are unable to deal, I must tell him that, along with his colleagues in the Conservative party, he bears a heavy burden. They are effectively saying that a nation that can afford with no difficulty to hand back considerable sums to those who already have means intends to treat its old—particularly its sick old—in a way close to barbarism.

I find that a sad commentary on a democratic country. I find, above all, that my constituents now see the stark reality of Conservative health policy, which is: "To them that have shall be given; to them that have not, there will be no health care in any form."

10.28 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mr. Michael Portillo): I congratulate the hon. Member for Crewe and Nantwich (Mrs. Dunwoody) on obtaining this Adjournment debate, and on speaking at a fairly reasonable hour. I join her in saying that this subject is important. She has broadened her remarks to cover the welfare of the elderly, not merely the issues immediately brought to mind by the title of the debate.

However, there is a certain inconsistency in some of what she has said. She seemed to attack the encouragement that she said that the Government had given to the expansion of the private sector. At the same time she was attacking the limits paid under income support as being too low.

Since 1980, first through supplementary benefit and now through income support, it has been very much easier for fees for nursing homes and residential care homes to be met. Of course that has brought about an increase in the number of people in residential care homes or nursing homes who are claiming income support to cover their fees. There has been an enormous increase in the number of claimants who are not well-off, as the hon. Lady seemed to imply. By definition, they are poorly off. For those people a need that could not be met before has been met through supplementary benefit and income support. It has

given those people choice. They can choose the place where they go to live with the taxpayer picking up the burden. Perhaps the hon. Lady should bear that in mind.

First, I shall deal with some of the issues that are particular to the hon. Lady's constituency and to her health authority. I understand that the Crewe district authority has been considering discharging elderly patients from hospital into the community when they no longer require the level of medical and nursing care normally provided in hospitals. These proposals are still at an early stage. Crewe DHA has been examining a number of options, some of which would involve the NHS building nursing home facilities on NHS land. Thereafter the property would be leased to a private operator. Also under consideration are a number of other options involving use of private or company trusts or use of the voluntary sector. Those options are being examined within the context of national policy, and no decisions have been taken. Crewe DHA is due to meet next on 17 June when this matter will be given further consideration.

Mrs. Dunwoody: I should not like to accuse the Minister's Department of misleading him, because I am sure that that is what it has been told. The reality is that it was suggested that a private home should be built on an NHS site. That plan was set up in such a way that geriatricians would be able to control the level of care. That plan has been turned down by the regional health authority which said that there is not sufficient private involvement. If it meant by that that the geriatricians should have no say in the standards of care, it is better that the Minister understands that and makes it public.

Mr. Portillo: I heard the hon. Lady say that during her speech and I raised an eyebrow at the time. I shall tell her what I understand the situation to be.

The proposals made by the DHA are very complex and need to be considered with care. The recent Public Accounts Committee report on community care readily acknowledged that patients should not be tranferred into the community until appropriate services are in place. There are legal problems where health authorities have set up trusts or joint arrangements with voluntary bodies or housing associations to house patients discharged from long-stay hospitals. These problems arise from the fact that health authorities are not allowed to charge, and must provide the care free. Legal problems arise where there are intimate connections between health authorities and privately provided care and living facilities.

Last autumn we asked health authorities to hold back on proposals for any new schemes on those lines where they were at the planning stage while we gathered information on the extent of such schemes, clarified the legal position and considered the long-term expenditure implications of any switch in services from a cash-limited Health Service budget to a demand-led social security budget. We are now giving urgent consideration to the way forward. Obviously Sir Roy Griffiths' report will be an important consideration.

In my opening remarks I referred to the extent to which the provision of support has risen, first through supplementary benefit and now through income support. When people cannot afford fees in private or voluntary homes they can get help from income support, and the spending on that has increased considerably from £10 million in 1979 to well over £500 million today.

The hon. Lady is looking impatient because she said that she did not want to hear any statistics, but the statistics are about a very large number of people with almost no resources of their own who are now being helped by the taxpayer to live and to be cared for in residential care and nursing homes, and that is a very important factor.

Mrs. Dunwoody: Will the Minister please answer the point? In my constituency—he can come and visit it any time he likes—people are told that there are no NHS beds and that they must go into private care. But they cannot afford to pay the sum, even with income support or anything else with a fancy name for handing out charity. That is happening day after day, and talking about billions of pounds does not change that for anyone.

Mr. Portillo: That is not true. Talking about billions of pounds changes the position for many more than the 100,000 people who are receiving their care in that way. The situation has arisen under this Government because before 1980 these fees were not available on supplementary benefit. It is nonsense for the hon. Lady to talk as though the help was insignificant.

I am not arguing that the social security arrangements are perfect, but the hon. Lady will recognise that some sort of limit needs to exist. She seemed to accept that point when she said that she disapproved of the expansion of the private sector. Where income support pays the fees of people in private homes, whether residential care or nursing homes, she presumably wishes to see a decent standard of care, that the charges are reasonable and that the amounts that the DHSS is willing to pay are suitable to reasonable, average charges throughout the country, and so they are. We base the amounts that we allow on research into the costs and charges that various homes make.

We introduced those national limits in 1985 because we wanted a coherent approach. There are now national limits for a range of categories of residential care homes and, similarly, nursing homes. Many of these limits have risen sharply in recent years. For example, in residential care homes the limit for elderly people is £130 and for those who are very dependent £155. Those figures represent increases of 18 per cent. and 41 per cent. over the 1985 limits, well in excess of inflation over the period. Again, people are being provided for in that way.

We are always willing to listen to the views of hon. Members and the public on this, but we keep these limits under careful review. That has been demonstrated by the fact that several limits were raised again in April 1988. Health and local authorities have the power and duty to meet high care needs, and they are often best placed to judge these. The question that arises is whether people are suitably placed. Although the national limits are tailored to care categories, they cannot respond to the infinite variations of individual needs. That matter is discussed in the PAC report published last week.

Mrs. Dunwoody: Will the Minister please listen to what he is saying? Will he tell me why there are insufficient beds in the NHS, and why the Government have encouraged the expansion of private care and now refuse to pay for it? The Government must either provide care under the NHS where it belongs or justify how they treat people in the private sector. They cannot have it both ways.

Mr. Portillo: I would perhaps listen to myself more carefully if the hon. Lady was not making so much noise in my speech. She pointed to the plans of the Crewe DHA to discharge patients into new set-ups that it is planning. I have already addressed that issue in saying that it raises complex issues which need to be considered, and for the moment we have said that health authorities should sit on such plans until we have been able to resolve those issues.

At the same time there is this large expansion in the private and voluntary care sector, about which the hon. Lady seems to be confused. On the one hand she is denouncing it as a bad thing and on the other saying that the limits seem to be set too low. Those two attitudes cannot be consistent. We believe that people are on the whole appropriately placed under the present system, but that is something on which we do considerable research. Recent research that was done by the social policy research unit seemed to show that more than 90 per cent. of the people studied needed residential care at the time of admission to homes and two years later. A minority of those in the sample were admitted to homes directly from the community, and were found to have lesser needs at the outset, although there was no difference between them and the rest of the sample by the time of the survey. Those are not conclusive results, but again I believe that they show that the care packages that are available on the whole suit the needs of people.

Ms. Marjorie Mowlam (Redcar): If the Minister is going to talk about the SPRU report and the Public Accounts Committee report on community care that was issued last week, would it not give a fuller picture if he also talked about the PAC report, which said that there is not enough community care, that 800,000 people have been let out into the community, and there are not the facilities to cater for them, as my hon. Friend says?

Mr. Portillo: The hon. Member for Redcar (Ms. Mowlam) will forgive me if I do not respond to the PAC report, because that would be improper, apart from anything else.

Mrs. Dunwoody: The Minister has been using it.

Mr. Portillo: No, I have mentioned the PAC report on two occasions and I have quoted from it, but I have certainly not attempted to respond to it.

The hon. Member for Redcar and her hon. Friend the Member for Crewe and Nantwich cannot be in any doubt that the Government are serious about community care because we have devoted much time and effort to studying the subject. The hon. Ladies need to show a little more patience.

We have recently received the Griffiths report. These are complex issues. I do not think that the hon. Member for Crewe and Nantwich did justice to the complexity of the issues which concern the appropriate level of care for people in the community, the efficiency with which the taxpayer can deliver that care, and the question whether it is best provided to persons in the home, in the voluntary sector, in residential care, in a nursing home or in geriatric beds in the National Health Service.

Mrs. Dunwoody: That is the best way.

Mr. Portillo: The hon. Member for Crewe and Nantwich has not referred to geriatric care in the National Health Service, but she will be perfectly clear about it. That option is in general the most expensive, not least because many of those who are cared for within the NHS are most dependent and require the greatest amount of care. That is a very important factor, but none the less it does not remove the great importance of ensuring that taxpayers' money, whether it is spent via the social security system, through social services or through the NHS, is spent efficiently so that we provide the appropriate level of care for people in whatever context.

Mrs. Dunwoody: With any luck, they will die!

Mr. Portillo: In short, I believe that the present arrangement for benefits for those in homes are a good deal better than they have been in the past, particularly given the reforms that were made in 1980. I am open to any suggestions for further improvement, and I am grateful to the hon. Lady for the characteristic way in which she has made a number of suggestions to us this evening.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at eighteen minutes to Eleven o'clock.

House of Commons

Wednesday 25 May 1988

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

SCOTLAND

Health Boards

1. **Mr. Graham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what allowance was made for inflation and growth, respectively, in his provisional allocation of resources to Scottish health boards for 1988-89.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Michael Forsyth): The provision for expenditure by health boards on hospital and community health services in 1988-89 is 5·8 per cent. over the corresponding provision for last year, which includes an allowance for inflation of 4·5 per cent. and for growth of 1·3 per cent.

Mr. Graham: Does the Minister sincerely believe that the figure for growth that we have—0·5 per cent.—is sufficient to meet the needs of the Scottish health boards, in whose areas thousands of people are waiting for treatment on the National Health Service?

Mr. Forsyth: The hon. Gentleman obviously prepared his supplementary question before listening to my answer. The figure for growth for health boards this year is 1·3 per cent. The hon. Gentleman should be aware that health boards have never been better funded in real terms than under this Government, having had an increase in funding of more than a quarter since 1979.

Sir Hector Monro: Does my hon. Friend agree that, in cash terms, we are spending more than double what was spent in 1978-79, which followed a period when there had been cuts in building and resources for the Health Service under the Labour Government? Is it not a real demonstration of the Government's concern for the Health Service and for caring that we are spending so much more?

Mr. Forsyth: My hon. Friend is right. The only cuts in the Health Service in the past 20 years were made under the Labour Government, who were forced to cut the capital building programme. My hon. Friend is right to point to our record. Not only are we spending more, but we are getting more value for the money spent in the Health Service.

Mr. Galbraith: The Minister must be aware that the actual figure for next year's increase as against the previous outcome is only 0·5 per cent. He will also know that that level is barely enough to cope with demographic demand, let alone to improve the Health Service. Because of the chronic and continuing under-funding by the Government hospitals such as the Elsie Inglis in Edinburgh will have to close, and as a result patients' choice will be diminished.

Does the hon. Gentleman agree that there is also a problem with the nurses' pay award? The Government have allocated £92 million, but the health boards have told me that they think the figure will be more because of regrading. If it is, will he assure the House that the Government will provide the extra funds?

Mr. Forsyth: I welcome the hon. Gentleman to the Dispatch Box. When he has had the opportunity to do his homework he will realise that the cash uplift is about 4 per cent. for all boards in Scotland. The overall cash uplift is 5·8 per cent. The 4 per cent. goes to all boards, plus an additional 1 per cent. which is being redistributed on the SHARE formula. In addition, there is a further £12 million that has not yet been distributed to health boards, so it is premature to pronounce on their allocations.

I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman would welcome an increase in nurses' pay that will result in their having a real increase of 44 per cent., as opposed to a reduction of 20 per cent. under the Labour Government. The Government have made it clear that we shall fully fund the pay awards over the 4·5 per cent. which has been allowed for inflation.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: Given the widespread interest in Scotland in the recommendations of the Griffiths report, is the Minister satisfied that within the small increase in the budget for health boards it will be possible for the boards to implement many of those recommendations?

Mr. Forsyth: We are giving careful consideration to the Griffiths report, which involves funding not just by health boards but by local authorities. We have made substantial increases in funding for health boards and social works depts of local authorities, and we shall certainly consider the recommendations carefully. Resources are not the problem. We must address ourselves to joint planning and organisation.

Scottish Development Agency

2. **Mr. Oppenheim:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met the chairman of the Scottish Development Agency; and what matters were discussed.

The Minister of State, Scottish Office (Mr. Ian Lang): My right hon. and learned Friend and I met the chairman and board of the agency on 16 May to discuss strategic issues which might be reflected in the agency's planning and budgeting process, and other matters.

Mr. Oppenheim: Did my hon. Friend have a chance to discuss the increasing success of the Scottish electronics industry, which has increased its output threefold since 1979? Does my hon. Friend agree that the Scottish people can now deploy their well-known and traditional qualities of doughtiness, courage and entrepreneurial flair in pursuit of economic growth? Is it not a shame that those qualities are so little apparent on the Opposition Benches?

Mr. Lang: I absolutely agree with my hon. Friend. The growth of the electronics industry in Scotland has been a

major contribution to the development of a broader based and more secure economic environment in which prosperity can spread more widely.

Mr. Michael J. Martin: The Minister will be aware that Teachers whisky announced over 200 redundancies last week, in addition to the many other redundancies that have taken place in Springburn. Will he involve SDA officers in bringing work, rather than closures, to Springburn?

Mr. Lang: The hon. Gentleman will know that the agency is engaged on a large number of initiatives in local areas in Scotland, and I am sure that it will note his remarks.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: Will the Minister consider providing extra funding to Locate in Scotland in order to boost Scottish preparation for the single European market in 1992? What is his Department doing to encourage seminars and projects throughout Scotland to maximise Scottish employment and success in that market?

Mr. Lang: We are already heavily involved in seeking to prepare companies in Scotland, as elsewhere in the United Kingdom, for the single European market. Part of the great success of Locate in Scotland in attracting inward investment to Scotland over the past few years is because it is perceived as being a good base for European manufacturing operations, particularly in electronics, but also in other industries.

Scottish Assembly

3. **Mr. Wray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received regarding a Scottish Assembly since 5 May.

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind): I have received two letters in favour of an Assembly and two against.

Mr. Wray: I am sure that the Secretary of State is aware of the district election and the general election results, and that he did a somersault on devolution. He will also be aware that he bestowed on himself powers under the Local Government, Planning and Land (Scotland) Act 1980 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act 1981 and thereby eroded democracy in Scotland. Is he aware that the only way getting rid of totalitarian demagoguery is by abolishing the poll tax and establishing a Scottish assembly?

Mr. Rifkind: I am aware that at the local elections the Conservative vote in my constituency increased from 39 to 46 per cent. and, indeed, that in Edinburgh the Conservative vote was greater than the Labour vote for the first time in five years. I doubt whether the Scottish public believe that a tax-raising Assembly would be in the interests of the Scottish economy or the other economic requirements of Scotland.

Mr. Bill Walker: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that the Scots have seen through the flawed proposals that have been put forward for any type of Scottish Assembly? Does he agree that the proposals, as they now stand, would have no chance of passing through the House, whatever its political complexion, because eight out of every 10 people in English constituencies would not want their Members to vote in favour of it?

Mr. Rifkind: As almost every Labour Government since the war required Labour Members of Parliament from Scotland and Wales to provide them with their United Kingdom majority, it is increasingly puzzling why the Labour party should wish to adopt a constitutional solution that will result in a substantial reduction in the number of Scottish Members of Parliament at Westminster and the end of any effective voice for Scotland in the United Kingdom Cabinet.

Sir Russell Johnston: The Secretary of State knows full well that many people in Scotland have strong views on a Scottish Assembly. Does it not occur to him that it is a bad thing that only four bother to write to him—mainly because they know that he will not listen?

Mr. Rifkind: On the contrary, since the election the Labour party and, indeed, the Social and Liberal Democratic party have been unable to demonstrate any substantial demand in Scotland for constitutional change. I recollect that when the Labour party called for a great rally on Glasgow Green for Scottish democracy, fewer people turned out for that than the number who voted Conservative in the Glasgow, Garscadden constituency.

Mr. Irvine: Did any of the four letters received by my right hon. and learned Friend address itself to what has come to be known as the West Lothian question? Does he agree that if Scottish domestic issues are to be reserved to a specifically Scottish Assembly it will be difficult to justify Scottish Members of Parliament at Westminster retaining their right to vote on and debate the full range of English domestic issues?

Mr. Rifkind: My hon. Friend has raised a genuine and serious problem that the Labour party must consider. The Labour party and, for that matter, the Social and Liberal Democratic party, are, by instinct, as Unionist as the Conservative party, yet they have failed to appreciate that the constant adapting of nationalist rhetoric is incompatible with the Unionist position that they have upheld since they were formed. They cannot at the same time argue for a Scottish Assembly unless they are prepared to provide an adequate and credible answer to the question that was so effectively raised by the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell), who then represented West Lothian.

Mr. Dewar: Has the right hon. and learned Gentleman not spent too much time recently in that painfully unrepresentative gathering, the Scottish Conservative party conference? Is there not a clear wish for some form of constitutional change in Scotland? Did the right hon. and learned Gentleman not quite recently say that there was at least a preference for devolution in Scotland, although he still argued whether it was a priority? Is it not a dangerous exercise in obstinacy to try to go back on that, as he is now apparently doing? Has not the message about the Government's unacceptable social and constitutional policies been proclaimed loud and clear this morning in the unanimous decision of the Church of Scotland not to invite the Prime Minister to the General Assembly next year? *[Interruption.]* The right hon. and learned Gentleman may laugh at the Church of Scotland, but that will not do him a great deal of good in Scotland. Clearly,

the right hon. Lady's sermon made few converts, and unacceptable policies remain unacceptable, however cleverly disguised. Is it not time that the right hon. and learned Gentleman thought again on devolution and an Assembly, as on many other policies?

Mr. Rifkind: I am amused, and it is significant, that, given the nature of the hon. Gentleman's questions, he clearly considers the General Assembly to be more important to Scotland than his proposals for a Scottish Assembly. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister received an extremely warm and genuine welcome from the General Assembly, and the efforts of a tiny minority of the commissioners of the General Assembly, led by a commissioner who is also a Labour councillor on Glasgow district council, were seen to be totally unrepresentative of the views of the vast majority. Of the 1,200 present, only five, including that Labour councillor, showed the discourtesy that is so untypical of the Church of Scotland as a whole.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I appreciate that we are about to debate the spring Adjournment motion, but I hope we can have less of a holiday atmosphere at Question Time.

Rating Reform

4. **Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the progress of registration for the community charge.

9. **Mr. Doran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has as to what proportion of registration forms for the community charge have been returned properly completed to the registration officer for each of the regional authorities in Scotland.

Mr. Lang: Detailed information on the progress of community charge registration is not available centrally, but it is clear that in many areas very high rates of return of forms have been achieved in the initial canvass. There is every reason to believe that the registration process is going smoothly.

Mr. Kirkwood: Will the Minister assure the House that he will seek a detailed statement of the progress of the registration from the poll tax registration officers, because there is evidence in some areas that the registration process is failing substantially? If some areas can achieve only 80 to 90 per cent. registration rates from direct returns from the public and therefore have to pad out the registrations with information from their own resources, will that not lead to registers being substantially appealed against after October, and will that not cause much delay and time-consuming and expensive administrative procedures?

Mr. Lang: I have every confidence that the registration officers will be able to fulfil their statutory duties without any interference from me. At the moment we are only a quarter of the way through the period for compiling the register, yet the signs from published figures are that the returns are in the region of 75 to 90 per cent. If anything is failing dismally, it is the Labour party's campaign to launch a "Return to Sender" campaign.

Mr. Doran: Is the Minister aware that in my post this morning I received an invitation from the Secretary of State for Scotland to witness the retreat of the bands of the Royal Marines? We have already witnessed the retreat of the Tory party from Scotland, and the cries of anguish were painful indeed.

My information from the Grampian region is that 70 per cent. of registration forms have been returned, but only 40 per cent. have been completed. That means that 60 per cent. of people in the Grampian region have refused to return their forms or have returned them asking for more information. Will the Minister publish similar figures for the rest of Scotland?

Mr. Lang: Those figures are not returned to the Government. They are compiled by the registration officers, and they announce the figures if they so wish. I hope the hon. Gentleman shares my view that the most effective way to get the community charge system to fund local government successfully is to spread it as widely as possible across the adult population. If not, those who complete the form and end up on the register will pay a higher share than would otherwise be fair.

Mr. Bill Walker: Does my hon. Friend agree that registration for the community charge will take time, as we expected? Does he also agree that it is interesting that Angus district, which is run by the Scottish National party, and Perth and Kinross, where there is a Scottish National party provost, have clearly declared that people should register, comply with the law and pay the community charge? That is contrary to what Scottish National party members have been saying.

Mr. Lang: I commend the attitude of Angus district council and I hope that its views will percolate through to its parliamentary representatives.

Mr. Dewar: In his obviously carefully prepared initial answer the Minister referred to published figures. Where are they published, and what are they? As far as I am aware, there has been only some speculation in *The Sunday Times*, which is virtually a Conservative party house journal. Given the depressing spectacle in another place earlier this week of reactionary hereditary power being marshalled cynically to frustrate the views of public opinion—[HON. MEMBERS: "Reading."]—what advice would the Minister give to Scots who recognise and oppose the unjust nature of the poll tax, but who are faced by a Government whose definition of democracy does not involve listening to the electorate?

Mr. Lang: That was obviously a very carefully prepared question. The published figures to which I referred were published in the press. The press will note with interest the disdain with which its published articles are treated by the Labour party. My advice to members of the public who are opposed to the legislation is to accept the rule of law. In that respect they will differ from the Labour party.

Electricity Industry

5. **Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last discussed the proposals for privatisation of the electricity industry with the chairmen of the Scottish electricity boards.

Mr. Rifkind: I last met the chairman of the South of Scotland Electricity Board on 1 March and the chairman

of the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board on 3 March to discuss privatisation of the electricity industry in Scotland.

Mr. Wallace: The Secretary of State has often said that once privatisation has taken place he would wish a substantial number of shares to be retained within Scotland. Has he given any thought to proposals to ensure that that happens, given that the hon. Member for Worcestershire, South (Mr. Spicer), the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy, has said:

"We shall be placing on the American market a proportion of the stock we shall be selling in the existing companies."? Does that apply to the flotation of the Scottish companies as well as to those south of the border?

Mr. Rifkind: In previous privatisations those who are both employees and consumers of a nationalised industry have often been given preference in the acquisition of shares. In respect of the South of Scotland Electricity Board and the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board, almost every consumer, with the sole exception of those living in Berwick-upon-Tweed, lives in Scotland. Therefore, if the Scottish public are interested in acquiring a substantial stake in the ownership of the two companies, they will have a preferential opportunity to do so.

Mr. Eadie: When the right hon. and learned Gentleman met the chairmen of the electricity boards in Scotland, was he able to assure them that a separate Scottish Bill would be published and that the proposed privatisation would not be hived off on to the Bill that is being submitted for the privatisation of electricity in England and Wales?

Mr. Rifkind: So far neither of the chairmen has expressed any preference for a particular form of legislation. Whether electricity privatisation should be part of a United Kingdom Bill or dealt with by separate English and Scottish Bills is a matter still to be resolved.

Mr. John Marshall: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that, apart from leading to wider share ownership, privatisation of the Scottish electricity industry will lead to lower prices to the consumer and greater job opportunities in manufacturing industry?

Mr. Rifkind: My hon. Friend is correct. There is no reason why the privatisation of both companies should not have the same benefits for the public as all previous privatisations, despite predictions to the contrary by the Labour party.

Mr. Maxton: Will the Secretary of State now answer the question put to him by the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace)? What guarantees will he put in the legislation to ensure that, in the months and years following the privatisation of the two electricity boards, control will remain in Scotland?

Mr. Rifkind: I cannot guarantee that the Scottish public will use the opportunities that the Government provide. The Scottish public will have a unique opportunity to acquire shares and therefore to acquire the ownership of the companies. Whether they wish to take advantage of those opportunities will be for them to decide. The hon. Gentleman must appreciate that that would be a responsible position to adopt.

Mr. Salmond: The Secretary of State has said that he cannot guarantee continued Scottish ownership of the Scottish electricity industry. Can he give the House any guarantee that the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board will have a social clause that is meaningful to the north of Scotland with regard to reconnections, repairs of lines and other aspects of its activities?

Mr. Rifkind: The original reasons for the social clause were not those raised by the hon. Gentleman. Those reasons were to ensure that the remote rural areas and island communities had access to the benefits of the board's activities—that has already been achieved—and to achieve common tariffs throughout the area. In the White Paper we have already made it clear that we intend to ensure that there will be common tariffs throughout the board's area.

Earnings

6. **Mr. Forth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the most recent average weekly earnings figures for Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: The average gross weekly earnings of full-time employees on adult rates in Scotland in April 1987 are estimated to have been £214·6 for men and £139·9 for women. In both cases, only the south-east of England had higher earnings.

Mr. Forth: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for that reply. Does he agree that that demonstrates the enormous success and well-being of Scottish people and economy? Therefore, does my hon. Friend accept that in future the Scottish people will look less towards the public sector and more towards their own great economic success? Will my hon. Friend confirm, however, that earnings from self-employment are still disappointingly low, and can he give us any goods news or optimism for the future?

Mr. Lang: My hon. Friend is absolutely right, in that the Scottish economy is responding well to the encouragement of enterprise and the stable economic base generated by the Government's policies. He is quite right also to identify self-employment as an important sector in the Scottish economy. We wish to encourage its growth. I am glad to say that since 1981 the numbers of self-employed have risen by 45,000, whereas in the previous three decades there had been no increase at all.

Mr. Tom Clarke: Is the Minister not astonished that a leading free market entrepreneur such as the hon. Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth) does not seem to be aware that the private sector Reward Group in its recent study discovered that the cost of food, transport, household goods and even drink in Scotland are considerably higher than in the rest of the United Kingdom? Does that not explain why the hon. Gentleman represents Mid-Worcestershire instead of Mid-Strathclyde?

Mr. Lang: I do not think that we need lessons on inflation from the Opposition, given the record of the last Labour Government between 1974 and 1979, when the cost of living more than doubled. It is precisely our great success in bringing down the rate of inflation in Scotland as elsewhere that has helped us establish the strong economic base that is leading to the growth of prosperity in Scotland.

Hospital Building

7. **Sir Hector Monro:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many major hospital building projects are under construction and at what cost; and what were the comparable figures for 1978-79.

Mr. Rifkind: Ten major hospital building projects are currently under construction, estimated to cost some £97 million. Comparable figures for 1978-79 are not available, but provision for the health capital programme increased by 23 per cent. in real terms between 1978-79 and 1987-88.

Sir Hector Monro: Bearing in mind the complete failure of the Labour Government in the 1970s, does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that the capital programme is the biggest ever in real terms? Does he also agree that the increase in nurses' salaries and the very substantial future changes in the structure of the nursing profession must hold tremendous prospects for the National Health Service in Scotland?

Mr. Rifkind: My hon. Friend is quite correct. The hospital building programme in Scotland is the largest in the history of the National Health Service in Scotland. Since 1979, 53 major new hospital developments have been completed and there are 33 major developments currently in the programme, of which three are being commissioned, 10 are under construction and 20 are at the planning stage. That shows the commitment of the Government to ensure that Scotland has hospital facilities that we can be proud of and that will last into the next century.

Mr. Ernie Ross: Is it not the case that the hospitals that the Secretary of State was talking about were approved by the last Labour Government? Will he say how many approvals for new hospitals have been given since 1979?

Mr. Rifkind: I know that the hon. Gentleman is desperately trying to retrieve the situation, but he knows perfectly well that the hospital building programme was cut under the last Labour Government——

Mr. Ross: How many?

Mr. Rifkind: We measure Governments not by their claims but by their deeds. The hon. Gentleman has to live with the fact that the Government whom he supported cut the hospital building programme, while under this Government we have the biggest ever hospital building programme.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: While welcoming the real and demonstrable commitment of the Government to new hospital building in Scotland, may I ask my right hon. and learned Friend to ensure that health boards use properly those facilities that they have available? Will he bear that particularly in mind in the consideration that he will shortly be giving to the proper provision of maternity services in rural areas in Grampian, where there are good facilities which are wanted by the local community and which the health board is trying to close?

Mr. Rifkind: My right hon. Friend is correct. Given the vast resources that health boards have at their disposal, it is particularly important that they ensure that they get the best value for those resources in the interests of patients.

District General Hospital (Motherwell)

8. **Dr. Bray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what consideration he has given to proposals for the building of a district general hospital on the site of Strathclyde hospital in Motherwell.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: My right hon. and learned Friend has not received any proposals from the Lanarkshire health board for a new district general hospital.

Dr. Bray: Is the Minister aware that the Lanarkshire health board has recently discovered mining subsidence on the site of the Law hospital, which makes it quite unsuitable for modernisation and development of that wartime emergency hospital on which Motherwell and Wishaw have depended for the past 40 years? Is he also aware that the Strathclyde hospital site has long been designated as a site for a new district general hospital? Will he tell the Lanarkshire health board to get on with it?

Mr. Forsyth: I thought that it was the position of Opposition Members that I should not tell the health boards to get on with anything. I am sure the hon. Gentleman will be aware that the Lanarkshire health board, as part of its general review of its long-term acute services strategy, is examining the case for a new district general hospital for the Hamilton-East Kilbride area. If it were to submit a proposal for a new hospital it would need to be backed by a full and detailed option appraisal. I await the board's proposals with interest.

Mr. Robertson: Is the Minister aware that the saga of the Motherwell district general hospital has been drifting on for about 25 years? Is he also aware that the huge Motherwell-Hamilton conurbation is seriously ill served in acute hospital services? When he considers the allocation of capital for hospital building, will he consider the desirability of building a new district general hospital for the Hamilton-East Kilbride area?

Mr. Forsyth: It is true that this matter has been under consideration for some time, but, as the hon. Gentleman will know, the board decided to give priority to new schemes at Kirklands hospital, Udston hospital and Hairmyres hospital shortly after 1978. Those schemes are now coming to fruition and they reflect the SHAPE priorities and the priority that has been given to services for the mentally ill and mentally handicapped.

Single European Market (Cecchini Report)

10. **Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has assessed the likely impact on Scotland of the Cecchini report on the single European market; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Rifkind: The Cecchini report supports the view that the internal market will create major opportunities. I have no doubt that the Scottish business community will rise to the challenge of 1992.

Mr. McLeish: Is the Secretary of State aware of the recent speech by Mr. Hamish Morrison, chief executive of the Scottish Council (Development and Industry), in which he said that he resented the fact that Government advertising on this issue represented Scottish business men as introspective bumpkins? He went on to say that British industrial policy did not match the realities of 1992. More

important, is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware of the implications of the Channel tunnel and the need for infrastructural development? Is he also aware of the lack of regional policy and of the tremendous contribution made to Scotland by the financial services sector in Edinburgh? If he is aware of all those aspects, will he prepare a report on 1992 so that the Labour party can take advantage of the opportunities, as the Labour party wants to do, unlike the Conservative party, which is complacent and seems to be uninterested in Scotland benefiting from the single European market?

Mr. Rifkind: I welcome the Labour party's latter-day conversion to the EEC because, with almost the sole exception of the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes), the Labour party campaigned against Scotland's membership of the EC and was thoroughly repudiated by the Scottish electorate when the referendum on the Community took place. I also welcome the hon. Gentleman's passionate support for the Scottish financial sector. It would be nice if his Labour colleagues could show the same spontaneous enthusiasm for the development of financial institutions in Scotland as a means of creating employment and boosting our Scottish economy. I agree that the internal market will be in Scotland's interests if we can prepare ourselves in a suitably professional way. For example, it is encouraging that it was a Scottish company that acquired the contract for the initial work on the Channel tunnel. Anything that enables our exports to reach continental markets more quickly and effectively can only be in the interests of the Scottish economy.

Mr. Douglas: As one of the Labour Members of Parliament, numbering 69, who voted for the Heath Government's White Paper, I have reasonable credentials to enable me to speak on Britain's membership of the EC, and I have the scars to prove it. However, this is a serious matter. The Secretary of State surely has an obligation to report particularly on the economic implications for Scotland of the 1992 proposal. Will he also take into consideration the fact that the economic effects of 1992 are likely to strengthen the case for a Scottish Assembly as a counterpoise, in terms of political decision-making, to the over-centralisation of the United Kingdom decision-making process in London?

Mr. Rifkind: I acknowledge the hon. Gentleman's European credentials and his entitlement to speak with some authority on matters involving the EC. However, I must disagree with his latter observation, because I cannot see, in the context of a European internal market, why a Scottish Assembly, with the power to impose additional taxes on Scottish industry, could do anything other than weaken Scotland's ability to compete effectively within that European market.

Mr. Fallon: Will my right hon. and learned Friend also welcome the Labour party's conversion, not just to the idea of Europe, but to the idea of a market? How does he square the Labour party's new-found enthusiasm for the single European market with its constant wittering about the need for a closed Scottish economy?

Mr. Rifkind: My hon. Friend rightly draws attention to the fundamental inconsistencies of those who argue on the one hand that Scotland must be protected by law and by Government from any action of the market, while on the other they expect Scotland fully to benefit from that same market. The Labour party must identify where Scotland's interests truly lie. Few people in the modern world would argue that some form of siege economy could be anything other than intensely damaging to Scotland's economic future.

Housing Statistics

11. **Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the latest estimates of the number of Scottish houses which are *(a)* damp and *(b)* below tolerable standard.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton): Returns submitted by local authorities indicate that at 31 March 1987, 38,100 local authority dwellings required treatment for dampness alone, 78,400 required treatment for both dampness and condensation, and a total of 53,000 dwellings were below the tolerable standard in Scotland.

Mr. Griffiths: Is it not disgraceful that more than 100,000 Scottish homes suffer from dampness and that more than 50,000 dwellings, most of them in the private sector, are below a tolerable standard? Why is it that the Secretary of State for Scotland rejects a house condition survey when the Secretary of State for Wales has just spent £1·6 million on such a survey so that he may be better acquainted with the housing problems of Wales and produce a programme for the future? Does not the ignorance of the Secretary of State for Scotland about the problems of Scottish housing and his failure to plan for the future ill fit him for his office?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: No. We are not convinced of the case for a national house condition survey as opposed to the requirement for local authorities to fulfil their statutory responsibility to assess the needs in their own areas. We support local authorities undertaking their own house condition surveys, as Glasgow has done.

The number of houses falling below a tolerable standard has been reduced from 121,000 in 1979 to 53,000. We hope that substantial progress will continue to be made. I stress that more is being spent on public housing in Scotland this year than last.

Mr. Lambie: Is it correct to say that when the Minister was a member of the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs investigating housing conditions he not only supported its call to the Government for a housing condition survey but voted for one?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The hon. Member has a very good memory. We do not rule out a national house condition survey on principle. *[Interruption.]* The matter is under consideration. We strongly support the principle of local authorities undertaking their own surveys, as Glasgow has done, which will assist both the authorities and their communities.

Mr. Favell: How many of the councils responsible for housing that is below a tolerable standard are controlled by the Labour party?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I would think a considerable number. However, we expect substantial

progress to be made. In the early days there was a great deal of demolition, but now houses will be renewed and rehabilitated, so that families may continue to live in them.

Mr. Ron Brown: Does the Minister agree that if the Government are not to be accused of double standards public housing in Scotland should be brought up to at least the standards enjoyed by the governor general seated next to the Minister, who has an official residence in Edinburgh named Bute House? Is it true that £100,000 was spent on Bute House last year? If so, how can the Minister justify that expenditure?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: It is important that more should be spent on public sector housing in Scotland this year. The final housing revenue account capital allocations for this year total £58 million more than the provisional allocations and are more than £34 million up on last year.

As to Bute House, obviously it is necessary that it should be kept in a proper condition.

Mr. Home Robertson: In this week of scriptural references, is the Minister aware of the words of Matthew 15:

"if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch?"

Has he yet taken an opportunity to look at the Prime Minister's complimentary copy of the Church of Scotland's report on housing in Scotland, which refers, among other things, to the lack of any reliable official survey of housing conditions in Scotland? As Scotland is now the only part of the United Kingdom without a house condition survey, may we take it that the Minister is deliberately remaining blind, ignorant and indifferent to the plight of hundreds of thousands of Scots who are living in overcrowded and sub-standard accommodation?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: It certainly will not be a question of the blind leading the blind, because we are issuing to authorities a handbook of guidance on the conduct of local house condition surveys. One of the difficulties about a national house condition survey is that the sample might be relatively small. In our view, it is more effective at this stage for local authorities to carry out their statutory responsibilities by making certain that they know the precise details of their own housing stock.

Labour Statistics

12. **Mr. Hind:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people were unemployed in Scotland in June 1983 and March 1988; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: Seasonally adjusted, the number of unemployed claimants was 308,000 in June 1983 and 300,000 in March 1988. Latest figures show a further drop to 295,000 in April, continuing the firm downward trend.

Mr. Hind: I am obliged to my hon. Friend for his reply. Has he noted the figures for unemployment in the long term, which were published yesterday, showing that in Scotland over the past 12 months there has been a reduction of 36,600—16·5 per cent.—in the number unemployed for six months, and a further 28,800—15·6 per cent.—reduction in the number unemployed for 12 months? Does that not vindicate the Government's economic policy and show that it is working in Scotland as well as in the rest of the United Kingdom?

Mr. Lang: My hon. Friend is absolutely right to draw attention to the good news that long-term unemployment is falling in Scotland as well as elsewhere in the United Kingdom. I agree with him that that is a result of sustained commitment over a period of years to our economic policies, which are now delivering more increased prosperity.

Mr. Canavan: Will the Minister now tell us the whole truth about the Government's track record on Scottish unemployment, which is that there has been an increase of 97 per cent. since that woman got the keys to No. 10 in May 1979?

Mr. Lang: I understand the hon. Gentleman's confusion over the matter, because no Labour Government have ever experienced the phenomenon of sustained falls in unemployment. I am sure, however, that the hon. Gentleman will be pleased to know that in his constituency unemployment has fallen in the past year by 1,022.

Mr. Speaker: Order. My attention was distracted, but I remind the House that we should refer to each other by our constituencies or offices in this place.

Mr. Wallace: Does the Minister accept that in "Just Sharing", the book published by the Church of Scotland, unemployment is given as one of the main reasons why poverty in Scotland has nearly doubled during the years of this Conservative Administration? What steps do the Government intend to take to address themselves to that fundamental question of poverty in Scotland?

Mr. Lang: The best way of countering poverty is by increasing prosperity, and that is what we have been doing in the past few years. We now have falling inflation, falling unemployment, increasing prosperity, increased investment and a rising standard of living for the vast majority of Scots.

Mr. Jack: Does my hon. Friend agree that last year's record level of business registrations in Scotland, and the considerable growth in self-employment, not only pay tribute to the growth of the enterprise economy in Scotland but will contribute greatly to further reductions in unemployment?

Mr. Lang: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. The figures for self-employment that I gave earlier this afternoon show the growth of enterprise in Scotland. It is also encouraging that employment during the last quarter of 1987 rose by around 7,000, and that business surveys from such bodies as the CBI and the Fraser of Allander Institute demonstrate that that growth is continuing.

Scottish and Newcastle Breweries

13. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what categories of assistance or grant his Department has paid to Scottish and Newcastle Breweries in respect of its Scottish operations since 1979.

Mr. Lang: The company received assistance from my Department under the old regional development grant scheme, which ended in 1984. It has received no assistance under regional selective assistance since 1979 or under the revised regional development grant scheme.

Mr. Allen: Was the Scottish Office consulted about the takeover of Charles Mackinlay by Invergordon Distilleries? If the Minister cannot answer now, will he undertake to write to me? Is he aware that hundreds of tenant-publicans in my constituency have been given notice to quit by Scottish and Newcastle Breweries? When Scottish and Newcastle next brings the begging bowl to the Scottish Office, will he tell it that, while the importation of Scottish and Newcastle best bitter is a bad enough imposition on my constituency, the imposition of Scottish and Newcastle's industrial relations practices is not acceptable?

Mr. Lang: I would not expect my Department to have been consulted on the takeover, but if I find that we were consulted I shall certainly write to the hon. Gentleman. The details of the relationship between Scottish and Newcastle Breweries and the company that it has taken over are a matter for the company and not for the Scottish Office.

Mr. Steel: Does the Minister accept that the consumption of the products of Scottish and Newcastle Breweries appears to have played some part in the ugly scenes at Wembley last weekend? Will he take this opportunity to repudiate the offensive suggestion by the hon. Member for Hayes and Harlington (Mr. Dicks) that the effects were visible on one side only, or the idea that they have anything to do with the Government's support of the company?

Mr. Speaker: That is very wide of the question.

Mr. Lang: I think it unwise for anybody to comment on such incidents without having access to all the facts.

Mr. Andy Stewart: Does my hon. Friend agree that the hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen) is spreading despondency among the Home brewery tenants and the company although he knows full well that the National Licensed Victuallers Association has accepted the proposals put forward by the company and is putting the proposals to its tenants tomorrow?

Mr. Lang: Yes, indeed. I understand that 90 per cent. of the tenants have accepted the new rent levels from Scottish and Newcastle Breweries and that production and employment at the Home brewery has increased.

Coal Imports

14. **Mr. O'Neill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has as to how many tons of coal have been imported by the South of Scotland Electricity Board since 1 April.

Mr. Lang: The level of coal deliveries to the South of Scotland Electricity Board is a matter for the board and its suppliers. I understand from the SSEB that around 20,000 tonnes have been delivered to date.

Mr. O'Neill: Will the Minister join me in hoping that those figures will not in any way impede the negotiations between the SSEB and British Coal, as I understand that progress has been made on price and tonnage? Will the Minister assure us that he will give his backing to a deal that will secure jobs in the Scottish coal industry for as long as possible into the mid-1990s?

Mr. Lang: I would certainly welcome a successful outcome to those negotiations, but that outcome must be based on a realistic perception of the competitiveness of British Coal and its ability to enable the electricity board to generate electricity competitively.

Mr. Darling: Is the Minister not taking the role of a disinterested spectator in the negotiations? Is he not aware that unless the coal side of electricity in Scotland is kept up we shall have to depend more and more on nuclear energy, with all the implications that that has for price and safety?

Mr. Lang: I am not uninterested in the negotiations but I do not believe that it is right and proper that we should interfere in them. There is every opportunity for Scottish coal to contribute to the generation of electricity, provided that it is available competitively.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: Will my hon. Friend acknowledge that Scotland is fortunate to have a wide variety of fuel resources? Will he also acknowledge that if the coal industry is to invest in deep mining it requires contracts for a reasonable period or years? Therefore, will he use what opportunity may be available to him to ensure that the SSEB takes a realistic view, as the CEGB has done in the south?

Mr. Lang: I certainly hope that realism will colour the negotiations on both sides. I welcome the signs of increased flexibility over working hours on the part of miners.

Dr. Moonie: It is just not good enough for the Minister to shrug off the negotiations between British Coal and the SSEB as though they were none of his business. He must be well aware of the problems and delays facing the implementation of the plans for the Torness power station. He must be well aware also of the problems at the Hunterston B power station, which is now 50 per cent. closed and must have a large question mark over its future. Surely he sees a role for the Government in promoting a strategic policy for energy production in Scotland.

Mr. Lang: I believe that Scotland is fortunate to have such varied sources of fuel for electricity generation. If the hon. Gentleman thinks that the Government ought to indulge in the beer and sandwiches approach to the negotiations that got the country into so much difficulty in the late 1970s, I assure him that he is mistaken.

Secondary School Pupils

15. **Mr. Knox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much was spent per pupil in secondary schools in Scotland in the most recent year for which figures are available; and what was the comparable figure in 1978-79, at constant prices.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: In 1986-87, net current expenditure per pupil in secondary schools in Scotland at outturn prices was £1,764. This is 26 per cent. more in real terms than the comparable figure in 1978-79, which at 1986-87 prices was £1,403.

Mr. Knox: How do those figures square with claims that there have been cuts in secondary education expenditure under this Government?

Mr. Forsyth: Such claims, which have been made by Opposition Members, are untrue. Expenditure has

increased substantially in real terms. In the current year expenditure provision for education will increase by some 9 per cent., which is a real increase well above the rate of inflation.

Mr. McAllion: Does the Minister agree that his figure for expenditure per pupil reflects declining school rolls rather than increased Government expenditure? The reality in Scottish schools continues to be chronic under-funding. If there has been the British economic miracle about which Conservative Members keep talking why is it not reflected in expenditure on Scottish schools?

Mr. Forsyth: Expenditure in Scottish schools is considerably higher than in England. One of the reasons for that is that a substantial part of the resources is spent on property costs, including the additional burden of rates, and on the lower pupil-teacher ratio because there are proportionately more staff. Labour-controlled local authorities in Scotland have made little progress in rationalising school places. In England, since 1979, the number of secondary schools has been reduced by 10 per cent. The comparable figure for Scotland is only 1 per cent.

Mr. Harry Greenway: Will my hon. Friend give the latest pupil-teacher ratio in Scottish schools and compare it with the figure for 1978-79, when we had a Labour Government? Will he then draw the attention of the House, and that of Scotland and the rest of the nation, to the substantial improvement that has been made since then?

Mr. Forsyth: I shall be happy to provide that information in the *Official Report*. The pupil-teacher ratio in secondary schools in Scotland is 13·2:1 as against 15·6:1 in England.

Mr. Norman Hogg: Why is the Minister so reluctant to address himself to the problem of falling school rolls in Scotland, particularly the fall in secondary education? Why does he not accept that such improvement as has been achieved in funding has been achieved by Labour-controlled authorities despite cuts in rate support grant made by the Government? Why does the Minister not admit to these things? Why does he not improve education at the point of use, rather than engage in this useless debate about figures that are utterly meaningless in real terms?

Mr. Forsyth: If the hon. Gentleman is asking me to endorse local authorities' action in rationalising school places, I should be happy to do so. It is a pity, however, that education authorities such as Strathclyde perceive rationalisation as closing full schools rather than empty ones. As for the hon. Gentleman's question about resources, he should ask Strathclyde why it cannot guarantee that any savings that it makes from rationalisation will be used to add to education provision.

Housing Stock

16. **Mr. McTaggart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if his Department has prepared an analysis of the likely effects on the administration of the Scottish public sector housing stock of the number of people in Scotland who will face reductions in income as a result of the recent housing benefit changes.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: No, Sir, but there is no reason to suppose that the housing benefit changes will have any significant effect at all on the administration of public sector housing.

Mr. McTaggart: Is the Minister aware that many constituents have written to me and, I am sure, to many other right hon. and hon. Members, expressing their genuine fear about the housing benefit changes? Has the Minister produced any figures that show how many people are worse off as a result of the changes, and what the average loss is? Instead of preaching to these people, many of whom are pensioners, why do the Government not do something to deal with their plight?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I am responsible for the structure of local government. We believe that housing agencies will be very well able to cope. The new system will be simpler and easier to administer. The administration of public sector housing, involving such matters as management, maintenance and allocation policy, should not be affected by the payment of housing benefit. On the same night as the hon. Member for Cunninghame, North (Mr. Wilson) had an Adjournment debate, a letter explaining the situation fully was sent out to every right hon. and hon. Member by my hon. Friend the Minister for Social Security and the Disabled.

Mr. Dewar: The Minister says that the changes will have little effect on the administration of housing departments. Does he accept that the changes will have an appalling impact on ordinary people in Scotland? How does he reconcile the fashionable preaching about morality with the cruel and inhuman changes in housing benefit, which are causing so much dismay and distress in every part of the land?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: As the hon. Member knows, housing benefit is the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Social Services. However, I can tell him that nearly 90 per cent. will gain, or will get the same amount of cash as before, when the reforms overall—involving family credit and income support—are taken into account. It is estimated that £613 million will be spent on housing benefit in Scotland this year.

Scottish Bus Group

17. **Mrs. Ray Michie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representatives he has received on the privatisation of the Scottish Bus Group.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. and learned Friend has received 47 representations, mainly about the form that privatisation might take, and its practical effects.

Mrs. Michie: Does the Minister recall that when the Secretary of State made a statement yesterday on the privatisation of the Scottish Bus Group he said that he was not yet in a position to say what the future will hold for Caledonian MacBrayne? In view of the anxiety in the Highlands and Islands about the future of Cal

Mac, will he at least give us some idea of when he can make a statement? Is it to be this year, next year, or when?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: It remains under consideration. However, I am glad to confirm to the hon. Lady that we regard the services to the islands—of which she is a representative—as a lifeline. It will also continue to be our policy to keep down travel costs to the islands. I appreciate that her constituents will want to know as soon as practicable.

Rowntree plc

3.31 pm

Mr. Bryan Gould (Dagenham) *(by private notice):* To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the decision not to refer the Nestlé bid for Rowntree to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister of Trade and Industry (Mr. Kenneth Clarke): This morning my right hon. and noble Friend announced his decision not to refer to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission Nestlé's bid for Rowntree, or Suchard's 29·9 per cent. holding. This decision was in accordance with the advice of the Director General of Fair Trading. It is now for Rowntree's shareholders to decide whether to accept Nestlé's bid.

Our policy is that, in deciding whether to refer a merger to the MMC, the main consideration is the effect of the merger on competition. Neither of these proposals raise competition issues which justify a reference. Nestlé and Suchard have only 3 per cent. and 2 per cent. respectively of the United Kingdom chocolate market.

My right hon. and noble Friend also concluded, after considering the Director General's advice, that there were no employment, reciprocity or other public interest issues which justified a reference.

The United Kingdom has benefited greatly from both inward and outward investment. We believe that open markets are the best means of encouraging efficiency and generating wealth and jobs. This applies to capital markets as well as to markets for goods and services.

The success of the United Kingdom economy is the best evidence of the effectiveness of our policies on competition and investment. My right hon. and noble Friend's decision is consistent with those policies, and is in the best interests of our continued economic prosperity.

Mr. Gould: Is not this decision a betrayal of British industry? Is it not a grave blow to the work force at Rowntree, to the local communities affected and to all those hon. Members, on both sides of the House, who understand the importance of Rowntree to their local economies? Is it not unfortunate that by this decision the opportunity has been missed to take those views and also the national interest properly into account? Is it not unfortunate that the decision will, instead, be taken exclusively by institutional shareholders according to their own narrow interests?

Why was the regional dimension not fully taken into account? Is it not clear that Rowntree, as one of the few major British companies with a headquarters outside the south-east, will lose that regional character if it is absorbed into a Swiss multinational? Should not the lack of reciprocity, in practical terms at least, between ourselves and the Swiss have been taken fully into account? What consideration was given to making a prohibition order under section 13 of the Industry (Amendment) Act 1975?

Given the similar threats that now emerge to similar British companies, the confused state of the Government's competition policy, and the added complications of 1992 and the internal market, may we have a debate on these important issues as soon as possible?

Mr. Clarke: I do not believe that there is any uncertainty about our policy. We have clear competition laws that govern such matters. We recently issued a Blue Paper which clearly set out our policy on monopolies and mergers. At the time it was not seriously challenged by anybody. We have a clear view of what is required to prepare this country for 1992 and to continue to keep it competitive in markets that are becoming ever more global for large numbers of products. In response, we are faced with extremely uncertain populism, which is not properly thought out and is based largely on short-term lobbies and fear of foreigners coming in.

We realise the importance of Rowntree to all those towns in which it has a manufacturing base. It is not for me to anticipate what the rival management will say about their intentions. However, I do not believe that anybody is seeking to acquire that company with a view to running down or abandoning its manufacturing capacity in this country. It is essentially up to the management—whoever owns it—to ensure that the company is kept cost-competitive and to decide how it manufactures and where it employs in future.

Nestlé has been well-established in this country for over 100 years. The bulk of its work force—10,000 people, which is more than the company employs in Switzerland—is based in the regions of this country.

We considered the question of reciprocity, because it can be an element in such cases. However, the fact is that a Swiss Minister would not have the legal powers that my right hon. and noble Friend has to intervene to refer or block a merger, using the powers to which the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) referred. Many Swiss companies have a share structure which makes it difficult for them to be taken over, as have many well-known British companies, such as Trusthouse Forte plc and Great Universal Stores plc. In the opinion of the Director General of Fair Trading, with which I wholly agree, reciprocity was not an adequate issue in this case.

It is right that the matter should now be decided by the shareholders. Our approach to inward and outward investment is in the best interests of the continued growth of the British economy.

Mr. Conal Gregory (York): Is my right hon. and learned Friend not opening a Pandora's box by his statement today? Having heard his statement, I feel that he is bringing about a regional assassination of a major manufacturing base in the north of England.

After today's decision, what protection does any United Kingdom company have against cash-rich Swiss companies which have protection against rival takeovers in Switzerland? Can my right hon. and learned Friend name one United Kingdom company that has succeeded in a hostile bid in Switzerland; nay, can he name any EEC company that has succeeded in a hostile bid in Switzerland?

Finally, did he take into account the employment aspects of this matter as Rowntree plc is one of only six remaining companies that have their international headquarters in the north of England? The House demands answers.

Mr. Clarke: I understand the concern in my hon. Friend's constituency. However, he is wrong to look upon this, as he puts it, as a threat to the manufacturing base. We are talking about the ownership of a major

[Mr. Clarke]

manufacturer of chocolates, especially for the British market. I cannot understand how anybody would make a bid for that company and then propose to close it down as a manufacturer of chocolates in this country. That would be a pointless acquisition.

Investment goes two ways. I take a great interest in the northern economy. I do not think that the northern economy would benefit any more than the midlands or the southern economies would if we suddenly tried to close off our companies from overseas capital investment, or if we tried to inhibit the ability of British companies to buy overseas. The proportion of our manufacturing base owned by foreign enterprises has been falling during the Government's period of office. In 1985, 14 per cent. of manufacturing employment was accounted for by foreign enterprises compared with 15 per cent. in 1979.

There have been takeovers in Switzerland. Piaget, the famous maker of Swiss watches, was recently acquired by Cartier. Opposition Members will say "Oh, Cartier is a foreign name—the company must be foreign," but it is a British-owned company. United Kingdom investors are the main overseas predators and make bids for overseas companies which far exceed the bids made by the Germans, the French or others. That is a good thing. That practice will increase as we run up to 1992. I welcome the fact that United Kingdom companies make bids in western Europe, such as Rowntree when it acquired Candice Martial last year, and Cadbury Schweppes when it acquired Chocolat Poulain in France. These companies have been overseas investors and they benefit from the free market system.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce (Gordon): Does the Minister agree that it is unacceptable that the Swiss should be able to sit behind the barricade of the Alps and pick off our ripe cherries? Does he accept that his statement means that the Government have no credible competition policy, no credible anti-monopoly policy and no effective or robust regional policy? Is it reasonable that the shareholders of the company should be expected to protect the interests of jobs and a corporate headquarters in the north? Is it not likely that the shareholders, as shareholders generally always do, will take the money and run? How will the Government respond if Rowntree goes for a merger with Cadbury as a logical defence of the company?

Mr. Clarke: I express amazement that someone who represents the Liberal party in this place, or what was the Liberal party, which always claimed to be the great European party, should retreat into arguments about the Swiss sitting behind the Alps. That is rather reminiscent of the talk in the past about Swiss gnomes. I am astonished also that someone representing what was the Liberal party should attack the idea of shareholders exercising any judgment on the best use of capital and the ownership of companies. If the newly emerged party, whose initials I can still never remember, is to try to reach agreements on policy, it will have to reconsider its approach to international market economies, competition-merger policy and the private sector economy.

If any other company starts bidding for another chocolate company, whether the bids come from home or abroad, we shall take the advice of the Director General of Fair Trading, who will apply the sensible legal rules that the House has laid down, along with the sensible monopolies and mergers policy that we set up recently in our Blue Paper.

Sir Giles Shaw (Pudsey): Will my right hon. and learned Friend accept that I deplore the decision that has been made today? Will he accept also that I am astounded that it is not considered by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry that there are any public issues involved in it that require examination? Will he confirm, for example, that the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food is concerned about how much of the confectionery industry is taken into foreign ownership? What percentage would cause a national issue to arise? What do my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for the Environment and for Education and Science have to say about the commitment to the Community in the light of an operation of the Rowntree type? What does the Department of Industry have to say about the further reduction in the six corporate headquarters that exist in the north of England? What does the Department of Trade have to say when about the only gain that the Government have achieved is a reputation for offering the maximum amount of encouragement to foreign capital to come here unfettered so that it is a matter of all manufacturing assets to be sold and gazumpers welcomed by 1992?

Mr. Clarke: My right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State had many serious issues to consider, including, overridingly, the national interest. That is one of the issues that we are rightly covering in these exchanges —whether it is in the national interest to have a reasonably free exchange of investment and capital movement across the world, given that the British are now the major overseas investors. We considered the reciprocity arguments and found, both in Britain and Switzerland, that some companies are so structured that it is difficult to make a reverse takeover bid. There are many who argue that it would not be to the advantage of an economy to have too many companies that are protected in that way. We considered the effects on market share, competition and the consumer, for example. All these issues have been considered in a reasoned way. There is no public interest and no established policy reason for the Government to intervene and say that the issue should not be decided by the shareholders.

I appreciate the experience and the close local concern of my hon. Friend the Member for Pudsey (Sir G. Shaw) in these matters, but we should not abandon the Government's legal, policy, economic and industrial bases and start acting in a short-term populist way in response to lobbies, managements which fear takeovers, or probably unfounded fears about the impact on particular firms.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): Does the Minister realise that those of my constituents who are employed at the Girvan factory of Rowntree will be deeply disappointed that he is adopting a Pontius Pilate role, which suggests that he is acting under the influence of his unelected boss?

Is he aware that the Girvan travel-to-work area has the third highest level of unemployment in the country? What guarantee can he offer the people in the Rowntree factory in Girvan that their jobs will be protected?

Mr. Clarke: If anyone is taking any Roman attitudes in all this it is the British investor who, with the encouragement of the British Government, is building up an empire of overseas holdings throughout the world, as British investors move into America and Europe. The average American business man wears a Brooke's Brothers suit, but is not usually worried that that company is British-owned. If one wishes to stay in a Hilton hotel outside America, one finds that one is staying in a British-owned hotel. If, on the other hand, one buys a bottle of good British Ashbourne mineral water, one finds that it is produced by Nestlé in its factory in Derbyshire.

It is absurd to adopt this nationalist approach to policy, and it will become ever more so by 1992. Even the nationality of companies is a matter of argument. We talk about these companies being national companies because their headquarters are in a given place, but the nationality of the shareholders is becoming more international all the time. In our competition policy we have to consider consumers' interests and the impact on the economy as a whole, and that is what we shall do.

I am sure that both competing bidders will make their statements about what the future holds for jobs, manufacturing, cost-effectiveness and any rationalisations that they may undertake. Those are matters for management. They never would be matters for the Government, whether the company remains wholly Rowntree-owned or whether it is taken over by Nestlé, Suchard or anyone else.

Mr. Michael Grylls (Surrey, North-West): Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that as there are only six firms in the EEC controlling 70 per cent. of the EEC confectionery market there is a prima facie case, on European competition grounds, for blocking this bid, which would reduce their numbers from six to five? Does that not show that there is an urgent need to accept and adopt the EEC merger directive?

Are we not sending a dangerous signal to British industry? If, in preparation for 1992, British firms invest in improving their R and D, their marketing and their general organisation, and their profits drop in the short-term, and if the British Government will not stand by them if they are attacked by predatory bids just at that moment, is that not dangerous?

Mr. Clarke: We do not know whether the bid will be successful. That is not a matter for me or my right hon. and noble Friend. It depends on what happens and on the decision of the shareholders. If it is right that the emergence of 1992 will lead to a concentration of ownership, we have to make sure that the European consumer and the European economy are protected against the problems of monopoly and merger. We are in discussion with the Commission about the future role of European competition policy, on which we have an open mind. We are, however, anxious to ensure that any European-wide agreement should be based broadly on our principles of free investment, not taking nationalist decisions, and acting in the best economic interests of the economy and consumers. We would not want Europe to adopt anything that stopped British investors maintaining the substantial level of acquisitions in western Europe upon which they are now embarked.

Mr. John Garrett (Norwich, South): Is the Minister aware that his answer will cause some concern among the thousand Rowntree workers in my constituency, who happen to work on a prime city centre site? Would not a reference to the MMC be the only way of obtaining an objective study of the national interest in these matters? Has not the right hon. and learned Gentleman given the green light to protected European predators to take over any British company that they happen to fancy?

Mr. Clarke: Anyone who wants to acquire a company has to persuade the shareholders that he is making the right price offer for it or has the prospect of developing that company and improving its performance. We must judge bids, from wherever they come, thus: if the Government decide to intervene and stop the shareholders deciding, they must do that on the basis of the national interest, the consumers' interest and the various other things that we have been discussing. The Director General of Fair Trading and my right hon. and noble Friend have carefully considered those aspects and have decided that they are not affected in this case.

At the moment, British investors go overseas much more than others. It is to the advantage of other countries if they open up their markets to overseas investment—they get capital inflows as a result. British predators are more feared than any others across most of western Europe, and long may that remain so.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): Does my right hon. and learned Friend accept that all of us realise that British companies are taking over overseas companies, just as British companies are being taken over, and that that is a good thing? Is not the problem that the Government's monopolies and mergers policy has become a shambles and needs to be re-thought? Cadbury and Rowntree would fit ideally together, not just because of their enterprise, but because of their backgrounds, and make an excellent merger. However, because of the monopolies and mergers policy such a suggestion would be flung into the arms of the MMC, so they are hamstrung. If we are to have free competition, let us have free competition, and not stop British firms from doing what is good for Britain.

Mr. Clarke: Our monopolies and mergers policy is crystal clear and has been applied wholly logically in this case. I take my hat off to the management, which, faced with a bidder that happens to be an overseas company, has run an extremely good campaign, implying that this is some sort of overseas threat to British sovereignty, and has tried to get the Government to intervene to decide the matter in its favour.

I bear no ill-will to the Rowntree management or to anybody else. I am wholly neutral on the merits of the issue. It is up to Rowntree to persuade its shareholders that their best interests and those of the company lie with the present management. The overall effect of continuing to apply the rules that I have described to any major bid proposal will be that we look after the interests of the United Kingdom economy and the consumer. We shall continue to apply those rules consistently.

We shall cross the bridge of a merger between Cadbury and Rowntree when we reach it. We shall consider that on the basis of the likely effects on the market and the consumer. One must consider the market in these products and the effect of any merger by two manufacturers.

Mr. Doug Henderson (Newcastle upon Tyne, North): Will the Minister own up to the fact that in reality he is handing over the future of 13,000 jobs in the north-east of England to 50 banks and insurance companies in the City of London? Does that not demonstrate the need to change merger legislation and to give workers and managers, the people who make the companies succeed, a direct say?

Mr. Clarke: If I were being fair to the Opposition, I would at least credit them with consistency. With the greatest respect to my hon. Friends, the Opposition are more consistent in these matters. Most Labour Members dislike the idea of British capital being invested overseas and, like the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley), try to devise a complicated arrangement for most of the capital. Most Labour Members are against any merger, and I am sure that the hon. Gentleman would oppose any takeover, whether the bidder was British or foreign. This Fortress England mentality to the economy is an extremely unsuccessful approach to modern trading conditions. The success of the British economy in the past eight years shows that the Labour party's approach is fundamentally wrong and not even in the interests of those employed in our major companies.

Mr. Michael Alison (Selby): Does my right hon. and learned Friend recall that in his statement today the Secretary of State expressed doubts about whether the Swiss system of restrictive shareholding barriers suited their system well and said that they appear to be on the point of liberalising it? As that liberalisation would be very much in the interests of British firms seeking to invest in Switzerland, was it not an error of judgment not to penalise the Swiss in this instance and encourage liberalisation by imposing the necessary restrictions on reciprocal grounds on the investments which Nestlé is trying to make in Rowntree?

Mr. Clarke: When we last had an exchange on this subject I said that I was not a Swiss legislator, so I could not give views on Swiss law. So far as I can discover, the law does not arise, and no Minister in Switzerland is given the powers of my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State to intervene. If I were a member of the Swiss stock exchange, it is likely that I would disapprove of the capital structure of many Swiss companies, but I am not. Moreover, I understand that there are pressures to change that.

I have already cited companies in the United Kingdom, one of which is the National Freight Corporation, in whose creation I was in a minor way involved, which have a structure which protects them from takeover bids. The British stock exchange does not approve of that so much, but no one has yet suggested that the Government should intervene to stop companies setting up that particular share structure, and I do not think that we can.

Given that background, I do not believe that any substantial issue arises in this case to suggest that we should suddenly impose a total ban on all Swiss bids for British companies until the Swiss change their corporate structure. We would be depriving ourselves of a valuable influx of overseas capital; as valuable as the influx of capital from the Americans, the Japanese and elsewhere.

Mr. Bruce Millan (Glasgow, Govan): The Minister keeps talking about shareholders, but is it not against all experience to expect shareholders to protect the national interest, as against protecting their own interests? In this case the management and work force of Rowntree and the local communities are all utterly opposed to the takeover. Does that count for absolutely nothing with the Government?

Mr. Clarke: It is contrary to all experience to believe that an industrial strategy, as managed by Labour Ministers, is in the interests of employees, compared with the decisions of shareholders in the free market economy that we are now operating. The strong growth of the British economy over the past eight years is the best illustration of that. We are now the fastest expanding economy in Europe, which is why we are aggressive investors overseas and why we are attracting so much inward investment. Recent experience shows that that is in our economic interests.

The proportion of manufacturing in this country owned by foreign companies has been dropping, if considered in employment terms, in recent years because, although there has been a great deal of inward investment, the amount of domestic investment has also been rising very rapidly. There is therefore no risk of our losing our sovereignty and of all companies becoming foreign owned. As our recent economic experience proves, the climate is at present much more favourable to growth, enterprise, new employment and continued expansion of the British economy.

Mr. Quentin Davies (Stamford and Spalding): Notwithstanding my right hon. and learned Friend's remarks about the application of the principle of reciprocity to Nestlé, will he take time to consider the range of alternative shareholding structures in Europe and the different mechanisms for issuing non-voting shares and restricting voting rights on ordinary shares in particular circumstances, which exist to a certain extent here but are particularly prevalent in Holland and Germany? Will he consider carefully whether he believes that those systems are necessarily in the public interest or, indeed, in the European interest after 1992?

Mr. Clarke: I shall take the time to consider those points, and I shall probably take the time to consider my hon. Friend's advice as he has considerable expertise in these matters. There is a great variety of shareholding structures in western Europe, and it is more difficult to acquire companies in some countries than in others. I have already said to my right hon. Friend the Member for Selby (Mr. Alison) that I am not sure whether it is in the interests of the countries that have restrictive shareholding structures to keep them as they are. When we consider these issues on a European-wide level, as no doubt we eventually will when we have a common statute for corporate organisation covering the European Community, I am not sure that we should imitate the more closed systems. The more open system in Britain is undoubtedly preferable.

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): The Minister said that no employment issues were involved. Does he know that the workers at the Fox's Glacier Mints factory in my constitutency take a totally different view, that they get on extremely well with the management, and that they have confidence in the company and none whatever in the takeover mechanism, which brings them only anxiety?

What guarantee, if any, can the Government give to those employed by Fox's Glacier Mints that they will have any future if the company is taken over?

Mr. Clarke: I understand people's anxiety about employment whenever any major change affects the company for which they work. The only people who can make statements about the future pattern of employment are the management of a company. I do not know what statements Rowntree has been making to the employees of Fox's Glacier Mints in recent years, and I do not know what it will be proposing. However, I know that when Ministers regarded it as their obligation to make statements about employment issues the British economy was performing very badly. As we now acknowledge that management should be given the right to manage its own business, and that the market makes pretty good judgments about the best use of capital, we find that the economy is doing very much better. That means that jobs are being created in Britain at a much faster rate than in the rest of Europe put together.

Mr. John Townend (Bridlington): Will my right hon. and learned Friend accept that the decision will be met with real regret in my constituency in east Yorkshire? Is he aware that we are worried, not just about the number of jobs in the north, but about the quality of jobs? When firms are taken over and the head office moves to London, or in this case perhaps Geneva, the international market in jobs is affected. Jobs in R and D and in top management will go. Will my right hon. and learned Friend accept that one of the main culprits in this case is the Rowntree Trust, which was given 50 per cent. of the shares of the company by the Rowntree family, but has progressively sold its holding and now owns only 5 per cent.?

Mr. Clarke: I shall not comment on what the Rowntree Trust has been spending some of that money which has not always pleased Conservative Members. I shall leave that on one side.

I am pleased to say that the Yorkshire and Humberside economy is doing very well at the moment, with unemployment falling and the regional economy reviving strongly. We must do everything to encourage that. I understand the sensitivities when one of the great names in a region is involved in a takeover bid. That has occurred before, and it will occur again. I am sure that, on reflection, my hon. Friend will be aware that all that Ministers can, and will, do is to apply the national policies for which we answer to the House. We must apply the law laid down by the House and stick by the principles that we set out in the Blue Paper on monopolies and mergers. We believe that that is essentially in the interests of the Yorkshire and Humberside economy and the national economy. I do not believe that the northern or Yorkshire economies can be protected by introducing special rules to stop the free movement of capital into that area while such capital is moving strongly into the rest of the country.

Mr. Geoffrey Lofthouse (Pontefract and Castleford): Before taking the decision not to refer the matter to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, was the Minister aware of the strong feelings of hon. Members on both sides of the House, Cadbury, the Rowntree work force and the Confederation of British Industry? He has said that the employment consequences are not his concern. They should be his concern. He should be concerned for the 13,000 people in Rowntree, including the 600 in my constituency, who are worried sick. My constituency has just lost 10,000 jobs because of the rapid rundown of the mining industry. Rowntree is a major employer, and there is no guarantee for the work force that they will keep their jobs. Should the Minister not be concerned?

Mr. Clarke: I did not say that I was not concerned. I said that I do not determine the employment patterns of British companies. It is not for Ministers to decide that. We create the economic climate in which companies are best placed to expand, prosper and increase the amount of employment that they offer. If Rowntree had remained untouched by any offer, I would not have answered questions about how many would be employed at a particular factory. I do not approve of an economic system in which Ministers claim that they determine that. At the moment I do not believe that anyone is threatening the continued manufacture of Rowntree or Cadbury chocolates in this country. We are arguing about the ownership of the capital and whether that should be left to the shareholders to determine in the usual way.

Mr. Robert Banks (Harrogate): Does my right hon. and learned Friend recognise that the decision will be met with deep disappointment by many people in Yorkshire, who will be worried that the bare threat of takeover facing this great Yorkshire company will proceed? Does he agree that this is a lost opportunity for bringing pressure to bear on the Swiss Government and Swiss companies to bring their company structures into line with those in the majority of companies in this country? Will he review the criteria for the terms of reference for referral to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission?

Mr. Clarke: I understand the deep concern felt by all my hon. Friends who represent Yorkshire constituencies, and most of them have now been called to express those concerns. We all have local loyalties, and my judgment of issues is often quite properly coloured by my perception of local issues. Normally, most of my hon. Friends who have spoken agree with me on economic and industrial policy. I have a feeling that if we were talking about a great Nottinghamshire company several of my hon. Friends who speak for Yorkshire would not have thought there was anything wrong with our refusal to refer a bid to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Mr. Pat Wall (Bradford, North): Will the Minister reconsider the interests of the Rowntree employees, because their labour has created the wealth over which the predators are now squabbling? Have they not the right to a ballot to defend their jobs, particularly as they cannot go to the courts against this intimidation and the likely secondary picketing by Suchard, General Cinema and Cadbury?

Mr. Clarke: The fact that many people want to own a company is not altogether bad news for those who work in it. I understand that many employees feel unsettled when they discover that someone is competing for the ownership of the company. I believe that the reason why people are trying to buy companies is that they see Britain as an attractive place in which to invest and to use as a manufacturing base for the European market that we are putting together for 1992. I understand all the fears, but I

[Mr. Clarke]

do not believe that there is anything special in this case which justifies referral to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Mr. John Maples (Lewisham, West): I want to change the tone a little by telling my right hon. and learned Friend just how welcome his decision is, particularly in view of all the chauvinistic whingeing that we have heard from people who until a few weeks ago had no idea that Nestlé was not a British company. Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that Britain and British companies have benefited enormously from their freedom to invest abroad and that we are the last country that should erect artificial barriers to international investment?

Mr. Clarke: I am not sure whether my hon. Friend is referring to English or Yorkshire nationalism, but I am grateful for his support. I agree that the average consumer and the average employee did not feel so strongly about the nationality of the shareholders until this issue arose. It will be interesting to see in the Tea Room how many people boycott Branston pickle, Ashbourne water and all the goods made by Nestlé, most of which are made in the north of England and Scotland.

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West): Is the Minister aware that when I visit the Rowntree company in my constituency tomorrow I shall expect anything but a welcome for this afternoon's statement? He suggests that decisions on jobs in my constituency and elsewhere should be left to the shareholders and the two competitors. Will he accept that that will cut very little ice in an area where we were given precisely the same arguments over the Guinness takeover, when those pledges mattered not at all? How many more jobs does he expect us to lose in the pursuit of the philosophy that he appears to endorse?

Mr. Clarke: I do not know the basis on which so many people are asserting that the change of ownership in itself is likely to lead to a reduction in jobs. The number of jobs involved in the manufacturing of chocolate in this country will presumably be determined by the management—under whatever ownership—deciding how to win a share of the United Kingdom and European chocolate market. When the hon. Gentleman visits his constituency tomorrow no doubt he will put forward alternative propositions about what should happen. The Labour party finance and industry group said that merger policy should give

"prime attention to the wider economic aims of a Labour Government."

I know which I would put most trust in. A merger policy simply based on the economic aims of the previous Labour Government would offer little reassurance for jobs or anything else to the hon. Gentleman's constituents or to those of anyone else.

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): I appreciate the constituency interests of my hon. Friends. Will my right hon. and learned Friend give them some encouragement by accepting from me that Nestlé took over one of the largest factories in my constituency a year or two ago, since when everything has gone from strength to strength for investment and employment? The future might be much brighter than my hon. Friends expect.

Mr. Clarke: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. Had we approached these matters differently we would have blocked hundreds of takeovers by foreign companies during the last two or three years which have led to the same reassuring satisfactory consequences for firms as those described by my hon. Friend.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I hope that I have managed to call all those hon. Members with a direct interest in this matter. There will be other opportunities on the Adjournment motion later.

Property Services Agency

4.8 pm

The Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Nicholas Ridley): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement on the future of the Property Services Agency.

The Government have decided that the PSA should become a commercial organisation. In reaching this decision, we have taken account of a report prepared by Messrs. Deloitte Haskins and Sells on the introduction of commercial accounting into the PSA. Copies of that report have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses of Parliament. We have also paid special attention to the report on PSA which the Select Committee on the Environment prepared under the chairmanship of my hon. Friend the Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Sir H. Rossi).

Last July my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury announced that, from 1 April this year, there would be a new relationship between Departments and the PSA on major civil projects. Those payment and untying arrangements will now be extended to cover the range of services, defence as well as civil, offered by the PSA. The extended arrangements will be fully in place by 1 April 1990. By 1 April 1990, also, PSA will be reorganised into three businesses, as recommended by Deloittes. Two of these will be services businesses, covering project services and estates services. For the third, PSA will continue to manage, on behalf of the Government, the common user element of the civil estate. A substantial amount of property, however, will become the responsibility of individual Departments. I hope to make substantial progress in implementing that reorganisation before the completion date of 1 April 1990.

PSA will continue to seek opportunities to contract out functions to the private sector. I shall keep the process of contracting out under continuous review.

The changes are designed to expose the PSA to outside competition as rapidly as possible, and to equip the PSA to compete effectively, but further measures are needed if the PSA is to operate on a fully commercial basis. I have therefore decided that the PSA should become a Government trading fund, as proposed both by Deloittes and by the Select Committee. In line with the timetable set out by Deloittes, I look to the PSA to put as much of its operations as practicable on a trading fund basis no later than 1 April 1993.

My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has agreed that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence should take over responsibility from me in two areas. First, estate agency functions on the defence estate, both in the United Kingdom and overseas, will transfer on 1 October 1988. Secondly, some 200 industrial staff who are employed in the PSA's directly employed labour force to carry out specific and permanent tasks at defence establishments will transfer on 1 April 1989. By 1 April 1990, as arrangements are developed to put PSA's relationship with MOD on to an untied basis, up to 800 more of those industrial staff will be transferred.

Dr. John Cunningham (Copeland): Is the Secretary of State aware that the reasons set out for the creation of the PSA in its present form are as valid now as they were when it was created by the Conservative Government in 1972? Its role is to provide, manage and maintain Government property, including defence establishments, courts, research laboratories, training centres and land. We see a continuing need for such a role in the public interest.

Is the Secretary of State aware that we support the aim of greater efficiency in the Civil Service and within the public sector? Surely the proposals are aimed at preparing the PSA for its dismemberment and ultimate sale. If better commercial practice and performance is the objective, will the Secretary of State assure the House that the restructured PSA, as announced today, will be totally free to compete on equal terms with the private sector, without ministerial interference, and as recommended by the House of Commons Environment Select Committee? If he cannot give the House that assurance, are not his arguments for better performance on commercial terms simply exposed as bogus?

The PSA has been trusted to build the Clyde submarine base, which is intended for

"The UK Trident strategic system and the expanding fleet of nuclear and conventional submarines. The development is one of the most challenging projects ever undertaken."

If the PSA has been trusted to do that work, is it efficient in carrying it out? If it is inefficient, why was it trusted with such a critical and expensive project in the first place? Perhaps the Secretary of State will explain that decision in favour of the PSA undertaking such complicated expensive work which the Government have already endorsed.

If the Ministry of Defence, which currently provides some 60 per cent. of PSA work, is no longer obliged to use it, what are the implications for jobs, especially regional employment, and for security? There are, for example, more than 1,600 jobs in the north-east of England that will be at risk as a result of the Government's decision and as many more in Scotland. How many of the 24,000 PSA jobs does the Secretary of State estimate will eventually go as a result of that decision?

In general, the PSA gives the taxpayer a good deal. Its chief executive—a distinguished civil servant—is Sir Gordon Manzie, who is trusted and whose annual report has been endorsed by the Secretary of State. In that report Sir Gordon says:

"comparisons have shown PSA to be competitive with its private sector counterparts."

If that is true, what can be achieved by the Government announcement today? Surely that announcement exposes as bogus the Secretary of State's claims about commercial improvement. The Government's statement is simply a triumph of dogma and ideology over British public interest.

Mr. Ridley: The hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) managed to wax himself into a paroxysm of apprehension about what I believe to be a helpful and progressive statement regarding improvements to the efficiency and management of the Government's estate. I agree that it is the PSA's defined role—laid down when it was set up in 1972—that we are now seeking to develop. I welcome the hon. Gentleman's acknowledgement that greater efficiency is something that we should strive for, and that is what the statement seeks to achieve.

Curiously enough, I also welcome the hon. Gentleman's call for the PSA to be able to compete with the private sector. In effect, that is a request for a future Government to privatise suitable parts of the PSA. I welcome that request from the hon. Gentleman, just as I

[Mr. Ridley]

welcomed his enormous concern about the critical and important nature of the Trident base—he was right to stress its importance. I have no doubt in the abilities of the PSA both in that respect and in respect of the many other functions that it performs for Government Departments, including the Ministry of Defence. I believe that it will supply sponsor Departments with the very best service, and in that case it will continue to prosper.

I believe that there will be no threat to jobs. The hon. Gentleman got the figures regarding jobs connected with the Ministry of Defence slightly wrong. In future, however, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence will answer for that. As I said in my statement, up to 1,750 PSA staff will probably transfer to the MOD. Those are the staff that the MOD will need to manage its estates. The PSA is already contracting out about 85 per cent. of its physical work, so perhaps the MOD will be able to improve upon that transfer figure slightly. A great deal of work is already contracted out and the people employed on such contracts manage the estates. Therefore, there will be no threat to their jobs.

Sir Hugh Rossi (Hornsey and Wood Green): I welcome my right hon. Friend's statement inasmuch as it accepts two main recommendations of the Select Committee: the creation of the PSA as a trading fund, and the untying of the defence establishments. Contrary to the statement made by the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham), the Labour Members who served on the Committee listened carefully to all the evidence, studied the effects of the recommendations and were completely in agreement with those recommendations and accord-ingly, no doubt, with the statement that my right hon. Friend has just made.

May I say to my right hon. Friend in criticism that the way in which answers to Select Committee reports are presented to the House in a piecemeal fashion is more than unsatisfactory. We have had a memorandum, a partial reply in a private Member's motion, and now a statement. It would be far more satisfactory if all these matters could be dealt with by way of Command Papers and we could then properly study the Government's replies to very carefully thought out recommendations of Select Committees. I am glad to see that my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House is in his place to hear that criticism of matters of procedure.

As far as I can tell, all the recommendations of the Select Committee on the PSA have now been accepted, except that I do not know where we stand on the recommendations that

"a central body of PSA expertise should be retained as one unit for specialist advice and as landlord of the Civil Office and Storage Estate; and . . . allowed to manage the Civil Office and Storage Estate more positively, as a major property resource".

Where do we stand on those recommendations—the last major recommendations of my Committee?

Mr. Ridley: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I consider that the report on the PSA to which we are referring was one of the very best reports that Select Committees have produced for a long time. I pay tribute to all the members of that Select Committee. The report was so good that the Government have more or less agreed to every recommendation, although they were major recommendations.

I hope that my hon. Friend will excuse us for the delay in providing an answer, but the report raised some very complicated matters which had to be pursued and that took rather longer than I should have liked. The delay was to enable us to meet the recommendations. On the other hand, Select Committees like an early Government reply, so we were in a dilemma. I hope that my hon. Friend feels that the delay has been worth while to achieve the results that the Select Committee suggested.

Of course, the PSA will continue to give specialist advice to Government Departments about property management. That function will not be disturbed. The expertise is there at present and will continue.

In regard to the ownership of the civil estate, as I said in my statement, a large common user element of the Government's property will remain the responsibility of the PSA, but where facilities are purely for the use of Departments, such as in many defence matters, the ownership will transfer to the Department concerned. The exact dividing line between the common estate and the property which goes to individual Departments has yet to be defined, but I hope that that definition answers my hon. Friend in principle. As he said, we have accepted the recommendations about the trading fund and about untying.

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): Does the Secretary of State accept that if his proposals will lead to Government Departments, not least the Ministry of Defence, having greater flexibility to economise through engaging contractors which offer a price lower than that of the PSA, that will generally be welcomed?

Can the right hon. Gentleman give any guarantee that the reservoir of expertise mentioned by the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Sir H. Rossi) will be retained and that there will not be a proliferation of mini-PSAs which could lead to the loss of the advantages achieved through economies of scale?

Has the Secretary of State had an opportunity to speculate on the implications of commercialisation for the care and maintenance of this building? Does he foresee charges for the showers, for example?

Mr. Ridley: On the first point, any Department will be able to obtain the best price it can for maintenance or work to its own property as a result of untying. The hon. Gentleman welcomed that.

Secondly, the PSA will remain as a body and will continue to have specialist knowledge which will be available to those from any branch of Government who want to consult it and to Government Departments which will be free to use the PSA as the agent for managing their properties.

Thirdly, I propose no change in the arrangements under which the Palace of Westminster is run. In this case, the landlord is a royal one and the PSA manages the building on behalf of the landlord in conjunction with the Services Committee of the House.

Mr. Michael Heseltine (Henley): I strongly support my right hon. Friend's announcement. May I put two questions to him? First, is it not more likely that jobs in the economy will be increased by his announcement as the skills within the public sector will be transferred to the

private sector and will not only become available to the public sector but will be exploited through the British civil engineering industry across the world?

Secondly, will my right hon. Friend consider, in the dispersal of the Government estate to separate Departments, urging those Departments to use contract management from the private sector for the management of those estates, as well as enjoying the additional freedom of overall responsibility that he has given them?

Mr. Ridley: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend. It is very likely that the development of the policy will lead to a strengthening of the private sector. There is no reason why it should lead to a reduction in the numbers employed by the PSA if it can continue to justify its activities by winning work from Departments.

On my right hon. Friend's second question, it will be up to the Departments to manage their own property from now on. I hope that he will urge Departments to follow the course of obtaining the best offer for managing their estates, whether it be from the PSA or from the private sector, as well as contracting out maintenance and new construction work.

Mr. Peter L. Pike (Burnley): The Secretary of State said that the Select Committee report was a good report. As a member of the Select Committee, I must say that even better reports are still awaiting his response. Will the right hon. Gentleman give a categoric assurance that the statement is not a prelude to privatisation? Will he further give an assurance that the trade unions will be consulted fully and their views given due consideration?

Will the right hon. Gentleman also recognise that one of the major problems that the PSA faces is that the Departments that it serves are sometimes very unclear in giving to the PSA work requirements, both in their initial instructions and when changing their minds? That causes major problems for the PSA. Will the Minister try to ensure that it does not occur in future?

Mr. Ridley: Whether reports from Select Committees are good ones must await my view. The hon. Gentleman cannot put those words into my mouth before I have decided.

Privatisation may become a possibility which the staff prefer when the three businesses have been separated. They may well wish to go into the private sector to compete for a greater share of the work available. We cannot prejudge that as it will be many years before we reach that position. Trade unions will be consulted from this afternoon about the announcement that I have just made.

The lack of clarity of the intentions and needs of Government Departments which has made life very difficult for the PSA in looking after its buildings has been in part the cause of the changes that I have announced this afternoon. From now on, Departments will be responsible for managing their own buildings and for paying for that management. They will therefore have a much greater incentive to seek the best value for money than if the costs of whatever changes they make halfway through fall upon the PSA, which is hardly fair on it.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I remind the House that we have a busy day ahead of us. I ask for brief questions, and certainly not questions that have been asked before.

Mr. James Couchman (Gillingham): I congratulate my right hon. Friend on his wise decision to take the PSA into a full commercial position. If I have a criticism, it is that it will take a very long time to establish it as a trading fund and 1993 seems a long way ahead. After all, we have fully privatised greater public utilities in rather less time.

In regard to the Ministry of Defence assuming responsibility for its estates, what will happen to those estate management matters which are currently in train? Will the MOD assume responsibility for those matters ahead of 1 October, or will the PSA take its responsibility beyond 1 October? My right hon. Friend is very well aware that there are matters in my constituency which are of significant importance to my constituents.

Mr. Ridley: I agree that it is a pity that it will take so long to attain a full trading fund, but that is the estimate of the PSA and our consultants, Messrs. Deloittes, who believe that it cannot be done quicker. That is the time that it will take to move a large organisation from vote accounting to having full commercial accounts in a trading fund because of the immense changes that are necessary, each of which underlines the difference between a Government Department and a commercial organisation.

I shall soon have to ask my hon. Friend to ask my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence how he will manage the contracts that he needs for the defence estate. I am sure that he will wish the smooth transitional arrangements to continue and contracts that are in train will obviously be treated differently from contracts that will be let after 1 October.

Mr. John Garrett (Norwich, South): What will be the required rate of return from the three businesses? Will it be rigged in order to make them uncompetitive compared with the private sector? Is it intended to make political appointments to head them?

Mr. Ridley: I shall be able to set targets for the three businesses once we have three businesses in a few years' time, but not now. The staff of the PSA will remain civil servants, as they are at present, until such time as the new era is reached.

Mr. Kenneth Warren (Hastings and Rye): Much as I applaud the management changes that my right hon. Friend has proposed today, will he, following his answer to the last question, make sure that the staff understand their forward terms and conditions of employment so that we avoid the turmoil that we are now experiencing on the privatisation of the Crown Suppliers?

Mr. Ridley: I confirm that there will be no change in the status or position of any PSA staff as a result of what I have announced this afternoon. They remain civil servants. The PSA is run by a permanent secretary, to whom I pay tribute, as did the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham). There is a small advisory board that is purely advisory, but, for the rest, all members, whether they go to the MOD or stay with the PSA, will remain in exactly the same position as at present—as civil servants.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): How much were Deloittes paid for their report?

Mr. Ridley: I have no idea.

Mr. Michael Morris (Northampton, South): Is my right hon. Friend aware that, in evidence to the PAC, it was clear over the years that the PSA needed to be released from some of its shackles, and to that extent my hon. Friend's statement is welcome? However, can he assure us that one of the trading functions—the servicing of boilers, lifts and so on—will not simply result in a major direct labour department under the PSA?

Mr. Ridley: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. It is time that we made the move that I have outlined. Some people are best directly employed in the maintenance and looking after of property, but equally there is always scope for contracting out and from now on it will be for individual Departments which own their own properties to take those decisions. The PSA will continue to decide whether to contract out the sort of work to which my hon. Friend is referring in relation to the common user element in the civil estate.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Why could not the Minister give a straight answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Norwich, South (Mr. Garrett) on who will be heading the three companies in preparation for privatisation? Will there be any friends of his, or civil servants, distinguished or otherwise, heading them up? Could ex-Ministers have a lucrative number in the future? Why cannot the right hon. Gentleman give a guarantee that nobody will be latching on to any of these slush funds?

Mr. Ridley: I have made it clear that as the PSA becomes three separate businesses the whole staff will be civil servants who will be interchangeable with civil servants from other Departments. If new arrangements are proposed in five years' time, that will be the time for the hon. Gentleman to expect an answer to his question.

Mr. Michael Fallon (Darlington): If, by his statement, my right hon. Friend is preparing the three businesses for early privatisation, is he not to be congratulated? If he is not, is he not astounded by his own moderation?

Mr. Ridley: I do not know which of my hon. Friend's interpretations to claim. It will take the five years until 1993 to obtain the accounts necessary and to separate the three businesses. I make it plain that the business that owns the common user estate is unlikely to be privatised because, clearly, we cannot make ourselves tenants throughout all Government properties, particularly in the Whitehall area. Whether the other two businesses should be privatised will become much clearer when they become established.

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): Can my right hon. Friend confirm that the great majority of the land and buildings used by Government Departments is used by individual Departments and so his announcement today means that almost all the owners of the Government estate will be at liberty to use the private sector? Secondly, will my right hon. Friend try to accelerate his timetable for setting up the trading fund? Will he acknowledge that many Conservative Members want him to accelerate a programme of full privatisation for the whole of the PSA?

Mr. Ridley: Those Departments with special user directed buildings, such as the courts buildings of the Lord Chancellor, or the buildings solely concerned with agriculture of my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food—those are just examples; there are many more—will pass to the Departments concerned. However, a Government office is unlikely to transfer because it may house one Department for a period and later switch to another Department. As such, that is part of the common user estate. I shall be able to give more details of the precise split between departmental property and the common user estate after more work has been done.

I agree that it would be desirable to accelerate the proposals in the statement as fast as possible, but we have already tried to do that and our accountants, Messrs. Deloittes, have advised us that if we meet the target of 1993 for the trading fund, we shall be doing well. However, a Government of the same colour will still be in place then and will be ready to take the next step.

Dr. Keith Hampson (Leeds, North-West): Will my right hon. Friend accept that the regional office of the PSA in my constituency welcomes his proposals as being sensible? However, I am sure that the PSA staff would like the reassurance that, if they are to lose their traditional client base, they will be free to win contracts on a new wider client base within the private sector, such as in the nationalised industries, the National Health Service, and so on.

Mr. Ridley: It was on a visit to the regional office in my hon. Friend's constituency, when I discussed this matter a year or two ago with the staff, that I confirmed that this was the right direction for us to go and I am sure that they will feel the same now. The new businesses have a lot of work to do to become established and we should leave matters as they are at the moment. However, if there are invitations and strong pressure for those new businesses to compete in the private sector, that will be a compelling reason for privatising them.

Mr. Robert G. Hughes (Harrow, West): I welcome my right hon. Friend's statement, but does he agree that there is a possibility that, in the separation into three units, there may be an increase in the arm's length relationship between those placing the order and those doing the work that has been missing for some time? Secondly, may we hope that there will be a better use of resources and property, in particular property going to the MOD? Does my right hon. Friend agree that it would be better to leave people living in such property than to leave it empty?

Mr. Ridley: I believe that the separation will lead to more arm's length relationships and less arm twisting, which I am sure is what my hon. Friend would like. It will help the Ministry of Defence to identify surplus property and make disposals, and to ensure that any empty houses are either occupied or sold. However, the majority of empty MOD houses are far away from distressed areas of housing shortage.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I appeal for brief questions. It would be helpful if these matters could be raised on the Adjournment.

Mr. David Heathcoat-Amory (Wells): I welcome this overdue move towards commercial management on a trading fund basis. Will my right hon. Friend elaborate on the third of his new PSA companies, that holding civil land

and property? As there is an increasing shortage of commercial sites, particularly in the south of England, will my right hon. Friend oblige the new company to dispose of property wherever possible so that it can achieve its full potential in the market place?

Mr. Ridley: I agree with my hon. Friend, but disposals from the PSA are currently running at £40 million or £50 million per year, which is a remarkable figure. I pay tribute to the agency for the diligence with which it has disposed of surplus Government land and property. There is not much more scope for increasing that figure, and I do not imagine that my hon. Friend would want us to go as far as selling, for example, the freehold of the Treasury.

Mr. Toby Jessel (Twickenham): Is my right hon. Friend aware that many of my constituents will be heartily relieved if someone moves in to sort out and tighten up on the excesses of the Property Services Agency at Hampton Court palace? Can he say how his policy for improving the administration there will interact with his new proposals?

Mr. Ridley: As my hon. Friend knows, we have already taken steps to establish an agency to manage Hampton Court palace, and those arrangements are going well. That in itself means untying the PSA from being the monopoly building adviser and contractor at Hampton Court palace. In a sense, that decision pre-dates the statement I have just made. In either case, Hampton Court palace will be free to seek the advice, the design and the contracting work which it finds of greatest value for money in what it has to do.

Mr. Chris Butler (Warrington, South): Can my right hon. Friend tell the House how the management of the British Library project will be affected under the new commercial arrangements he has described? What would happen if the Property Services Agency ran severely over budget in respect of that project?

Mr. Ridley: Contracts already in existence and operating will continue to be managed as at present. That would apply to the British Library. If the Property Services Agency, having bid for the project, fails to make sufficient money to cover its costs and loses money, it will be necessary for it to account to the Treasury. In due course, the Treasury would decide whether or not to make good that which it had lost.

Mr. Richard Holt (Langbaurgh): As a member of the Select Committee on the Environment, I endorse the remarks of my hon. Friend the Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Sir H. Rossi) and of the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham). When it comes to relocating the three new companies, will my right hon. Friend give serious consideration to making the north of England the area to which they are directed?

Mr. Ridley: I have asked the PSA to consider what scope there is for relocating its operations and staff well in advance of anything that may arise from my statement. That is now being done. I am sure that my hon. Friend does not expect me to suggest any particular locations, but both the PSA and the Government are keen to devolve as many functions and staff as they can to localities where the resultant jobs will be welcome and where houses will not be so expensive.

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): I welcome my right hon. Friend's announcement. However, in the past there has been a major problem in dealing with defence property because of the PSA's influence. Will my right hon. Friend confirm that in future it will be easier to dispose of surplus land and houses currently owned by the MOD as a result of the PSA's reorganisation?

Mr. Ridley: It will certainly be no more difficult. The decision whether to dispose of land or property has always been one for the Ministry of Defence, which has always owned its own property. We are now giving it the personnel necessary to manage the estate agent, maintenance and new build functions. I hope that the Ministry will be able to dispose of surplus properties, as my hon. Friend suggests. I believe it will help the Ministry to be itself in control of the estate agent function in identifying and putting on to the market property which it does not need.

Mr. Dalyell: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. There are eight officials in the Box. The Secretary of State for the Environment has a particularly athletic PPS. I asked a very short question about the cost of Deloittes' report. Could not one of the Minister's officials, through his PPS, have provided the information I sought?

Mr. Speaker: The PPS looks to be in very good shape, but I cannot answer the hon. Gentleman's question.

Local Authority Searches and Enquiries, Etc.

4.45 pm

Mr. Malcolm Moss (Cambridgeshire, North-East): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to expedite local authority searches and enquiries and for other purposes.

There are two types of information which potential house purchasers require of local authorities. First, they need to search the land charges register; secondly, they need answers to additional inquiries. Local authorities have a statutory duty under the Local Land Charges Act 1975 to register local land charges. Everyone has a statutory right to inspect those registers at any time. The fee is set by the Lord Chancellor.

Additional inquiries are answered by voluntary agreement. There are 18 basic questions in all. Although the searches and the inquiries are technically quite separate, conveyancers usually apply for both together, and they are known collectively as the local searches. Before a purchaser commits himself to signing a contract, he needs answers to the questions contained in the local searches. Most building societies will not release mortgage money until they are satisfied that such searches and inquiries have been completed.

The problem of delays in completing those searches is not new. It was highlighted by the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) in his House Buyers Bill in 1983. However, it related only to the statutory search, and it was later dropped. The matter was also raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Staffordshire (Mr. Heddle), who I am delighted to see is present in the Chamber this afternoon, as someone who is continually vigilant in confronting the problems which face house buyers. My hon. Friend raised the matter in an Adjournment debate in February, when he produced statistical information contained in a report by the conveyancing standing committee of the Law Commission published last December. That report presented options and proposals for improving the system, and it invited comments by March of this year.

This month, the Woolwich building society also took up the question of delays and commissioned a survey in 37 towns and cities in England and Wales. That society's local branch managers were asked to obtain information from solicitors involved in conveyancing. Half of those interviewed responded that the service given by their local authorities is not very satisfactory. The delays revealed by the Woolwich survey averaged four weeks across the sample with the average going up to seven weeks in the metropolitan areas. It revealed a staggering 20 weeks in the London boroughs of Lambeth and Hackney. Most conveyancers in the survey expressed the view that a delay of one to two weeks is acceptable. The conveyancing standing committee suggested as accepable a delay of 10 days. It regards as reasonable a period that will not of itself cause any delay to routine conveyancing procedures.

Various reasons were given for delays. They included staff shortages and pressure of work. That may be true in certain local authorities where the housing activity of the past year or so has increased dramatically. Planning departments in my constituency are receiving twice the number of applications. Organisational difficulties were also mentioned, because the forms are often completed by different departments in different parts of the same building or in separate buildings. Another reason given for delay was fluctuating demand. District councils in my own constituency can turn around searches and inquiries in five to seven days. If it is possible there, why cannot other councils do the same?

Although delays are not universal and they vary in degree, the conveyancing standing committee of the Law Commission believes that the problem needs tackling immediately. The Bill seeks to speed up local authority searches now, and to encourage changes to simplify and streamline procedures for the future.

First, the Bill will seek to penalise local authorities that take more than 10 days to return the completed forms. If, after 10 days, they have not completed them, they will forfeit half the fee. If a further 10 days elapse and they still have not completed the forms, they will forfeit the whole fee. In addition, at that 20-day point, the house purchaser or his conveyancer will have a statutory right to instigate a personal search free of charge. A scheme of similar penalties was suggested by the hon. Member for Great Grimsby in 1983, and by my hon Friend the Member for Mid-Staffordshire in his Adjournment debate. It has also been put forward as an option by the conveyancing standing committee.

As a help in the longer term, my Bill seeks to promote computerisation of search procedures. The conveyancing standing committee thinks that that would be a medium-term solution for, say, five years. The Association of District Councils, however, considers that unduly pessimistic, pointing out that two authorities, Wigan and Portsmouth, are currently undergoing pilot schemes for computerisation, which should be on stream very soon. If it is successful, there is no reason why other local authorities cannot take it up fairly quickly.

House buyers and vendors alike are justifiably annoyed and upset, and their conveyancers are frustrated and irritated, when it takes an unreasonably long time to exchange contracts on a house. There is no doubt that such delays fuel the practice of gazumping. It is surely unacceptable that some local authorities offer the house-buying public a service that is at times so slow and erratic as to be rendered virtually useless. It is time that this unacceptable inefficiency was stopped.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Malcolm Moss, Mr. John Heddle, Mr. Tony Favell, Mr. Roger Knapman, Mr. Barry Field, Mr. Timothy Kirkhope, Mr. Irvine Patnick, Mr. Anthony Coombs, Miss Ann Widdecombe and Mr. Tim Boswell.

LOCAL AUTHORITY SEARCHES AND ENQUIRIES, ETC.

Mr. Malcolm Ross accordingly presented a Bill to expedite local authority searches and enquiries and for other purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 8 July and to be printed. [Bill 171.]

Adjournment (Spring)

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That this House, at its rising on Friday 27th May, do adjourn until Tuesday 7th June, and that the House shall not adjourn on Friday 27th May until Mr. Speaker shall have reported the Royal Assent to any Acts which have been agreed upon by both Houses.—*[Mr. Durant.]*

4.52 pm

Mr. Harold McCusker (Upper Bann): I shall not detain the House for long. In fact, I would not be speaking to the motion at all if the slightest parliamentary courtesy had been extended to the people of Northern Ireland, their elected representatives and, for that matter, the House by the Northern Ireland Office today, when it presented to the House a White Paper. I am sure that only you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and very few other Members of the House are aware of its having been presented. It was presented to us under plain cover, and no doubt was presented to the House under plain cover as well—or they slipped in in carpet slippers to avoid being heard.

Two important issues have already been discussed here this afternoon, and three important issues were discussed yesterday before the debate on the remaining business of the House. Here we have had a White Paper dealing with major issues regarding employment in Northern Ireland, yet once again the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland ignores elected representatives from the Province and, indeed, the whole House. That is a disgrace, and it is a disgrace that the House should adjourn before we have had an opportunity to ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland some questions about what he is proposing.

It is nothing new for the Leader of the House to hear this complaint. I have been making it regularly for the past 12 months. He will also know that I absented myself from the House for two years as a protest against the way in which Northern Ireland was being governed. During that period, the one constant whine for me to come back came from none other than the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, who continually exhorted me to come here, saying that this was the place in which to discuss the affairs of Northern Ireland, not the streets of the Province. I came back 12 months ago and, with my colleagues, have been treated with nothing but contempt ever since. That contempt reached its pinnacle today with the presentation of the White Paper without a word to the House from the Secretary of State.

Of course, outside the House everything is different. The White Paper, which was not available to me until 3.30 this afternoon, was available at 11 am to the media in Northern Ireland and at midday to the media in London. At this moment the media in Northern Ireland and London are receiving a private briefing on the contents. No doubt they are asking the sort of questions that the Secretary of State wants to hear and no doubt he will answer them, but he will not be hearing the questions that Northern Ireland Members would like to ask.

The White Paper projects the concept of fair employment in Northern Ireland and how it is to be achieved. It makes it a criminal offence for an employer in Northern Ireland not to keep registers of the religious affiliations of his employees and submit an annual return on that basis. That is a significant development. Until comparatively recently in Northern Ireland, employers were criticised for allegedly inquiring into the religious affiliations of their potential employees. Now it will be a criminal offence if they do not do so. Let me say with all the conviction that I can muster—and I am sure that I speak for all my colleagues—that I believe in appointment on merit alone.

Mr. James Molyneaux (Lagan Valley): The Prime Minister does.

Mr. McCusker: In that regard I agree with what the Prime Minister said at the Dispatch Box last week. If anyone disputes that assertion, I challenge him to go to where I was employed for six years before I came to this House and check my record there. An employer is a fool to do other than employ on merit alone, because in the current extremely difficult business circumstances, particularly in Northern Ireland, it is nonsense for an employer to believe that he can sustain and progress in his business by employing second best simply because he does not like the religion of another applicant. To make it a criminal offence not to register the religious affiliations of the work force is hardly likely to improve the position.

The Government commissioned PA International Consulting Services Ltd. to sell the nation to the business communities and others in Northern Ireland. Of course, the Government continue to contend that it is not in conflict with the principle of merit alone to ask employers to keep such registers. In a commentary on the issue, Mr. Dermot O'Callaghan made an important point:

"It is important to make it clear that equality of opportunity is not the same as equality of outcome."

He has put forward the argument to try to console employers that, provided they can prove that they have provided equality of opportunity, if equality of outcome does not arise they have nothing to fear. I wonder how long that concept will be sustained.

It is almost exactly 12 years to the day that we debated the first Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Bill, which became the present Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act 1976. On that occasion I was told by the Minister responsible that I was guilty of mischief-making, of making misleading statements and of scaremongering by suggesting that the Act would lead one day to employers having to keep registers of the religious affiliations of their employees. I have the relevant *Hansard* report with me, in case anyone disputes that. I was laughed out of the Chamber.

Just as it was clear then that ultimately the day would come when religious affiliation registers were kept, it is clear now that the suggestion that equality of opportunity is not to be confused with equality of outcome will be forgotten and that we shall move to a sytem of quotas. If an employer's register does not begin to reflect the religious composition of his area, it will be suggested that he prove that he is doing what is right by producing workplace statistics amounting to quotas.

I shall not rehearse all the arguments that we shall have when the White Paper is translated into legislation. Instead I shall pose the questions that my hon. Friend and I might have wanted to pose to the Secretary of State had he had the stomach to come and face us this afternoon. Let us take a look at the right hon. Gentleman's own record. We may expect an English politician presiding over Northern Ireland who produces a White Paper such as this to want to set a good example. Yet the Northern Ireland Office has a worse record of employing Roman Catholics in Northern Ireland than any other Government

[Mr. McCusker]

Department. It employs 14 per cent. Roman Catholics in the Province. I do not believe for one moment that the Secretary of State or those whom he employs are guilty of religious discrimination. I am sure that if the right hon. Gentleman was put to it he could explain why that is the case. There may be very good reasons that have nothing to do with religious discrimination. But he does not listen to that argument when it comes from other sources.

Lest the House should think that the record of the Northern Ireland Office is only marginally worse than that of other Government Departments, let me give the figures. The DHSS in Northern Ireland employs 49 per cent. Roman Catholics—almost 50 per cent. higher than the proportion of Roman Catholics in the community. The Department of Economic Development employs 40 per cent. Roman Catholics—well over their representation in the community. The overall average for the Civil Service in Northern Ireland is 33·7 per cent.—about the same as the proportion of Roman Catholics in the community. Let us ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, as he will be asking private sector employers, "Why do you employ only 14 per cent. Roman Catholics?"

I should also have liked to ask the Secretary of State about the implications of the White Paper for the Royal Ulster Constabulary, the Ulster Defence Regiment and the prison service. Those services probably employ only between 5 and 10 per cent. Roman Catholics, and they are frequently abused as sectarian organisations because they have so few Roman Catholics. Anyone who knows anything about Northern Ireland knows that that is not because of religious discrimination; there are other reasons. What is the Secretary of State doing to encourage the Catholic community to supply more people to those services, in which they are rightly required? Or is that community to be allowed to say, "We shall opt out of playing our part in certain essential occupations in the Province but we demand our quota and more in other occupations"? I should have been interested to hear what the Secretary of State had to say about that. We must also consider the ancillary staff employed by those organisations. What are the ramifications for ancillary staff who may be occupying very sensitive positions?

Not only will it be a criminal offence not to keep a register; there will be a series of penalties. Contractors and others who fail to comply will not be allowed access to Government grants. They will not be allowed to tender for Government contracts. What will happen to that most critical of Government contracts—a contract to rebuild a bomb-damaged police station or Army camp? Does the Secretary of State really intend to say to the few contractors left that they cannot have the contract? Many contractors have been murdered. The major contractor was murdered a short time ago, as was his general manager, and there is a death threat hanging over all the remaining principals in the company. Through no fault of its own, that company probably employs a majority of Protestants as Roman Catholics are terrified to work for it. Do the Government propose to say, "Sorry. We cannot let you repair our police stations and Army bases because you do not have the right religious balance"? Are they to be denied Government grant and contracts? I should have liked to hear the Secretary of State's answer to that.

What would the Secretary of State say to employers in west Belfast? I heard the political correspondent of Radio Telefis Eireann suggest that there was 90 per cent. unemployment in west Belfast. That means that if we go on this way there will soon be 110 per cent. unemployment. Of course that is nonsense. The figure is damnable, but in fact it is about 30 per cent. That means that there is 70 per cent. employment in west Belfast, much of it provided by bona fide Roman Catholic employers. Are we really to suggest to employers who employ a 100 per cent. Roman Catholic work force of necessity that they must set themselves a target for the next couple of years to get rid of 70 per cent. of their employees and recruit people from Sandy row, the Shankill road or east Belfast, as is being suggested to employees in east Belfast?

It is not good enough for the Secretary of State to produce a glossy White Paper which is

"Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland by Command of Her Majesty. May 1988"

and fail to come to the House to answer essential questions affecting the well-being of all the people of Northern Ireland.

What is the bottom line? We have 20 per cent. or 25 per cent. unemployment and there will be no real improvement in the balance until there are more job opportunities. My principal question to the Secretary of State concerns the chances of real improvement in job opportunities in Northern Ireland. What policies is the right hon. Gentleman pursuing to improve the number of jobs available? Or is it suggested that to get this imaginary balance right about 25,000 employed Protestants will have to get themselves unemployed over the next few years, and 25,000 unemployed Roman Catholics will have to be slotted into their jobs? Without more job opportunities, that is the only way to achieve the balance.

It is a disgrace that the Secretary of State has not been here to answer my questions, and I hope that even before Friday the Leader of the House will exhort him to come before the House.

5.8 pm

Sir Fergus Montgomery (Altrincham and Sale): I wish to raise two matters with my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House before we adjourn. I make no apology for raising once more the question of Manchester airport. On Monday 16 May mine was the second motion listed for debate. In my 25 years as a Member of the House it was the first time that I had been lucky enough to get into the first three, but perhaps luck was with the House, because my motion was not reached. We spent most of the time talking about planning procedures, which was of great interest to many of my friends from the south-east. Therefore, I propose to say briefly today what I would have said at greater length had I had the opportunity on 16 May.

Since 1979 Manchester airport has expanded more rapidly than any other United Kingdom airport, and for that I am grateful. I pay tribute to the work done by successive Secretaries of State for Transport in Conservative Administrations, whose efforts have been much appreciated in our area. Like Oliver Twist, we are asking for more. We want more intercontinental flights in and out of Manchester. I find it scarcely credible that there are 360 flights a week from London to the United States, but only 13 from Manchester to the United States.

It cannot be right that so many people who want to travel to America from the north of England should have to go to Heathrow or Gatwick when they have a perfectly good airport at Manchester. If there were more intercontinental flights in and out of Manchester, the economy of the north would receive an enormous boost. I believe that the economic situation in the north is improving, and I want the trend to continue. Manchester airport is one of our greatest assets—someone referred to it as the jewel in the crown. I am disappointed that we have not had a satisfactory conclusion to the applications by American Airlines, Northwest Airlines and Pan American World Airways to fly into Manchester and to provide enhanced opportunities for British airlines to fly direct to the United States from Manchester.

Over the years there has been a bipartisan approach to Manchester airport. I am delighted to see my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport in the Chamber. That bipartisan approach has been supported by hon. Members on both sides of the House and by local authorities in the north of all political persuasions. People have worked together for the common good, and particularly for Manchester airport. I am saddened by the breakdown of that approach.

Manchester airport now has a board of directors which includes 16 Labour councillors, one Conservative councillor and one Social and Liberal Democrat councillor. [HON. MEMBERS: "Too many."] Well, there was a time when the Labour party paraded on a programme of fair shares for all. I cannot see much to do with fair shares in that arrangement. For reasons best known to themselves, the directors ran an advertising campaign in support of more intercontinental flights. I agree about the need for more such flights, but I disagree with the board, in that it puts all the blame on the Government. The board was most unfair, because there are other considerations to be taken into account. The first involves British Airways, which is now running a daily flight from Manchester to New York, albeit that it starts in Gatwick. British Airways is asking for a clear run for at least two years to get the flight fully operational before it has to counter any opposition.

The next problem is the view taken by the American Transportation Secretary—my right hon. Friend's opposite number in Washington. Until quite recently that position was held by Mrs. Elizabeth Dole, who unfortunately resigned to try to help her husband gain the Republican nomination. I am tempted to say, "Come back Elizabeth Dole, all is forgiven." She was much more prepared to look favourably on applications for routes than is her successor, who wants his pound of flesh. That is common sense. If the Americans are to give anything, they want something back in exchange.

I hope that that shows that the issue is not as simple as the politically motivated directors of Manchester airport have made out. By a strange coincidence, the advertising campaign was timed to appear just before the local government elections. What could have been more convenient? All my hon. Friends from the north-west were opposed to the campaign. We felt that it was a waste of money.

Having said all that, I appeal to my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House and to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport to understand how strongly we feel about the negotiations that are going on between the United Kingdom and the United States. I ask them to press the case for the north as strongly as possible.

American Airlines already flies direct from Manchester to Chicago and has made an enormous success of the route. If its application to fly from Manchester to New York were granted, that would give an immediate stimulus to the economy of the north.

The other issue that I want to raise is, perhaps, more controversial. It is the need to establish in legislation a new upper gestational limit for abortions. I am not now suggesting what that limit should be, but there is no doubt that to millions of people in Britain this is a matter of national importance on which there is a pressing need for Parliament to reach a decision.

The hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) introduced a Bill earlier this year which would have provided the House with the opportunity to arrive at a conclusion on this matter, but the Bill was scuppered by a small but determined group of opponents who used the procedures of the House to prevent it from making progress.

I cannot see what the opponents of the Bill are worried about. All that we were asking for was a little extra time to ensure that all the votes were taken. The arguments have been made. I do not think that people outside the House understand why Parliament can be prevented from expressing its will. They saw a Bill, which had a comfortable majority on Second Reading, being blocked in its final stages. They feel that there is something undemocratic about that.

I was saddened when, on business questions a couple of weeks ago, my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House said that he was unable to make additional time available to compensate for the time lost on Friday 6 May. I say that because the only reason for the Abortion Act becoming law in 1967 was that the Government of the day provided extra time to ensure that the legislation could go through. If that Act, which has led to the abortion of 3 million babies, is not to remain for ever enshrined in stone, the House must find time to have the necessary votes.

All the arguments have been marshalled. All that is required is that a decision be taken. This problem will not go away. If the Abortion (Amendment) Bill fails, similar Bills will keep appearing, and the more the opponents of abortion reform do to prevent a decision being reached, the more the House will be brought into disrepute.

I do not think that there is one right hon. or hon. Member who has not been overwhelmed by the sheer weight of correspondence from constituents on this issue. That shows how strongly many people feel about the matter. There is great public outrage and frustration at the failure of the House to complete the remaining stages of the Abortion (Amendment) Bill. I hope that we will be able to reach a conclusion on it before the House rises for the spring recess.

5.16 pm

Mr. Jeff Rooker (Birmingham, Perry Barr): Perhaps I might make a passing reference to the motion before raising the matter that I wish to address.

It has been the recent habit to bring the House back on a Tuesday. Unless our other procedures are changed, that will cause chaos when we try to organise our affairs, such as participating in Question Time and getting ticket

[Mr. Jeff Rooker]

allocations. Above all, it will cause chaos for hon. Members who are serving on Standing Committees. Whether a Government Back Bencher or an Opposition Member, if one serves on a Standing Committee and the House comes back on a Tuesday rather than a Monday——

Mr. Michael Brown (Brigg and Cleethorpes): Simply come down on Monday night.

Mr. Rooker: It is not as easy as that. Hon. Members, especially Opposition Members, who are serving on a Standing Committee and want to meet outside advisers and colleagues to discuss the business for the week ahead cannot do that when the House is closed on a Monday. This may sound a pettyfogging complaint about an administrative inconvenience, but our coming back on a Tuesday is a recent innovation. It came to my attention during the Committee stages of the Local Government Bill and the Local Government Finance Bill. I am pleased to say, however, that I am not serving on any Standing Committees at the moment and I have no intention of serving on any for the rest of the Session.

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham): The change was made entirely for the convenience of the House. Many Members asked for it. I think that I, in a previous incarnation, had something to do with it the first time it happened. The main reason for the change was that hon. Members who live a long way from London would not have to travel down on a Sunday. The change was for the general convenience of hon. Members.

Mr. Rooker: That is the one respect in which I can see that the change is a convenience. In all other respects, however, such as those which I have mentioned, it is negative rather than positive.

Far be it from me to stick to the motion, but I should like now to raise a matter in respect of which we should have some answers before the recess. I freely accept that I shall not get those answers, but the matter must be raised.

This is a follow-up to the matters that I raised with the Home Secretary at Question Time on 21 April. I raised the issue of the Wormhoudt massacre of unarmed British prisoners of war on 28 May 1940. Therefore, this coming weekend is the 48th anniversary of that massacre, about 12 miles from Dunkirk, by one of Hitler's SS units.

About 80 or 90 British troops—we will never know the exact figure—unarmed members of the Royal Warwickshire and Cheshire regiments, were gunned down on the orders of one SS officer. From all the information I have read and according to the survivors, only one officer was known to be with those British troops at the time—Captain Lynn-Allen—who, in fact, was one of the first British soldiers to be killed.

From the history of the period—it happened before I was born, but I have talked to people who participated—the events of that day and of the days previous must have been chaotic. Untold acts of heroism must, and did, take place, as British Tommies fought against overwhelming odds to protect our forces retreating to Dunkirk. Many of those troops were captured. However, the vast majority of those captured were treated properly, under the Geneva convention, by professional German soldiers.

Everywhere the SS units went death followed. That is absolutely the case. Of course, there was not just this one incident, but this is the one that I wish to highlight. In fact, there was an incident two days before when an SS unit massacred unarmed British prisoners of war, who were members of the Royal Norfolk Regiment. The officer responsible for giving those orders was executed in 1949. In other words, the matter was followed up and a trial took place.

As I said in the House on 21 April—and as other hon. Members are also aware—it is clear that the responsibility for the Wormhoudt war crime is clear and unambiguous. The man responsible for that order was the then SS Captain Wilhelm Mohnke, later to rise to SS Major General and Commandant of the Reich Chancellery Defence in 1945. He escaped from Hitler's bunker on 1 or 2 May 1945. If anyone doubts that there is a prima facie case against that officer, I put on record two quotes which could be without challenge, but, unfortuntely, they come from documents which have not yet been released.

The first comes from the War Crimes Interrogation Unit Report No. 1500. It is dated 1947, but it was clearly prepared prior to June. On page 12, there is a paragraph headed "Responsibility", which states:

"Responsible for the crime of WORMHOUDT is the CO of —

then there is the particular SS unit—

"MOHNKE, who gave an order to shoot the prisoners concerned."

That report was superseded in June 1947 by Report No. 1650. Again that report related exclusively to the Wormhoudt incident. I do not intend to quote the names of the people mentioned in this report, because some of the Germans who gave evidence are still alive. On page 8 it states:

"MOHNKE gave the NCO of the second party of prisoners . . . the order to take them all to the Barn and eliminate them."

The next paragraph states:

"The evidence to show that MOHNKE gave the order to shoot the prisoners is well and clearly stated by"—

and two Germans are listed as giving statements.

On page 16 the report states:

"His (MOHNKE's) words were, '. . . What do you mean, by bringing in prisoners, contrary to orders'".

Those are the words of a German soldier.

The report further states:

"we had orders from MOHNKE to shoot the prisoners."

The 60-odd pages of this report, relating to this one incident, finger one German SS officer. That officer did not even shoot any British Tommies, but that is not the point. In this case it is the officer who gave the orders. That is the line which I draw and the line which was drawn by the people who conducted many of the trials following the war.

These reports show that there was a prima facie case to answer. The matter was passed to the Judge Advocate General's office. Mohnke's name was added to CROWCASS—Central Registry of War Crimes and Security Suspects—and later the British Government lodged it with the United Nations War Crimes Commission, where it remains today listed as case 128/UK/G/28.

Many attempts have been made to have the truth told about this massacre. I do not claim any credit; I have just added a piece to the jigsaw puzzle. I do not know when Mohnke was first discovered.

Since raising this matter in the House, a London bus driver has contacted me and said that he had identified and located Mohnke in 1972 on behalf of his uncle, who was at Wormhoudt on that day but was not put in the barn. He was taken as a prisoner of war by a non-SS unit and was therefore treated properly.

Mr. William Powell (Corby): The hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) raises an important point. One of the most disturbing things about this former SS officer is that not only did he serve later in the war as the commander of the guard around Hitler's bunker, but that he has achieved—though untried—a degree of quasi respectability with historians. He has become a major source of information for international historians, who spend a great deal of their time recreating the events that occurred in Berlin in April 1945.

Mr. Rooker: The hon. Member for Corby (Mr. Powell) is quite right, but those are not matters that I wish to go into now. There are many questions to be raised about this former SS officer. What happened to him between 1945 and 1955 when he was in Russian hands? What happened to him when he came back to the West—if I can use that term—and it was known that he had come back?

As I said, many attempts have been made to get to the truth of this massacre. There must be a degree of embarrassment in certain high places, both military and political, in this country. In fact, the deafening silence in certain quarters is testimony to this. Anyone who has read the stories in the papers during the past few weeks will have noted—by their absence—quotations from certain quarters that one would expect to have more than a passing interest in what happened to those British prisoners of war. Those are points that must be raised later when the Minister of Defence, hopefully, takes positive action.

There is no embarrassment whatsoever in this matter being raised for Reginald West, Charles Daley, Alfred Tombs, Albert Evans and Brian Fahey, who were all privates with the Royal Warwicks and the only known living survivors of the massacre. Of the 12 to 14 survivors, those alone remain. They cannot be precise about the number of survivors; no one will ever know exactly how many British Tommies were murdered and how many survived. All their identification tags were removed. A year after the bodies were buried, they were allegedly dug up and reburied elsewhere. No one knows whether all the bodies were removed. All identification was removed, contrary to the Geneva convention.

Nobody believed the story told by these men when they returned to England—the first in 1943—following repatriation, when they were swapped for Germans. They were not believed. How could they be? Seventy to 80 British Tommies were left at Wormhoudt with one or perhaps two officers, as reference has been found to another officer. There was perhaps one officer to protect the rear of those who had gone to Dunkirk. They never arrived. They never returned. No one knew what happened to them. There were no records. No one knew until 1943 when repatriation had taken place. No one even expected that there had been a massacre. There was no one to tell about it. Of course, officers and the press in Britain were stunned. Originally, no one believed these men when they told their story. In fact, one of my constituents did not return until late 1946 or early 1947.

To encourage the Ministry of Defence, I should add that there is no embarrassment among the relatives of those killed at Wormhoudt, or among the relatives of the survivors who are now dead. Sons, daughters and grandchildren have written to me in the past few weeks, supporting the desire to see justice, because it was known among the families and in the close circles of those men that something bad had happened, and nothing ever appeared to be done about it. Many who lost relatives at the end of May 1940 and who received letters from the then Ministry of War or the various regiments to say that their loved ones were missing in action and presumed dead can never be really certain whether they were in that barn at Wormhoudt.

None of the relatives can understand—nor can many hon. Members—why the two reports from which I have quoted are closed, under the Official Secrets Act, until 2021—to be precise, until 1 January 2021. They are closed for 75 years after the end of the war. Why? Most of the British personnel who are mentioned in the reports are dead and not all the survivors were involved in giving depositions because they were not all known about at the time. At least two and perhaps three out of the four members of the interrogation unit are still alive, although Colonel Scotland, who headed the unit, is no longer alive.

Surely those reports cannot be closed for 75 years to protect Herr Mohnke, or the Germans who gave evidence against him, from embarrassment. I know that in the early 1970s when writers were seeking permission from the Ministry of Defence to look at some of the documents, they were told—I have seen the correspondence—"You must not attribute or refer to those Germans in a derogatory fashion because it may embarrass them or their relatives." Funnily enough, the two Germans who were referred to in one letter were both dead, and anybody who knew anything about the case history would have known that they had been dead for years. However, the Ministry of Defence laid down those rules to British inquirers, writers and academics, and said, "You must not embarrass the Germans. You must not give the source of your information. You must not say that you have been allowed access to reports 1500 and 1650." There is no earthly reason why those reports, or any others, should remain closed for 75 years.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow) *rose*——

Mr. Rooker: Yes, I shall give way to my hon. Friend as I am about to conclude.

Mr. Dalyell: My hon. Friend will recollect that I supported him at Home Office Question Time on this important issue on which he has taken the lead. I asked about Ministry of Defence records. Someone, at some time, when making decisions about shredding, must have seen those documents.

Mr. Rooker: That is right. The fact that I have copies of both reports—not just extracts—shows that copies are in circulation and that they were not all at Kew or in the Ministry of Defence. Clearly, bona fide original copies are available, but not enough people have had sufficient pieces to put the jigsaw puzzle together. Not everyone knew that Mohnke was still alive. Those who knew the background were not certain. In the early 1970s the evidence was that he was either dead or still behind the iron curtain. I have seen that written up as late as 1972. Yet he was seen, as I

[Mr. Rooker]

understand it, at a trade fair in the late 1950s—in 1958 or 1959. The Germans have cleared him twice—in 1974 and in 1976. I do not know whether the German authorities have ever asked the British whether they could look at our information. One reason why I want the Ministry of Defence to take the lead in this is that it is beholden to do so.

Together with my collaborator, Ian Sayer, who publishes "World War II Investigator" and who gave me Mohnke's address, I arranged for Reginald West, my constituent, to make his own private complaint to the Lubeck authorities recently so that they cannot say that none of the survivors has contacted them. As none of the survivors has ever been contacted by the German authorities, that cannot be used as an excuse. We gave the Germans the reference numbers of the two reports and the West German ambassador in London received a copy.

I have told the Ministry of Defence that I am going to be patient. I have been so far, and I intend to continue to be moderate and modest in my demands. However, I will keep the issue before the House in one way or another. Later in the week an early-day motion will be tabled, with support from hon. Members of all parties, including the Father of the House, the right hon. Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine).

Mr. Martin M. Brandon-Bravo (Nottingham, South) *rose*——

Mr. Rooker: If the hon. Gentleman will forgive me, I shall not give way as I am about to make my final point.

Mr. Brandon-Bravo *rose*——

Mr. Rooker: I shall give way, but I have another point to make.

Mr. Brandon-Bravo: I am extremely grateful to the hon. Gentleman for giving way. I am sure that he knows that one has the impression that there has been great reluctance to open up or to look again at events which took place 40 years ago. As the hon. Gentleman knows, the Home Secretary has set up a small commission to look into the wider issues of unresolved war crimes. Will the hon. Gentleman help us by submitting his evidence to the panel that the Home Secretary has set up?

Mr. Rooker: I am glad that I gave way. That has already been done, but the panel said that the matter has nothing to do with it. The operation that the Home Secretary has set up will not cover this case. I make no complaint about that. I am raising a wholly different issue. I do not seek to confuse matters, but the Home Secretary's operation will not affect and is nothing to do with this case. Contact has been made and the panel politely pointed out that its terms of reference did not cover this case. I make no complaint about that at this point; perhaps later the panel's terms of reference will change.

The youngest of the survivors is 68 and the oldest is 81. They are not getting any younger. Time is not on their side, and they understand that as well as everyone else. In the past few days it has been disclosed that one of this country's eminent lawyers has offered his services free to the survivors, and they have accepted because other avenues can be explored. If the Ministry of Defence says, "Ministers have looked at this and taken a decision; the matter is to remain closed"—I sincerely hope that it does not—that decision must be challenged, and it can be challenged in places other than this House. However, that needs people with better and other professional expertise than I have.

I have sought to raise only a few of the points relating to this case. I do not wish to bore the House or to take up a lot of extra time in raising matters which I know could not be answered today. I gave notice to the Ministry of Defence last week that I would seek to keep the matter before the House and to keep up the pressure on Ministers and on those in the Ministry of Defence. They may not have been under pressure from certain quarters—that is a matter for criticism, and I will make that criticism at the appropriate time—but they will be kept under pressure from myself and from hon. Members of all parties until we get a satisfactory conclusion and justice for the survivors and the fallen.

5.37 pm

Mr. John Carlisle (Luton, North): The House has listened with great respect to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker), who has taken the lead on the matter that he raised and has earned the appreciation of many Members for the investigation that he is making.

I hope that in the few minutes available to me I shall be listened to with equal respect, especially by the hon. Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick), on the matter that I wish to bring before my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House before the House rises for the spring Adjournment. It is a matter that I tried to raise on the Adjournment some time ago but neither the Home Office nor the Foreign and Commonwealth Office would take any responsibility for it. It is the continuing picket outside the South African embassy.

With the tourist season and the summer approaching, I believe that the House should hear about the terrible scourge of that picket, or demonstration, on Trafalgar square; about the shame that it is bringing to London and to this country by the fact that it is allowed to continue virtually unabated; about the fact that Her Majesty's Government have seen fit not to take any notice of the picket; and about the fact that the police have had great difficulty in the various prosecutions that they have brought in trying to bring some sense of law and order into events outside the embassy.

It is a disgrace that a bunch of Left-wing political extremists, paid, of course, by Camden council, the World Council of Churches and other organisations to attend, should be present on a 24-hour basis outside an embassy in this country. The demonstration bears no comparison with the understandable vigils and other demonstrations that have taken place outside embassies throughout London in the past. For example, candlelight vigils have taken place outside the Russian embassy and many hon. Members on both sides of the House have participated in them. Quiet and peaceful demonstrations and protests have taken place outside the embassies of South American countries and of many other countries. The demonstration outside the South African embassy has nothing to do with peaceful protest. It is a continuing scourge and the House should understand that many of my right hon. and hon. Friends are becoming cross at the apparent inactivity of the authorities to do something about it.

No other demonstrations are taking place in the capital outside the embassies of countries that equally, if I might use that term, violate human rights. I have always said that I consider apartheid to be a violation of human rights. There are no demonstrations outside any of the black African embassies, for example, which represent countries where some human rights violations are far worse than in South Africa. There are no demonstrations outside the embassies of iron curtain countries. There are no demonstrations outside the Indian embassy or the high commission because of what has been going on in that country. The House should understand that the continuing demonstration outside the South African embassy is becoming rather more than a nuisance.

The demonstration is mounted by an unashamed political body through the anti-apartheid movement, which receives funds from eastern European countries and some British sources. Those who take part in the demonstration might well demonstrate in support of an animal welfare rights campaign along Whitehall, or in a campaign to protest against the recent parliamentary activity of the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton).

The same people turn up day in and day out, year in and year out, for any sort of protest, and they always exaggerate their numbers. They are known, quite rightly, as rent a mob. They are especially violent and spiteful in the demonstration that they are mounting against the South African Government outside the embassy. I have personally experienced violence on the campuses of universities and polytechnics, which has rightly been condemned by Members on both sides of the House, and the fact that this violent element exists in our capital is a disgrace to us all. The demonstrators are supported by the so-called respectable arm of the African National Congress through its offices in London.

The non-stop picket has taken place in many and various ways——

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire): I am glad that my hon. Friend has brought the matter before the House; it has received scant attention until now. Will he deal with the apparent unwillingness of the Metropolitan police or my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary to pursue the legitimate complaints that have been made, partly by members of the public who have suffered at the hands of these people, and partly by police officers who have been injured by them?

Mr. Carlisle: If my hon. Friend remains patient for a few moments, I think he will find that I shall cover the issue that he has raised. It is one that concerns many throughout Britain.

The activities of the group of demonstrators outside the South African embassy include a continuous presence. There is an unashamed 24-hour protest outside the embassy on the pavement, which is about 20 ft. wide. This tends to spill over towards the embassy and thus causes great inconvenience to passing visitors. The group's activities include the daily use of a megaphone, the loudness of which varies. What do not vary are the slogans that are shouted through the megaphone at the embassy, at passing visitors, at the police and at anyone who is in the vicinity at the time. Typical slogans are, "Ambassador Killen is a Fascist killer" and "Racist murderers, out of Britain." Those who shout the slogans accuse the police of sexism and racism. The slogans are directed at any visitor in the area or those entering or leaving the embassy.

Every Thursday afternoon or evening there is the playing of a brass band, by what might be called a motley crew of musicians. They set up shop outside the embassy and play all types of music, again to the nuisance of those working within the embassy and to those outside.

Street collections have been mounted on many occasions, and these are illegal if they are not supported by the proper licences. Encouragement has been given to various groups, such as the British Communist party and the Labour lesbian group. Who knows, there may be some members of that group on the Opposition Benches. British Labour Members have stood outside the embassy, and in many instances they have deliberately caused themselves to be arrested in the demonstration. On occasion the demonstrators have set up on the pavement outside the embassy a stall at which they have sold T-shirts, pamphlets, stickers and posters. There has been a continuous attempt to coerce members of the public into signing petitions.

Worst of all has been the abuse, both verbal and physical, that has been directed at those legitimately walking in the area. This has been virtually unnoticed by the House. Whoever walks by the embassy these days is accosted by one of the demonstrators. This may be done by young men or young women, if they can be so described.

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockport, North): That is not true.

Mr. Carlisle: I hear what the hon. Gentleman says. Perhaps he has not walked by the embassy recently. Perhaps he does not realise the extent of the picket. On many occasions it spreads across the pavement, which means that pedestrians cannot walk by without being accosted or physically jostled by the demonstrators.

Mr. Cook: The hon. Gentleman may be pleased to learn, if he is in one of his rare listening moods, that I walk past the embassy regularly and am never accosted by the demonstrators. I walk past without let or hindrance. The House will note that the Metropolitan police maintain a presence and that their officers rarely have to take a hand.

Mr. Carlisle: I do not have time to list the various offences that have been committed. Probably the hon. Gentleman is recognised by those who maintain the picket, who know him to be sympathetic to their cause. The general public are accosted regularly and the embassy officials are jostled, spat at and abused as they enter or leave the embassy, whatever the colour of their skin. This abuse is a continual nuisance to the public, and especially to those who are working in the embassy.

I suppose the most famous offence in recent times was the one that took place in May 1987, when three canisters of red paint were thrown at the embassy. Perhaps some Labour Members would argue that that was a form of peaceful protest. However, arrests were made on that occasion. When police barriers have been erected, they have been moved. After the red paint incident, the mob was moved to the pavement of Duncannon street, which runs along one side of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, and for about five weeks it carried out its protest there. The House, including my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary,

[Mr. Carlisle]

should ask why the Metropolitan police allowed the mob to return to a place outside the embassy after it had committed an offence against the embassy.

The police have been involved in violent scuffles outside the embassy on many occasions. In one such incident a policeman was injured by the demonstrators. If the demonstration was peaceful and non-violent, did not harass those working in the embassy and those walking by it, and was a genuine protest—I understand the feeling of some Opposition Members and some of my right hon. and hon. Friends about that which the demonstrators are protesting against—we would have no cause for concern. Unfortunately, that is not the position, and Opposition Members delude themselves if they think otherwise.

I promised my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth) that I would discuss the prosecutions that have taken place. This goes back to the incident outside the South African embassy in Kensington in 1984, when some violence took place. Although various arrests were made, no one was ultimately brought to trial, sometimes for technical reasons and, one hopes, sometimes because there was no case to answer. If that is the way the law is, so be it. However, there is no doubt that because of that "success" the police have been extremely reluctant to bring prosecutions against people who are violating the law in no uncertain terms.

In April 1986 there was a discussion between the police, the Foreign Office, the embassy and members of the diplomatic corps. It was promised then that every effort would be made to alleviate the problem. Since then nothing has been done to alleviate the problem. Some prosecutions have been brought, but most of them have failed, and virtually no prison sentences or punishments have been given, although there have been one or two. [HON. MEMBERS: "Shame!"] The shame is that these people can flout the law, week in and week out, without attracting the attention of the authorities or the police.

Two questions must be asked about this sorry affair, and I ask my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House to take the first of them to the Foreign Secretary. Are the Government fulfilling their obligations under the Diplomatic Privileges Act 1964, under which a responsibility is placed on the receiving state to protect the peace and dignity of a diplomatic mission as well as the persons and possessions relating to such a mission? Under the Vienna convention we are ignoring our responsibilities by allowing this demonstration to continue in its present form.

The second question is whether the Government are wholly satisfied that the police have to rely on local byelaws to arrest those who offend, and that cases can be brought only against individuals, not against groups. Will my right hon. Friend ask our right hon. Friend the Home Secretary to consider bringing in legislation to prevent this sort of thing happening to embassies?

Finally, I bring a related issue to the attention of the House. On 11 June the BBC is making a 10-hour broadcast of a concert from Wembley which is organised by the anti-apartheid movement to celebrate Nelson Mandela's 70th birthday. Mandela is a terrorist who was committed to gaol in South Africa 26 years ago. He can walk out of gaol any time he wants to, provided that he renounces violence against the state.

Why is this concert going ahead and being sponsored by the BBC? Where will the, presumably considerable, fees come from? I suggest that it is outside the BBC's charter that such an unashamedly political organisation should obtain 10 hours of time and receive the considerable sums of money from the public purse and the licence payers that the concert will generate. I hope that before 11 June the Home Secretary will scrutinise this matter and ask the BBC those questions. It is a disgrace to the House and the country that we consistently support terrorist organisations with our money and time.

5.54 pm

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): What has been disgraceful is not the daily demonstration outside the South African embassy but the manner in which the apartheid regime is defended and justified at every opportunity by the hon. Member for Luton, North (Mr. Carlisle). He has made a number of trips to South Africa at the expense of the South African authorities and has never sought to deny that. During the time he has been in the House he has continually used it as a platform from which to put across the point of view of the South African authorities.

The Opposition have made their position clear on numerous occasions. We are against the system in South Africa. It is an outrageous tyranny that discriminates against the majority of the people there because of the colour of their skin. We have been told by the Government that they accept our point of view; the argument is what should be done about it. Time and again, Ministers have said that they agree with our interpretation of events in South Africa—not with that of the hon. Member for Luton, North.

We want sanctions against the South African regime. However much my views may differ from those of some of the people involved in the demonstration, I am pleased that Londoners and all who come here are constantly reminded that there are people in this country who are very much opposed to the tyranny of the South African regime, just as we opposed the Nazi tyranny in Germany before the war.

I come now to the point raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker). It is difficult to understand how the Government can be indifferent to the fate of the British and Canadian soldiers who were massacred nearly 48 years ago. If the person responsible is living in Germany under a respectable guise, as the hon. Member for Corby (Mr. Powell) said that he was—and I understand that he is a fairly successful business man—I find it difficult to understand how the Government can be indifferent to what happened. After all, the allied Governments in the war—including the British Government—made their position perfectly clear: they said that all those responsible for Nazi crimes against humanity would be brought to justice when the war ended. Surely we should be concerned about the massacre of British soldiers at the hands of this Nazi fanatic, and should bring every sort of pressure to bear on the German authorities to ensure he is brought to justice.

My main point in this debate concerns the partial compensation that will be paid to people who have lost more than £2·50 in housing benefit. We have been informed that a special unit of the DHSS has been set up to deal with applications from such people—pensioners

and others—who are now forced to pay £15, £20 or more weekly in rent and rates out of a limited income. Some of those affected are my constituents. These substantial additional payments of rent and rates are expected from those who have had their housing benefit withdrawn or much reduced, and many of the pensioners who have been thus adversely affected are finding it almost impossible to come up with the extra money now required.

An 84-year-old constituent came to my surgery to tell me that she had been asked to pay £18 a week more out of a very limited income. As a result of pressure from Opposition Members and the public, the Government partly climbed down. The Secretary of State for Social Services announced the transitional arrangements, but how long will they last—for one year, or more? I see no reason why the first £2·50 should not be compensated; but it appears now that there will be no compensation for rent and rate increases in the current year, either.

A good deal of red tape seems to be involved in applying for the compensation. It will not be paid automatically. Applicants will have to fill in a form which has to go to the special DHSS unit in Glasgow. Local authorities will have to be consulted about how much housing benefit the applicant was paid before the cuts and how much is being paid now. All that will take time.

The special unit will not be established until the beginning of July, so during the eight weeks or more people on a limited income will pay substantial increases in rent and rates. That is wrong. I hope that tonight the Leader of the House will give us more information about the transitional arrangements. The Secretary of State should be here to make a statement.

My second point concerns the Home Secretary's decision on concessionary television licences as announced in a written answer on 18 May. It could be argued that I have an interest, not because I am a pensioner—I have quite a few years to go yet—but because I introduced a private Member's Bill on this subject. I was fortunate in winning first place in the ballot and on 16 January 1987 my Bill, which would have provided a concessionary television licence fee for all pensioners, was defeated by 21 votes. That was a shameful result arising from the Government's decision to oppose my measure.

A week later in the High Court it was ruled that local authorities could provide concessionary television licences for pensioners where there was some common facility. Several local authorities, including mine, submitted applications, some of which were successful so that pensioners would receive a concessionary television licence where there was, for instance, the Piper warning system. The Home Secretary has now reversed that. Not only has the 5p fee increased to £5, but it will be necessary for the accommodation to be warden-controlled. Pensioners on a limited income were hoping to get a concessionary licence —we should bear in mind how important television is for elderly people, especially in the winter months—but their hopes have been dashed.

It is difficult to understand how in the Budget the Government can provide the richest in the community with hundreds of pounds a week extra—those people certainly do not need that cash—while many of our retired constituents living on the smallest income are denied a concessionary television licence. As I say, the Government have made it far more difficult for them.

If the licence fee were £5 for all pensioners I would have no complaint, but that is not the case. Far from it. I hope that today we shall be given information on housing benefit and concessionary television licences for pensioners, and that there will be a debate on the latter.

6.2 pm

Mr. Kenneth Warren (Hastings and Rye): I wish to address my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House on the difficult subject of the relationship between the British Broadcasting Corporation and the world which watches and listens to it.

We are enjoying a good, sound boom in economic growth and nowhere is that more clearly visible or wanted than in overseas exports. I am sure that you, Madam Deputy Speaker, on your travels around the world have enjoyed the excellent performance of the BBC world service. It is rewarding to hear of students in parts of China listening to the BBC world service and gaining an understanding of this country. But we must recognise the strength of the BBC and how it is often thought to reflect British policies and even how this House views the countries at which programmes are directed. I can find little fault with the BBC world service, but recently the penchant of the BBC in its current affairs programmes has been for trial by television, and one or two examples of that have been discussed in this House. When the BBC gets it wrong, the BBC gets it excruciatingly wrong.

I have not visited south-east Asia for many years, but I was talking to some leading business men who have high hopes of exporting there capital goods on a large scale, providing employment for thousands of British people. They drew my attention to the extraordinary impact of "Newsnight" on 4 May which was about the new Prime Minister of Malaysia. Apparently it was constructed from a 45-minute interview with the Prime Minister which was whittled down to two minutes of him on screen and 18 minutes principally devoted to the views of his political opponents.

The BBC and the press have every right to say whatever they want, but the impact of such a programme should be borne in mind, especially considering the hard time that British exporters have had in building up their exports over the past seven years. Four years ago there was an active "buy British last" policy in Malaysia and other parts of south-east Asia. It not only affected the export of capital goods, but Concorde was denied rights to fly down the corridor to reach Singapore. The BBC is recognised as an important and valuable national institution, so when a programme is biased against a foreigner it is regarded as a direct criticism by this House and our Government of a particular foreign power and its leader.

I shall not dwell on whether a foreign power or its leader is correctly portrayed. I am concerned that British exporters, having spent four years gradually beating back the "buy British last" policy, and being on the verge of substantial orders, could be undermined by such an unfortunate programme. I have illustrated a specific case, but I hope that my right hon. Friend will review the general case and perhaps discuss with the governors of the BBC the impact of that type of programme and the effect of misreporting on the fortunes of and relationships between two countries such as Malaysia and the United Kingdom.

I have no interest to declare. I raise this matter because I am worried about the delicate nature of such a relationship, and how the BBC is regarded around the

[Mr. Kenneth Warren]

world. I am rarely a critic of the corporation which in general is excellent, but perhaps my right hon. Friend would be kind enough to review the position and reassure the Malaysians and others interested in trading with us that we base Government policy not on media opinions, but on good relations developed between this Government and those overseas.

6.8 pm

Mr. Charles Kennedy (Ross, Cromarty, and Skye): I wish to contribute briefly to the debate on an issue of great importance to my constituency—an issue that arouses the interest and concern of every hon. Member when it is relevant to his constituency or area. The Leader of the House had experience of this matter this time last year, as he told me in response to a recent business question.

The issue that concerns me is that of Nirex and its consultative arrangements in respect of its document, "The Way Forward", which seeks to find a solution to the thorny, vexed and long-running problem of the disposal of nuclear waste. It is significant that the consultative period will end during our parliamentary recess. Therefore, I bring to the attention of the Leader of the House and of hon. Members the considerable legitimate worries about Nirex's method of consultation and the options in its report. I wish to draw the House's attention to the feelings of people in my constituency which has been listed as being of potential geological suitability for possible further evaluation with a view to long-term nuclear waste disposal.

The consultative document considers three concepts for dealing with the problem. The first is disposal under land, the second is disposal under the seabed with access from the coast, and the third is disposal under the seabed with access at sea. There are several reasons for refuting each of those concepts as a possible way forward, but I shall confine myself to one.

Each of those methods would involve the long-term locking away of nuclear material in an unreclaimable form. It is nonsense, when scientific knowledge at this juncture is not sufficient to offer a full solution to the problem, to lock ourselves away from a possible future solution if scientific knowledge can deliver it. That is the fundamental criticism inherent in each of those possible categories of disposal.

Nirex is not consulting about one form of interim disposal—on-site storage at surface level at existing nuclear installations. There is considerable evidence of public support, if I may call it that, for that approach rather than for the three methods upon which Nirex is currently consulting. Its consultation process is flawed because it has not chosen to evaluate and test public reaction to the perfectly feasible and scientifically sustainable method of storing nuclear waste materials on site at existing nuclear installations.

I hope that the Leader of the House will draw the concern of many hon. Members to the Secretary of State for the Environment who, ultimately, will have to consider whatever recommendations Nirex may make. I hope that the Secretary of State for the Environment and the Secretary of State for Scotland will bear in mind that Nirex did not consult upon that evident way of proceeding.

Mr. Michael Brown: I agree with a great deal of what the hon. Gentleman has said. Does he agree that, as we are only days from the end of the consultation period, it is crucial that every hon. Member should express his view on the consultation document—I suspect that many hon. Members share his view—by the end of the consultation period so that Nirex is in no doubt about our views?

Mr. Kennedy: I am aware of the prominent and consistent view taken by the hon. Gentleman in respect of his constituency during the last Parliament and I know that he will have made clear his thoughts to Nirex. I echo his plea that the more hon. Members make known their views to Nirex, the greater will be the input that Nirex receives.

I wish to refer to the distinctive form of public consultation which has been carried out at Easter Ross in my constituency. Nirex has not been particularly forthcoming about the geographic knowledge that it is willing to pass on to those concerned about possible disposal sites. However, within those constraints, a mini-referendum was recently held within Easter Ross, supervised by the Electoral Reform Society. The ballot motion stated:

"A company called UK Nirex has found several areas of Britain in which it may be possible to bury low and intermediate levels of nuclear waste below ground level. Part of Easter Ross is one of these areas. NIREX intend carrying out more tests in order to choose an area in which they can site an underground waste repository. Are you in favour of these tests being carried out in Easter Ross?"

That motion was approved by the Electoral Reform Society, and I hope that the House will agree that it was not a loaded question. It is a straightforward, unbiased account of the proposition currently being considered. Of all the valid returned papers, 96·36 per cent. came out against such tests in Easter Ross; 142 people voted in favour of the proposition that further tests could be carried out and 3,761 voted against it. In all, 5,130 papers were distributed and 3,915 were returned, of which 12 were blank or spoilt. The response to the ballot, including blank and spoilt papers, was 76·31 per cent. As a result of that straightforward and unloaded public opinion survey, which required people to mark the ballot paper and then go to the bother of returning it by post, there was a definitive answer that, in common with many other parts of the country, my area categorically said no to Nirex. I hope that Nirex will take that into account.

Nirex has not given a very warm welcome to the result of that ballot. I regret the criticism that it has levelled at the ballot because it was invited to participate, with myself and other members of the local community, in a series of four public meetings in which the arguments for and against were thoroughly aired and the technical matters involved were constructively explained. Nirex chose not to participate in that exercise, which, again, does not reflect much interest on its part in a genuine consultative process.

The way in which Nirex has approached this matter is shot through with flaws and we reject its approach. I also speak for others in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland where there is considerable anxiety about this matter. We share a common view that on-site disposal or storage is more preferable than the options being canvassed by Nirex. We believe that there should have been consultation on the option of on-site disposal or storage.

I hope that before the consultative period ends hon. Members will make known their views to Nirex, and that,

in due course, both the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Secretary of State for the Environment will evaluate carefully what will no doubt be strong opposition from many parts of the country. It is all too easy on this issue to say, "Not in my back yard," as the referendum in my constituency showed. Surely it is more constructive for the future to say of those three methods of disposal, "Not in anyone's back yard," because it is not a responsible way to deal with the problem. We should choose on-site disposal rather than any of the three methods in the consultative document.

6.19 pm

Mr. William Powell (Corby): The charm of these debates lies in the wide variety of issues that are canvassed. I have listened with considerable interest to many of the contributions this evening, not least to that of the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy). I want to return to the remarks made by my hon. Friend the Member for Altrincham and Sale (Sir F. Montgomery) about an hour ago and deal with the procedures of the House.

The Order Paper is filled with motions on procedure, but matters of procedure do not receive the attention that they deserve. Many misconceptions and misunderstandings follow, particularly outside the House, because people have an inadequate grasp of the reasons for the procedures and the fact—which is vital—that our procedures are impartial and work for the benefit of the whole House, not for any particular hon. Member. In that connection I want to refer, as my hon. Friend the Member for Altrincham and Sale did, to the Abortion (Amendment) Bill.

I declare without any hesitation that I am an unashamed supporter of the Bill presented by the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton). I recognise that many people disagree strongly with my views on this subject. If I had my way—and I know that I shall not—we would rely on the old common law relating to abortion and the Abortion Act 1967 would never have reached the statute book. I recognise that many people disagree very strongly with that view.

Mr. Ray Powell (Ogmore): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I want to draw attention to the fact that I have just entered the Chamber after having a cup of tea in the Tea Room where I saw that my name was on the annunciator screen. I want to bring that to your attention, so that I shall not be recorded as having spoken today and therefore lose my chance to be called later today or tonight.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): I note that the hon. Gentleman is very anxious to be called later this week. I hope that he will be.

Mr. William Powell: I am grateful to the hon. Member for Ogmore (Mr. Powell). In trying to find my way around this place I have from time to time found that there are opportunist advantages in my path in being able to follow the hon. Gentleman. Perhaps from time to time he feels that there is some advantage the other way. Both he and I shared some of the correspondence to the former right hon. Member for South Down. Such are the ways of the House.

Controversial legislation such as reform of the abortion law is quite unsuitable for private Members' legislation. Private Members' legislation procedures, if properly followed, cannot possibly be used to bring about such a controversial change. If only those outside had been properly cautioned not to expect too much of the Abortion (Amendment) Bill when it was before the House, a great deal of disappointment might have been avoided.

Perhaps my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House will confirm that only one substantially opposed private Member's Bill has become law without Government intervention since 1958. I was not a Member of the House then. The hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) is nodding in agreement, and he has been a Member for most of the time since 1958. I have not.

In the 1960s the Wilson Government allowed private Members' legislation procedures to be altered to allow sufficient Government time for measures of considerable public controversy to be carried. Although I was not a Member of the House then, I deplore Governments making such time available. Although I am a strong supporter of the Abortion (Amendment) Bill, I strongly support the view taken by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House that Government time should not be made available for this measure, because if it were it would be changing the goalposts in the middle of the game. Time is of the essence in carrying all private Members' legislation. I am fully aware of that. I was fortunate enough to be almost at the top of the ballot for private Members' Bills and I was able to carry through private Members' legislation. I am all too well aware of the loops, difficulties and potential pitfalls in those procedures. However, we must respect the fact that there is only so much time.

The tactics of those who oppose or delay private Members' Bills are governed by the fact that there is only so much time. When people claimed that the Abortion (Amendment) Bill failed the other week simply because another hour and a half or whatever was not made available, they could not be more wrong. If another hour and a half, five hours or 10 hours had been made available and that extra time had been announced in advance, the tactics of the Bill's opponents—people have every right to oppose the Bill and I deprecate all comments from some supporters of the hon. Member for Mossley Hill that the procedures of the House have been abused in some way —would have been different, but I have no doubt that the result would have been the same.

Private Members' Bills are a valuable way of handling certain matters that need to be in the public domain, but they are utterly unsuitable for dealing with matters of major public controversy such as the reform of abortion law. Although my hon. Friend the Member for Altrincham and Sale was right to say that the issue would not go away, I hope that all hon. Members will bear in mind that if they seek to follow the path taken by the hon. Member for Mossley Hill, and others in previous Sessions, the result will be the same. Public opinion should be aware, before the procedures are started, that that is the almost inevitable consequence of introducing such a measure. The public should not be encouraged to imagine that because a Bill has received a Second Reading, or has a measure of support, those who have every legitimate right to oppose measures in the House are in some way abusing the procedures.

The abortion conundrum must be resolved, but the solution does not lie in introducing a private Member's Bill. The Government should grasp the nettle. Fortunately, they will have that opportunity. I understand that in the next Session of Parliament the Government are

[Mr. William Powell]

likely to present a Bill to deal with many of the matters raised in the Warnock report. Such a Bill will deal with many matters of conscience and it is likely that on the Conservative Benches at least there will be a free vote. That is the advice that I have received.

There can be no more sensible way of resolving the abortion problem than for a clause to be inserted in a Government Bill such as the one to which I have referred —if one appears—to amend the Abortion Act 1967. The House would be able to consider that in Government time, with all the differences in procedure which that necessarily involves. No doubt a free vote would be allowed. In that way the House could quite properly deal with a matter that must be dealt with. The House and the public could be spared the unnecessary difficulties that have arisen as a result of absurd expectations about what private Members' legislation can achieve.

I stress that the procedures of the House should be respected by all hon. Members. They are available for use by all Members, and it is wrong to say that they are abused merely because they are used.

I understand that on Report a new clause is to be proposed to the Criminal Justice Bill. It may that the clause will be in order, in that it will lie within the long title of the legislation to which it is to be added, but I hope that when the new clauses and amendments are selected for debate those who are responsible for that selection will be extremely cautious about selecting it, because it amounts to nothing less than tacking.

Tacking was a tremendous game that was played in the early 18th century. There is nothing that more encourages the natural sense of mischief that lies within most of us than the opportunity to tack on to legislation. That happens in the United States Congress, with the utmost mischief and the greatest of joy. Years ago I used to study with considerable interest the career of a notable member of the United States Senate, the former Republican leader Senator Everett McKinley Dirksen. He was a master of parliamentary tactics and he used to tack mercilessly on to every Bill that he could. Much of what he tacked on was thoroughly mischievous.

If we allow tacking to take place here, we will find that it will become an ever-growing industry. It was rightly stopped in the 18th century, and it would be foolish and unwise if it were reintroduced. I hope that that will be borne in mind and that a proper selection of amendments and new clauses will be made. There might be other reasons why the proposed new clause should be selected, but it would be a most undesirable precedent. I say that as someone who supports the efforts that have been made by the hon. Member for Mossley Hill. The supporters of change to the abortion law must not try to misuse the procedures of this House and then accuse those who seek to oppose them of being the misusers. That has been going on, and it is undesirable and must stop.

The relationship between Standing Committees and Select Committees is another matter that requires a great deal of thought in the months and years to come. Departmental Select Committees are a welcome and, I hope, permanent feature of the work of the House. They have been running for nearly 10 years. There is a degree of criticism of the work that they do, but that criticism should not be allowed to undermine the part that they can play in the proceedings of the House.

The time has come for the House to give careful consideration to the work that is done by Select Committees. The House should consider whether some of the work that is done by certain Standing Committees should be referred to Select Committees for proper consideration. Obviously controversial major legislation must be dealt with by Standing Committees. That procedure, although it is open to criticism, is by far the best way to handle major legislation in detail.

From time to time all hon. Members receive invitations to attend Standing Committees on statutory instruments. I have served on a number of such Standing Committees, and I must say that in nearly every case they have been a waste of time. Most of the hon. Members who serve on such Committees have no conceivable interest in the subject. Sometimes the work has been completed within minutes, and on one or two occasions I recall it being completed in less than one minute.

Surely some of the delegated legislation that is dealt with by Standing Committees could be referred to the Select Committees. They have a greater expertise in such matters and they could consider whether it would be appropriate for the House to take a greater interest in the legislation, instead of it being considered by a Standing Committee.

It seems to have become regarded as necessary for every departmental Select Committee to make at least one trip abroad every year. It would be something of a surprise if people were aware of some of the matters on which Select Committees spend so much of their time. I note that the hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) is in his place, and he is—he may not have sought the role —one of the most knowledgeable people on the subject of local government. The Select Committee on the Environment has been in existence for about 10 years, but I understand that it has never considered the subject of local government. In the past 10 years, however, every Session of Parliament has devoted an enormous part of its time to local government. Perhaps it is something to do with the fact that local government does not involve travel abroad and is of less interest to members of that Committee than it is to the House and the public.

It comes as a surprise to discover some of the matters that the Select Committee on Transport has considered. Such consideration has enabled that Committee—in the course of its duties, of course—to go abroad on fact-finding missions. I have no doubt that the Committee Members have derived considerable benefit and experience from such trips.

I believe that some of the statutory instruments relating to transport, local government and the environment, which are of no interest to most Members of the House but which are a necessary part of our legislative activity, could be referred to the Select Committees for proper consideration. We should pay particular regard to the fact that statutory instruments are not amendable. If they are laid before Select Committees in draft form for consultation with the Government before they come to the House for consideration, that is likely to lead to better parliamentary scrutiny than currently takes place.

I expect that my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House will say that all these matters are for the Procedure Committee. He may even be kind enough to refer to the fact that he has tabled a motion that has my name to it.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The debate can last for only three hours—it used to be open-ended but the Establishment cut it down—and there is a convention that hon. Members should try to keep their speeches to a reasonable length, bearing in mind the amount of time available. The hon. Member for Corby (Mr. Powell) appears to be filibustering for no useful purpose, and that seems to be an abuse of the procedures that he is discussing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): I have heard nothing out of order from the hon. Member for Corby (Mr. Powell). Perhaps this is a suitable moment to remind the House that there are a number of hon. Members who still hope to get in and this debate must end at 7.52 pm.

Mr. Powell: I was in the process of drawing my remarks to a close and I apologise to the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) if he feels a degree of impatience. He is able to contribute frequently to the proceedings of this House, and I have raised a matter which I do not believe has been canvassed before on the Floor of the House. It is a matter that needs more careful scrutiny than it has received so far. When my right hon. Friend replies to the debate I hope that he will say that the Procedure Committee will be established soon. It will then be able to get to work on all sorts of matters of procedural reform that are important to the House.

6.38 pm

Mr. Graham Allen (Nottingham, North): I want to bring to the attention of the House a matter that is of urgent importance to my constituents—the cuts that will be imposed this year on the Health Service in Nottingham. They are causing great concern and distress to my constituents, to the trade unions and to the organisations representing workers in the Health Service.

I have had representations from Nottingham BMA representing the doctors and consultants, from the Royal College of Nursing, NUPE and COHSE representing the nurses, from the General Municipal Boilermakers and Allied Trades Union, NUPE, COHSE and other unions representing the ancillaries. If they were free to speak, no doubt I would have received representations from the senior management of the district health authority.

Yesterday, we saw the collapse of the lottery designed to assist the National Health Service. Even if it had not collapsed, the amount of money that it could have contributed would have been minimal, given the needs even of Nottingham's health service, let alone the National Health Service.

Before making any critical remarks, I wish to pay tribute to the staff, the nurses, the ancillaries and all those involved in making the Nottingham district health authority work, papering over the cracks and holding the Nottingham health service together with sticking plaster, working day and night beyond the call of duty. They deserve a tribute from everyone who uses the Health Service. I must, first and foremost, say that to them.

Yesterday, Princess Margaret came to Nottingham to declare open a scanner. As well as the sights that royalty are normally shown, I hope that Princess Margaret was given an insight into the cuts that will be taking place this year in Nottingham district health authority. At every possible opportunity, local Conservatives paint a rosy picture which belies the reality of the health service in Nottingham.

A document produced by the Nottingham health authority, the Nottingham district and medical staff committee's report on the financial situation and its impact on clinical services, outlines how poorly the health service in Nottingham will fare during the next year. It estimates that in the current financial year pay awards in Nottingham's hospital units will be under-funded by approximately £439,000. The report states:

"This factor exacerbates all other problems."

For as long as it is Government policy not to fund all pay awards in full, it will be essential that local financial planning must reduce pressures within the health authority and that will always mean a reduction in services, a reduction in ancillary services, and, now, a reduction in clinical services in the health authority. The district health authority will have to set aside three quarters or 1 per cent. for possible pay award shortfalls in the coming year.

That will cause a number of problems for the Nottingham district health authority and for people in Nottingham who wish to use the health service. In previous years a temporary ward has been funded at the City hospital to cope with the increased intake of medical patients during the months of January and February. This year medical patients will spill over into beds for other specialties, thus reducing their throughput. Therefore, a ward will not be provided this winter through lack of finance. Clearly it is unsatisfactory to leave it to chance that that money will be available should the need for additional beds become obvious. Therefore, it needs to be prioritised. If it is not prioritised through cuts in other areas, there will be no winter ward in the City hospital in Nottingham.

The traditional buffer for overflow of medical patients has been general surgery. However, the scope for that has been reduced following the cut in general surgical beds at the University hospital in Nottingham. It is accepted that additional difficulties are created by trying to accommodate an overflow of medical patients. I propose to consider other areas in which cuts will be affecting the Nottingham district health authority and the service to patients which in many cases will mean a diminished service which I hope will not produce dramatic cases such as that of Matthew Collier. I hope that the Government will have a change of mind and a change of heart and will properly fund the Health Service.

Medical equipment clearly becomes obsolete very quickly. The report states:

"As a result it needs to be replaced regularly. . . . At the two major Units the cost of planned replacement would be in excess of £1 million for this year. Approximately one quarter of this can be funded."

In other words, three quarters cannot be funded. The report goes on to say that £300,000 is required for pathology equipment, £45,000 for endoscopic equipment and £300,000 for X-ray equipment replacement. Those figures cast great shadows on the Government's policy towards the Health Service. The people of Nottingham will suffer for those failures.

The report continues:

[Mr. Graham Allen]

"As a short-term measure the Authority will be recommended to allow Units to retain a larger proportion of their Cost Improvement Savings in 1988-89 to invest in equipment."

However, it suggests that

"the sensible way forward is to establish a planned replacement and renewal programme rather than the current arrangement of bidding against a limited (and normally inadequate) non-recurrent allocation."

These people are not manning a picket line and demanding the scalp of the Government; they manage the health service in Nottingham. They are at the end of their tether; they cannot make ends meet.

The report, referring to operating theatres, states:

"At the two large Units"—

the City hospital and the University hospital in Nottingham—

"during the summer a total of 175 operating lists had to be cancelled because of the shortage of nursing staff due to holidays. The smaller Units have difficulty in maintaining general anaesthetic lists, because of the lack of ODAs, and it has also not been possible to transfer sessions from Central Notts in order to make an impact on the very long Oral Surgical waiting lists."

Many health authorities have difficulties in maintaining their levels of nursing staff. At the University hospital, where the nursing budget allows only for under-recruitment, the report says that improved recruitment has led to overspend, so that the unit has to return to planned under-staffing. The largest hospital in Nottingham is deliberately under-staffing itself so that it can break even on the targets that have been set by higher authorities. The result is pain and anguish for people in Nottingham who are on the waiting lists, particularly those waiting for hip and joint replacements. A job description for a consultant orthopaedic surgeon has been prepared and agreed.

Mr. Andrew Mitchell (Gedling): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Allen: I shall not give way. The hon. Gentleman has had more than enough opportunities in other forums to make his points.

The possible revenue consequence of such an appointment at the City hospital unit is a sum of about £200,000. The report states:

"This funding is not available and the appointment is to be delayed with consequent effects upon the ever-increasing waiting lists for this type of operation."

Throughout the report there are clear signs that the health service in Nottingham is falling under greater stress despite the heroic efforts of the people who work in it.

The major constraint at the general hospital is the overspending pharmacy budget because of the escalating costs of cytotoxic chemotherapy which at the moment is not being met by Trent regional health authority.

In the neurosciences there are problems with pathology and nursing. The budget for neuropathology at University hospital is approximately half that provided in equivalent sub-regional centres. The enormous increase in the neuropathology work load has produced an overspending and, as a result, there will be a reduced diagnostic service with all that that implies for therapy and potential litigation. On nursing under neurosciences, dependency studies show that insufficient nurses are available to cope with the work load.

The report highlights the fact that the Nottingham area is faced with increased and uncontrollable work loads at the same time as having imposed upon it cost improvement saving targets. The report clearly and strongly says:

"Existing clinical services will almost certainly have to be reduced in order to demonstrate the savings, as there must come a time when no further savings can be made in non-patient services."

The report goes on—this may be of interest to the hon. Member for Gedling (Mr. Mitchell)—to say:

"We are concerned that this is not acknowledged and the public are assured by bland statements in the local press that clinical services will not be affected."

The health service in Nottingham is under tremendous pressure. The Government are doing insufficient to maintain the current services. Services are being reduced and the end result will be more people on the waiting list, more people whose operations are cancelled and more people in desperate need and in desperate pain.

I ask the Leader of the House to take those views away with him. In my view, and I hope in the view of my constituents, the House should not adjourn until something has been done about this situation.

6.50 pm

Mr. Richard Holt (Langbaurgh): The hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) rightly referred, in a point of order a moment ago, to a convention regarding debates such as this. Another convention is that hon. Members are supposed to raise matters that need to be discussed before we adjourn for the recess.

To me and to many of my constituents, going home is a pain. It is a pain because the Department of Transport has never been able to get its act together. Anyone who wants to travel to the north-east of England up the A1 will come up against no fewer than six lots of road works, repairs not to minor potholes, but to major sections of the road.

You can imagine my joy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when, on Tuesday or Wednesday this week, I heard on the radio that those thinking of travelling in Yorkshire would find a two-mile traffic jam on the Doncaster bypass, a four-mile traffic jam at Catterick and a six-mile traffic jam at Dishforth. Those who are not too familiar with the English countryside or the glories of the north may think that those places are a long way apart, but they come within a radius of 40 miles. Imagine setting out on such a journey. Imagine a British exporter trying to get his goods to the Channel ports when his lorry driver is faced with that.

Almost everybody acknowledges that it is time for a new motorway to be built on the eastern side of Britain, linking the Channel ports, London and Scotland. We have such a road on the western side of Britain. Why should we on the eastern side be denied such a facility?

Every time I communicate with the Department of Transport, I am told that the evidence does not justify the major expenditure that such a road would require. But who is preparing that evidence? Who is compiling the statistics? Who is advising on the conclusions to be drawn? It is the people who gave us the M25—the same technical experts, the same transport boffins.

The Department of Transport is not ignoring the problems of the A1; it is making them worse by working almost simultaneously on every junction and stretch of the road to try to upgrade it a little. That is like trying to make a pair of long trousers out of a pair of shorts. It just will

not work. To have a dual carriageway for a major arterial road at this end of the century denies us the facilities that people have in other parts of Britain.

Recently, I raised this matter in the House and I was rubbished in *The Daily Telegraph* by some spotty boy called Simon Heffer who said that I threatened to put concrete over the whole of east or west Yorkshire. I did nothing of the sort. However, I must tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House and spotty Heffer that I am not alone in my quest. It has the unanimous support of every political party in the north-east, and that includes the Green party. We need to open up the arterial roads between the north-east, London and the Channel ports, yet, as far as I can make out, we are spending billions of pounds on repairing a road that is already inadequate. Even when that money has been spent and traffic can flow on that road, it will still be insufficient for the needs of the future.

I challenged my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport to join me in a drive from here to my home. I said, "Come and spend a few days with me. We will spend only six hours in the car." He said that if he had to go to the north-east he would go by train, or fly. That is fine for my right hon. Friend, but it is not fine for families who cannot afford British Rail's fares, and it is not fine for every business man in the north-east who has all the expense of running his business but none of the road facilities that are available to people in other parts of the country.

We have the M4 and the M40, the M1 and the M6. Why cannot we have a major arterial road from Doncaster to the north-east of England? Its route would go through the county of Cleveland—that is if I have not been successful by then in having an enactment of the recommendation of the Teesside chamber of commerce, which again has universal support in my part of the country, to reorganise local government and do away with Cleveland county council.

When I set out on my journey home tomorrow with my wife, daughter, dog and all the other things that I have to take, it is no good my right hon. Friend telling me that I should fly or go by train, because that is no good for families. I urge the Government to stop spending money, stop tinkering with a road that is already there, and give serious consideration to the needs of the north-east. They should take on board the recommendations of all the people who require, need and use that road. They must stop listening to the officials—who play with their abacus and computer and always come up with the wrong answer—and give us what we in the north-east of England need so that in future I can get home in less than six hours.

6.58 pm

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): Twenty six years ago to the week, I made my maiden speech in the House. A few months later, Harold Wilson, then Chairman, put me on the Public Accounts Committee, and, as Dick Crossman's Parliamentary Private Secretary, I worked with, and had an admiration for, Dame Evelyn Sharpe, the late Lady Sharpe, the permanent secretary of the Crossman diaries. I say that because I will not have it alleged that I am lighthearted about the Civil Service or insensitive to the rights of individual civil servants or oblivious to the difficulties of their position.

In 26 years, I have only brought on to the Floor of the House the names of Miss Colette Bowe and the dramatist personæ of Westland. Pre-1986, in 23 years, I had not mentioned a civil servant, other than uncontroversially. I was, and am, an admirer of the British Civil Service.

Against that background, I believe that the House should not go into recess until the Prime Minister comes to the House to explain what appears to be deep impropriety at the very heart of Government. She should make a statement tomorrow, after Prime Minister's questions. This is not posturing—it is a matter of belief. Other than introducing the debate on the Queen's Speech, the Prime Minister has not made a speech in the House since the general election. This is a profoundly unsatisfactory state of affairs, which may partly account for the ill-concealed disdain for Parliament which some civil servants seem now to be developing.

I refer to early-day motion 1142 and a series of press reports suggesting that Mr. Charles Powell has turned down the offer of an ambassadorship in Stockholm and is holding out for an ambassadorship in either Washington or Paris. His picture appears on page three of *The Guardian* for Friday 20 May over the caption

"Charles Powell . . . waiting for a plum posting."

The Guardian commented:

> "Powell has another string to his bow: he knows where the bodies are buried in the Westland affair. He escaped appearing before a select committee, but not their sharpest criticism for his orchestrating role in the leaking of a letter from the then solicitor general, Sir Patrick Mayhew, which ultimately resulted in Michael Heseltine's resignation."

I may add that it resulted in the resignation also of the scapegoat—the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan).

The implication is clear—that knowledge of wrongdoing by the Prime Minister places Mr. Powell in a position to demand the ambassadorship of Washington or Paris and to turn down Stockholm. I cannot imagine what other interpretation could be drawn from that article in *The Guardian* on Friday 20 May.

I went into great detail about the Westland affair in *Hansard* for 25 July 1986, for 29 October 1986, and in the Adjournment debate of 22 April 1988. As there remains only a short time and other hon. Members wish to speak, I just mention the long, detailed setting out of that case. The background, and my view of Mr. Powell in particular and of the Westland affair in general, is known to the Foreign Secretary, who took the initiative of writing to me; to the head of the home Civil Service, to whom I wrote and who very courteously replied twice; and, prompted by an unusual approach, to Sir Patrick Wright, head of the Diplomatic Service, who also replied most courteously.

The press has clearly implied that the Prime Minister, in saving her own political skin over the Westland affair by misleading the House, has created a situation in which a senior civil servant has something on her—a hold over her—which, if he wished, would enable him to make demands.

Unfortunately, Mr. Powell cannot answer for himself, but the Prime Minister can, and she should. Having made him an accomplice in deceit over Westland, she should now tell the House of Commons what she knew about the Law Officer's letter, and when she knew it. She should also explain why she told my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) on 27 January:

[Mr. Tam Dalyell]

"I did not know about the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry's own role in the matter of the disclosure until the inquiry had reported."—[*Official Report*, 27 January 1986; Vol. 90 c.657.]

We should assert ourselves, as Members of the House of Commons, in order to know the truth. The truth, for the House of Commons, goes far beyond party. The all too clear implication in the press is that we have a Prime Minister—a Head of Government—who by wrong doing and by giving civil servants a string to their bow, in their knowing

"where the bodies are buried in the Westland Affair"—

which is the way in which the press put it, not me—has opened herself to the exercise on of pressure or threats in an attempt, especially unfairly, to influence her actions. That phraseology is precisely the definition of the word "blackmail" given by Collins dictionary.

7.5 pm

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): Before the House adjourns, it should consider a subject that is of importance to every hon. Member. Despite that, very few hon. Members are interested in it. I refer to the subject of community care, particularly for the elderly but for every other group as well. I imagine that every hon. Member has a relative or friend who is in need or receipt of community care services. In recent years, there has been a plethora of reports on the subject of community care, whether they have come from the National Audit Office, the Select Committee, Griffiths, Wagner, or the Firth working party. Those reports are now being digested by the Department of Health and Social Security, but in my view we are missing an important opportunity.

It is appropriate for this House to have the opportunity of discussing such matters before any decisions are taken about where responsibility for community care should properly reside. I say that knowing that there are thousands of social workers working under difficult and frequently dangerous conditions. They are overstressed and exceedingly anxious about both the extent of their powers and the degree of protection they can secure from the law, in the knowledge that if they make the slightest error they will be hauled before the bar of public opinion, either through the press or through this House, as if it were entirely their fault that some of the most difficult, distressing and dangerous cases with which anyone in society has to deal have gone wrong.

Social workers' morale is now low. Uncertainty about the future of community care and about the recommendations of the Griffiths report are contributing in no mean way to that lack of morale. Complex issues are involved. There are anxieties about, for example, the fact that this week has seen a three-year training term granted to nurses which has been refused to social workers. That raises many questions about where the responsibility for community care lies. If it is left to officials of the Department to take final decisions as to what should be done, and which are only then brought to the House for debate, it would be as though the whole of the jigsaw was assembled by someone else with only one small corner left for social workers and the social services. That would be the wrong way of making decisions about a service of such complexity and importance.

The social services embrace housing, social security benefits, and difficult issues such as child abuse and who should or should not be asked to leave home. They are also concerned with the question of how people should spend a dignified old age. It is entirely appropriate that the House should discuss those matters as a matter of urgency so that hon. Members may contribute their views and experiences into the mix before any decisions are taken.

7.9 pm

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): I am pleased to have been called, having been here throughout the debate. I have seen some Conservative Members wander in and be called after five minutes, which seems to suggest a somewhat unbalanced view of the way in which debates should be conducted. I should have thought that some preference would be given to those who had troubled to attend the whole debate.

I do not intend to speak for long, because my hon. Friend the Member for The Wrekin (Mr. Grocott), who has been here throughout the debate, wants to contribute. However, before the House rises for the recess I want to draw attention to the subject of school buildings in Bradford. This is a fairly mundane subject with none of the glamour of some of the topics that have been raised, but the facility is none the less vital for our schoolchildren in a major city.

Forty per cent. of Bradford's schools were built before 1906 and need refurbishing. Some are attractive, and I do not urge that they be replaced by modern concrete and steel-frame buildings, which are often ugly and unsatisfactory. But refurbishing Victorian schools, often affected by such radical difficulties as dry rot, is expensive. Refurbishment and replacement will require a great deal of money.

Bradford has an expanding school roll. It is one of the few major cities in this country to be in that position. Most of the problems being considered by education committees relate to diminishing rolls and what is to be done with school buildings, but over the past few years Bradford has seen the development of what might be called shanty-town schools, with temporary classrooms to accommodate the increasing numbers. In March this year, for example, there were 451 temporary units housing 567 classes, 17 nursery classes, three halls, 13 kitchen and dining units, five administration units and 11 toilets. Such accommodation should not be allowed to be based in temporary units to that extent.

There are other difficulties. In many cases the temporary units are becoming permanent, which means that they need repair. A mounting bill is inevitably placed on the local authority—which has a duty to provide the accommodation—to ensure that the temporary units fulfil their function and are kept wind and water tight. That means, in some cases, the local authority having to use capital expenditure to maintain temporary units when priority ought really to be given to permanent extensions to schools or, in some instances, completely new schools.

There was a fire in one of the temporary classrooms not long ago. It was reported by the local evening paper, the Bradford *Telegraph and Argus*, a copy of which was sent to the Secretary of State for Education and Science by the chairman of the education committee. As the Leader of the House will know, Bradford is an acutely fire-conscious city after the Bradford city football club fire disaster. It is felt

that the temporary units, constructed of rather more inflammable materials than brick and mortar, may be more vulnerable than the ordinary permanent buildings. As one of the units has been set on fire, probably through arson, the citizens of Bradford are concerned that the units should be replaced at the earliest opportunity. Some temporary units are inevitable, but not on the current scale.

More money is needed to finance the permanent construction of schools in Bradford. I recently visited a school in Queensbury in my constituency where there are four temporary classrooms. Another two are to be added because of the expanding numbers, and a toilet block is to be built to serve all six. In 1988, a local authority, because of central Government meanness, is to build an open-air toilet block to serve a number of temporary classrooms. The children will have to troop outside their classrooms across an open space to go to the toilet. For years in Victorian schools we have been trying to get rid of open toilets at the bottom of playgrounds. In winter, children have had to go out in bad weather and cross wet playgrounds. Yet, in 1988, those circumstances have been recreated because there is not the money to provide permanent extensions that have been badly needed for a number of years.

In another school in my constituency, in Wibsey, 12 temporary units are housing virtually a complete school. When I made representations to the local authority I was told that it did not have the money to do anything about the matter, although it acknowledges the need for a permanent extension to the existing school.

The Government have the money if they have the political will. They have given nearly £2 billion to the well-off. People in Bradford who are concerned about the issue may well bear in mind that the tax concessions to the rich in the recent Budget—indeed, a tiny fraction of that amount—could have been used to embark on a serious and wide-scale programme of building new schools and refurbishing tried and trusted but well-used Victorian schools which are badly in need of it.

The Government are embarking on the building of a new nuclear power station at Sizewell B. That is not necessary—our coal measures can supply us for the next 300 years—but we are to spend £1·5 billion at Sizewell. The Government have put through a statutory instrument that makes objections rather more difficult. Public inquiries will be held more speedily, so that Hinkley Point B nuclear power station can be given the go-ahead more quickly. That means a minimum of another £1·5 billion. We could be using some of that money for a basic construction purpose: providing new schools in my constituency, and no doubt in others as well.

Eleven billion pounds have been forked out by the Government on Trident. Only yesterday the Prime Minister spoke about Christian values and morality. Is the mass extermination of innocent men, women and children part of her Christian morality, and that of the Leader of the House? What section of the Bible will the Prime Minister quote to justify mass extermination by the use of nuclear weapons? We are to get more of them than ever before, and at a cost of £11 billion.

I plead with the Leader of the House for increased resources for Bradford—not even the money spent on nuclear power stations or nuclear weapons, but just the £3·5 million spent by the Department of Trade and Industry on giving prominence to the cronies of the Secretary of State and saying how wonderful the internal market of 1992 will be. What a waste of money. Would it not have been better to put the money into schools in Bradford to give our children a decent start in life?

Mr. Allen: I do not know whether Bradford is blessed with a city technology college, but my constituency has a CTC nearby. That one CTC in my patch will cost more than the combined capital programme of all the schools in Nottinghamshire. I see that my hon. Friend the Member for Mansfield (Mr. Meale) is present. All the schools added together will not account for more expenditure than that one project. I do not know whether similar circumstances apply in my hon. Friend's constituency.

Mr. Cryer: I shall respond briefly because I know that we are rather short of time due to various Conservative Members' interventions.

The Secretary of State for Education and Science had the cheek to comment on the schools in Bradford and the enormous shortages that I have outlined to the effect that the local authority could find the money. He did not know whether the local authority could find the money or not. He is ignorant about education. In reality, Bradford is hard-pressed. That self same Secretary of State for Education gave the chairman of the chamber of commerce £30,000 simply to investigate the possibility of establishing a CTC in Bradford. That is a measure of the absurdity of the Government's priorities. I am happy to say that the investigation came to naught because Bradford has more than adequate facilities in the public sector for the provision envisaged in CTCs.

If we are to provide a proper education for our children and young people, we need adequate facilities. Bradford's schools are under pressure and they do not deserve to be. I hope that the Government will come up with some money to ensure that we have proper schools because children in Bradford deserve no less.

7.21 pm

Mr. Bruce Grocott (The Wrekin): I am wholeheartedly in favour of the motion. It would be hypocritical of me not to say that, as last week I introduced the Working Life (Reduction in Hours) Bill, which provides for longer statutory holidays. Therefore, I could not possibly object to the suggestion that we should take our holidays. I take this opportunity to remind the House that that Bill is to have its Second Reading on 8 July. As it is a pretty enlightening and far-sighted measure in the interests of working people, I am confident that the Government, true to form, will ensure that it is thrown out on 8 July.

My hon. Friends have drawn attention to the inadequacy of the Government—their failure to deliver on promises, the inadequacy of their funding for key services and the mistaken priorities that they have chosen. I am sure that the House will forgive me if I refer to a major development in my constituency.

A near-unique state of affairs is developing. Wrekin district council is beginning legal proceedings against the Telford development corporation because of the Government's repeated failure to deliver on their promise of a ballot for Telford development corporation tenants who are anxious to know who their future landlord will be. Ministers repeatedly promised a ballot among tenants. Then they heard the devastating news that in a ballot held

[Mr. Bruce Grocott]

last November Peterborough tenants opted overwhelmingly for the local authority as the appropriate landlord to take over the houses after the conclusion of the development corporation.

As soon as the Government realise that a ballot will have results that they do not like, they postpone that ballot. In my constituency, tenants are now faced with a long period of uncertainty—up to two years—before being asked whether they want the district council or housing associations to take over their houses when the Telford development corporation is concluded. That delay is disgraceful, and the message from my constituency is that we must consult tenants on the matter.

I do not want to be entirely churlish in my concluding remarks. One heartening thing has come out of the Government in the past few days. It is perhaps in the spirit of the religious festival that we celebrated last week at Whitsuntide that the Prime Minister has at last decided that the political debate is a moral debate. I have held that view for many years, and I welcome the Prime Minister's conversion to it. I look forward to our debates on the subject because I am quite sure that her decision that we should now deal with the moral aspects of political argument will turn out to be the most monumental own goal in recent political history.

I have read the Sermon on the Mount many times. I have also read the 1987 Conservative party manifesto many times—purely for professional reasons, I may say. The only similarity that I have been able to discern between the versions of the two documents that I read was that they were both written in English. My hon. Friends have drawn attention to some of the moral issues that I hope will be at the forefront of political debate in the months and years ahead.

I am sorry that only five of my hon. Friends were able to contribute to the debate. They had a common theme, however. Every one of them drew the House's attention to the values that need to be espoused and the choices that need to be made by the country and the Government. My hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker), who told us that he would be absent at this stage, rightly drew our attention, albeit 48 years after the event, to one of the profound evils of Fascism as it affected a case that came to his attention—the massacre by the SS of British troops. I know my hon. Friend's tenacity is such that he will persist in drawing that case to our attention.

I find it ironic that my hon. Friend the Member for Perry Barr was followed by the hon. Member for Luton, North (Mr. Carlisle), who took a selective view of Fascism. He congratulated my hon. Friend on drawing our attention to Nazi atrocities but went on to act in his usual role as an apologist for the South African Government, ignoring the fact—which he should know as an expert on the subject—that key members of the Broederbond and the National party which has ruled South Africa for 40 years were active and keen Nazi supporters during the second world war.

Mr. Winnick: He is paid by the South African Government.

Mr. Grocott: They wanted Hitler to win. I hope that the hon. Member for Luton, North declares his position on that, and I hope that he will condemn them when he gets the opportunity. He appears to think that the major moral issue facing the nation is the can of red paint thrown at the South African embassy. Nothing could contrast more dramatically with the issues that concern Opposition Members.

Mr. John Carlisle: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I do not know whether you heard the comment made by the hon. Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick), who said, "He is paid by the South African Government." Is that an aspersion on an hon. Member's character?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I did not hear a comment from the hon. Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) to that effect, but if a comment was made that cast aspersions on the integrity of an hon. Member, I am sure that it will be withdrawn.

Mr. Winnick: The hon. Gentleman was right—I did make that comment and I would not wish to deny it. Perhaps I can seek your ruling, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The hon. Gentleman has not denied that he has visited South Africa at the expense of the South African authorities. That assertion has not been challenged, so surely I am right when I say that the hon. Gentleman is paid by South Africa.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Time is short. All I am saying is that it is not in order for an hon. Member to cast aspersions on another hon. Member. If the hon. Member felt that that is what happened, I hope that, with his usual courtesy, he will make it clear that that was not his intention.

Mr. Winnick: I do not basically withdraw anything that I said, but if you ask me to withdraw because you require it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in those circumstances—and only in those circumstances—I shall make the remarks that you wish me to make.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am obliged to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Grocott: The values of my hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) were shown clearly in his speech. He described how he would like the country to develop and spoke about the effects of the social security changes. Almost any right hon. or hon. Member could give examples of difficulty. My hon. Friend gave the example of an 84-year-old constituent who is paying an additional £18 a week in rent. We all know about the delays involved in making minor concessions such as the Government say that they will make.

My hon. Friend also mentioned the need for a fairer system of television licences for pensioners. I am sure that, if we appeal to the country not on the level of self-interest but on the basis of values and caring for other people who need assistance, my hon. Friend's appeal will be understood.

My hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen) spoke about the effects of Health Service cuts in his constituency. Once again, we return to priorities and the moral choices that a Government have to make.

We then heard a speech characteristic of my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell). It is a clear illustration of Conservative Members' failure of judgment that they cannot see that tenacity, even in the

face of ridicule and constant prevarication and blocking tactics by Ministers, is the essence of parliamentary democracy.

My hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow will not let this matter go, whatever the jeers or sneers from Conservative Members. The issue will not go away, whichever party is in power. Anybody who thinks that this is an anti-Tory vendetta does not know my hon. Friend very well. He pursues injustice wherever it occurs. He is entitled to an answer to his questions. I regret to say that I doubt whether he will get an answer, but one will be forthcoming, even if it has to be written in the history books.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) also considered priorities and choices. He talked about the Victorian school buildings which are characteristic of much of his constituency. Once again we return to the choices which the Prime Minister told us that we should be making—the moral choices in politics. I suppose that our political opponents can say that the electorate is much more cynical than we in the Labour party would like it to be and that almost one year ago —we were all campaigning one year ago today—it opted for the party with the creed of self interest and rejected the idealistic approach.

I take heart from some recent polls. I wonder whether the Prime Minister knew the result of one of them before she decided, quite suddenly, to address herself to some of the moral issues in politics. A Harris poll shows that, although 48 per cent. of the population think that the country is richer than it was 10 years ago—that is hardly surprising, in view of the bonus of North sea oil—no fewer than 61 per cent. of the population believe that people are more selfish. Only 19 per cent. think that people are more generous.

When asked whether, by and large, people are happy, the clear majority said that people are unhappier than they were 10 years ago and that the quality of life has deteriorated. For all the supermarkets and the phoney gloss of commercialism, the majority of our fellow citizens believe that the quality of life has declined in the past 10 years.

Although we shall undoubtedly adjourn for the spring recess, I welcome the political debate that will come when we return. I hope that hon. Members will find a few moments during the recess to skim again through the New Testament, as the Prime Minister has advised. I look forward to seeing to what extent the Government's actions match up to the New Testament. We all look forward to the debates that we shall have after we return.

7.35 pm

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham): We have heard several good speeches, in which hon. Members have raised many constituency, national and international issues. As always on these occasions, I shall do my best to reply to all the points that have been raised, but in the event of time running short I shall refer any outstanding matters to my right hon. Friends to ensure that an appropriate reply is given.

The hon. Member for Upper Bann (Mr. McCusker) asked why there was no oral statement on the fair employment White Paper for Northern Ireland. As the White Paper, which has been published today, develops proposals that have already been announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, he thought that a statement today was not appropriate. The hon. Gentleman knows that Northern Ireland questions come top tomorrow, and I shall be surprised if some of the issues in the White Paper are not raised by the hon. Gentleman and some of his hon. Friends then.

My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State have repeatedly made clear the Government's determination to eliminate religious discrimination in Northern Ireland and to promote genuine equality of opportunity. Compulsory monitoring is central to the success of that policy, and the fact that the Government propose that failure to register with the Fair Employment Commission or to submit monitoring returns should be a criminal offence reflects the seriousness that they attach to solving this serious economic and social problem. I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for expressing some of the arguments that he will make in the debates that we shall have on this issue.

My hon. Friend the Member for Altrincham and Sale (Sir F. Montgomery) spoke about Manchester airport. He has raised the subject before, and I make no complaint about his raising it again. The Government have made repeated attempts to persuade the United States Government to negotiate traffic rights for United States airlines to serve Manchester airport. The United States Government finally agreed in March this year to negotiate on the issue, but no agreement was reached because the United States Government insisted that all their demands should be met, or none at all. They rejected a very reasonable package offered by the Government. The package would have permitted the immediate commencement of a daily non-stop service from Boston to Manchester, and a daily one-stop service from New York to Manchester. The United States Government have put off any further negotiations until early next year, but the Government hope to raise the matter before then if there are any suitable grounds for doing so.

My hon. Friend also mentioned Manchester airport's campaign against the Government. I am pleased to note that the airport board has decided to discontinue its confrontational and counterproductive campaign.

Manchester airport's efforts would be better used to encourage interested United States airlines to bring pressure on the United States Government to negotiate quickly and realistically.

My hon. Friend also raised the question of the Abortion (Amendment) Bill, about which I know he feels strongly. As I have said on a number of occasions, it is a well-known and long-standing practice of this Government not to provide additional time for any individual private Member's Bill. The rules that govern the conduct of private Member's business are decided upon by the House, and it is important that the Government, as much as individual hon. Members, should abide by them.

The hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker)—who told me that he unfortunately had to leave —raised the question of General Mohnke and the serious allegations that have been made against him. The evidence is being examined as a matter of urgency. This country has no jurisdiction in the matter—this was the point raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham, South (Mr. Brandon-Bravo)—and that is why it is not covered in the Home Secretary's review of some of these matters. When

[Mr. John Wakeham]

the evidence has been assessed, we will know what basis exists for approaching the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Mr. Winnick: With some urgency.

Mr. Wakeham: As I have said, the matter is being pursued as a matter of urgency, because we believe it to be important. However, it is not right for me to speculate on matters connected with the evidence now that it is being reviewed.

My hon. Friend the Member for Luton, North (Mr. Carlisle) referred to the demonstrations outside the South African embassy. I admire the courage with which he puts his views, often unpopularly and at great personal and physical risk to himself. I do not always agree with what he says, but I admire the courage and the tenacity with which he puts his views. The day when hon. Members are not able to speak their minds will be a bad day for democracy.

The right to demonstrate, assemble and protest peaceably within the law is, of course, fundamental to our democratic way of life. However, the police can, and do, take action when demonstrators step over the line from peaceful protest to behaviour amounting to criminal conduct. There have been 46 arrests so far this year for offences such as the obstruction of police officers and a breach of the Westminster city council's noise byelaws. I shall refer my hon. Friend's concern to my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary.

The hon. Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) raised the question of housing benefit and the transitional unit. On 5 May my hon. Friend the Minister for Social Security and the Disabled sent a helpful letter to all right hon. and hon. Members. In addition, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State explained during oral questions how the special unit that is being set up will operate. There is no need for the Minister or the Secretary of State to make a further statement to the House, but it is proposed that the special unit should last for two years, and the situation will then be reviewed.

The hon. Member for Walsall, North also raised the question of concessionary television licences. As we have made clear on a number of occasions, we do not consider that it would be right or sensible to give free or concessionary television licences to all pensioners, irrespective of need. That would be very expensive and would mean that other licence payers would have to pay a lot more. On 18 May my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department explained that many of the people for whom the scheme was never intended would have qualified under the previous regulations. The new regulations restore the scheme to its original intention, which was to benefit pensioners and disabled people in residential care or in equivalent sheltered accommodation.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hastings and Rye (Mr. Warren) rightly raised the question of the British Broadcasting Corporation. As he says, the Government have no control over the programming of the BBC, which is editorially and managerially independent. It is clearly a matter of regret if the BBC strays from its normally high standards of programme making, thereby causing offence to the Governments of the countries with whom we have friendly relations and with whom we hope to do economic trade. It was right for my hon. Friend to raise the matter in the House and I hope that those responsible will take note.

The hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy) referred to Nirex. I recognise the concern of the hon. Gentleman and his constituents. I remind him that I had to express the concern of my constituents during the time that I was not able to make a speech in the House. Fortunately, my right hon. Friend the Father of the House at that time seemed from time to time to utter thoughts that were not completely dissimilar from mine and those of my constituents. I have shown how grateful I was to him during my period of silence.

I cannot say very much about the issues that have been raised. Nirex has a responsibility. I am sure the hon. Gentleman is right in saying that Members of Parliament should make known their views and the views of their constituents on the issues for which Nirex has responsibility. When I made my views and those of my constituents known to Nirex, I found that it listened to me, even though, as I said, I had to remain silent in the House.

My hon. Friend the Member for Corby (Mr. Powell) raised two matters, one about abortion and the other about Select Committees. I listened with interest to what he said about the procedures of the House and whether the reform of the abortion law is a suitable subject for private Members' legislation. I am not completely persuaded by his arguments, although he put the point persuasively. The Government do not take a collective view on the moral issue of abortion, but consider that any new legislation of this kind is best kept to the initiative of private Members.

I noted what my hon. Friend said about the possibility of combining the abortion issue with any future Bill on the Warnock recommendations, but I am not sure that the issues are quite as comparable as he suggested.

The House of Commons Commission has approved the total amount of expenditure for overseas travel by Select Committees and has delegated to the Liaison Committee —as the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) tells us from time to time—the responsibility for allocating that sum to individual Select Committees. I do not think that it would be very wise of me to interfere at this time.

The hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen) rightly raised a number of questions about the Health Service in Nottingham. I do not know as much about the Health Service in Nottingham as he knows—or at least he should know—but I thought that his comments were to some extent unbalanced. For instance, he did not say anything about the fine teaching hospital and the fine work that is done on breast cancer in that area. I join him in the tribute that he paid to the nurses and staff who work in the Health Service in Nottingham.

I do not believe that any reasonable comments on the position would ignore the fact that Nottingham is a RAWP gaining area. There have been substantial increases in resources in Nottingham, there are about 200 more nurses in Nottingham this year than last year, the waiting lists have reduced over the past five years by about 30 per cent., there has been an enormous increase in the number of patients treated, and there has been a substantial increase in the capital expenditure in that area. Although there may still be some shortcomings, if one were to set the factors that I have mentioned against those mentioned by the hon. Gentleman, one would get a more balanced view.

My hon. Friend the Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) told us of the difficulties of getting home to his constituency. I shall make sure that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport takes on board the points that he made. There are three major schemes on the A1(M) and we regret that they inevitably cause delay. On that highly trafficked section of the route, as on other sections of the A1, we are accelerating the work to the maximum extent possible through the use of lane rental contracts. Our programmes have improved the A1 to dual three-lane standard and have increased the capacity of the road generally. However, I recognise that my hon. Friend will be inconvenienced for some time to come.

The hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) carries on his campaign with increasing extravagance. However, I have to tell him—I do not think that he had the slightest expectation of anything else—that I have nothing further to add.

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

Mr. Wakeham: No, I shall not give way.

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

Mr. Wakeham: No, I shall not give way. I am about to reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe), who raised the question of community care.

The Government are considering the recommendations of the Sir Roy Griffiths and Lady Wagner reports. We have said that we will bring forward our proposals on them in due course. The issues raised are complex and there is no obvious perfect solution. However, it is right that we should devote the necessary time to identifying the right answers. In the light of that, it is too early for me to comment on the form and timing of the Government's eventual response.

The hon. Member for Bradford, South referred to the level of capital allocations in his area. He is right to do that. I accept that Bradford has substantial capital problems in the school sector. Three main factors are responsible: rising rolls in the inner city, an unusually high proportion of very old buildings, and a serious accumulation and backlog of maintenance. In recognition of especially the first of those problems, Bradford has received comparatively large capital allocations for some years. Its allocation for 1987-88 was £6·303 million—the third highest among the metropolitan authorities and the eleventh highest in England. The hon. Gentleman was right to voice his concern and we recognise that there is a problem.

From the tone of the debate, no one seems to be against——

It being three hours after the commencement of proceedings on the motion, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *put the Question, pursuant to Standing Order No. 22 (Periodic adjournments.)*

Question agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House, at its rising on Friday 27th May, do adjourn until Tuesday 7th June, and that the House shall not adjourn on Friday 27th May until Mr. Speaker shall have reported the Royal Assent to any Acts which have been agreed upon by both Houses.

Firearms (Amendment) Bill (Allocation of Time)

7.52 pm

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham): I beg to move,

That the following provisions shall apply to the remaining proceedings on the Firearms (Amendment) Bill:

Report and Third Reading

1.—(1) The remaining proceedings on Consideration and the proceedings on Third Reading shall be completed at this day's sitting and, if not previously concluded, shall brought to a conclusion five hours after the commencement of the proceedings on the Motion for this Order.

(2) Paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) shall apply to those proceedings.

(3) Standing Order No. 80 (Business Committee) shall not apply to this Order.

Dilatory motions

2. No dilatory Motion with respect to, or in the course of, the proceedings shall be made except by a member of the Government, and the Question on any such Motion shall be put forthwith.

Motion under Standing Order No. 20: extra time

3. If the proceedings are interrupted by a Motion for the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 (Adjournment on specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration), a period equal to the duration of the proceedings on the Motion shall be added to the period at the end of which the proceedings on the Bill are to be brought to a conclusion.

Conclusion of proceedings

4.—(1) For the purpose of bringing the proceedings on the Bill to a conclusion at the time required by this Order, Mr. Speaker shall put forthwith the following Questions (but no others)—

(a) any Question already proposed from the Chair;

(b) any Question necessary to bring to a decision a Question so proposed (including, in the case of a new Clause or new Schedule which has been read a second time, the Question that the Clause or Schedule be added to the Bill);

(c) the Question on any amendment or Motion standing on the Order Paper in the name of any Member, if that amendment is moved or Motion is made by a member of the Government;

(d) any other Question necessary for the disposal of the business to be concluded;

and on a Motion so made for a new Clause or a new Schedule Mr. Speaker shall put only the question that the Clause or Schedule be added to the Bill.

(2) Proceedings under sub-paragraph (1) above shall not be interrupted under any Standing Order relating to the sittings of the House.

Recommittal

5.—(1) References in this Order to proceedings on Consideration or proceedings on Third Reading include references to proceedings, at those stages respectively, for, on or in consequence of recommittal.

(2) No debate shall be permitted on any Motion to recommit the Bill (whether as a whole or otherwise) and Mr. Speaker shall put forthwith any Question necessary to dispose of the Motion, including the Question on any amendment moved to the Question.

Supplemental orders

6. The proceedings on any Motion made in the House by a member of the Government for supplementing the provisions of this Order shall, if not previously concluded, be brought to a conclusion one hour after they have been commenced, and paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) shall apply to the proceedings.

All that I had left to say at the end of the previous debate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was to wish everybody a happy few days rest. I hope that it is not out of order if I start my speech on this debate with what would have been my concluding remarks for the last.

[Mr. John Wakeham]

Ever since the Government proposed to bring forward legislation in this area, the timing of the passage of that legislation has been a matter of the keenest interest. In October last year, my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary was berated by the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) for

"identifying a problem that he describes as urgent and then announcing that he proposes to remedy it some time during the middle of next year."—[*Official Report*, 26 October 1987; Vol. 121, c.29.]

In the Second Reading debate, the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook described how in March 1987 the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) had written to my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary saying that there was a need for tighter gun control. In those circumstances, it is somewhat surprising that the hon. Gentleman has said that he and his colleagues will oppose this motion to ensure the prompt passage after considerable discussion of the gun controls for which he had earlier called.

It is all the more surprising when one considers that I twice announced Monday's business—on 12 and on 19 May—and received no protest or criticism from the official Opposition. On 12 May, only the hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross) suggested that those arrangements would not provide sufficient time. I replied that my advice was that what I had announced was for the general convenience of the House and that we should have to see how we got on. At business questions the following week, no adverse comment at all was made, and there was nothing to suggest that the arrangements would not be generally acceptable.

Mr. Jerry Wiggin (Weston-super-Mare): Is it not a fact that at the time of those business questions the Government had not tabled nearly 80 amendments? It was, in fact, the grouping by Mr. Speaker of 36 groups of amendments that made completing the Bill on Monday night so impractical, although the Government brought an end to the business long before it was necessary to do so.

Mr. Wakeham: I shall deal with all those points, but, of course, the Government always have to announce the business and agree it before Mr. Speaker has made his selection of amendments. As my hon. Friend, who has followed these matters closely, knows, the amendments were substantially about questions that had been raised in Committee and had been well rehearsed and discussed. Nevertheless, during my speech I shall seek to deal with the points that my hon. Friend has raised.

It would, I believe, have been generally unacceptable to have completed our consideration of the Bill on Monday by sitting well into Tuesday morning. As Leader of the House, it is my responsibility to ensure, whenever possible, that our business is conducted in an orderly way and for a length of time which is not unduly extended. That is why I have brought forward this motion. It provides for a maximum of five hours proceedings on this Bill from the start of this debate. At the very least, it will provide two hours to complete the Bill's remaining stages. If proceedings on the timetable motion do not last the three hours of which they are capable, there could be a further two to three in addition. I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Weston-super-Mare (Mr. Wiggin) and his colleagues on having persuaded the Government that the further discussion of this legislation merits this extra prime time rather than extend proceedings in the early hours of the morning.

It is true that more than 30 groups of amendments remain to be considered in the time available. There are two points to be made here. First, the Bill and its proposals have already been the subject of considerable consultation and discussion both inside this House and between my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State and interested organisations. In October there was a half-day debate, in Opposition time, on this subject, and in December my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary was questioned on his oral statement announcing publication of the White Paper. On 21 January we had a full day's debate on the Bill, at the end of which it was given a Second Reading without a Division. Since then, the Bill has been considered in Standing Committee for 27½ hours and has already been considered on Report for more than six hours. For a Bill which comprises only 20 clauses and one schedule, I do not believe that that is unreasonable. Indeed, if the Standing Committee had wished to consider the Bill for longer, it could have done so.

Secondly, the time spent in consideration of the Bill has been well used—particularly from the point of view of my hon. Friends who wished to see changes to it in Committee. The Government have already agreed that a firearms consultative committee should be established and that it should be given statutory backing for an initial period of five years. We have also decided to "buy-in" firearms which will become prohibited under clause 1(2). We have made, and propose to make, a number of other changes to our original proposal——

Mr. Terence L. Higgins (Worthing): First, on the point about compensation, I have been unable to obtain a copy of the *Hansard* report of the Second Reading debate because it is apparently out of print. Was there a Money or Ways and Means resolution and, if so, is a new one needed, given that compensation is now required? Secondly, I notice that the financial memorandum of the original Bill as at Second Reading made no reference to that. Should we not have a new financial memorandum on the Bill as it now stands?

Mr. Wakeham: My recollection is that we did that, subsequent to Second Reading, so I think that everything is in order. We have passed a Ways and Means resolution and all the necessary formalities. However, my right hon. Friend is right that that was not done at the time of the Second Reading. That covers the question of the buy-in scheme.

Mr. Higgins: Does there not need to be a financial resolution to finance the buy-in scheme?

Mr. Wakeham: Yes. The House approved that resolution at a later stage after the Bill had been given a Second Reading. It did so on one of the rare occasions when my right hon. Friend was not in his place.

My hon. Friends have identified three areas that require particular attention, and the Government have already made significant concessions on two—compensation and a consultative committee. Though differences of view in detail of bringing about these changes remain and may

deserve further discussion, in the circumstances I believe the amount of extra time proposed in the motion is adequate for the disposal of the outstanding points.

The other area to which my hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside (Mr. Colvin) referred yesterday, self-loading rifles and the integral magazine of five to eight rounds, has already been raised both in Committee and in the debate on Monday about new clause 1, when my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State explained the Government position. Nevertheless, and though the grouping of amendments is not a matter for me, I understand that later groups of amendments—119 and 128, and 91, 128 and 129—may give my hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside the opportunity he seeks for a vote.

I will end my remarks now, because the more promptly the House is able to agree this motion, the more time there will be for further consideration of the Bill itself. The proposals from my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary attracted a broad range of support when they were introduced and have, I believe, attracted further support as they have been amended in the light of the Standing Committee proceedings. I cannot conceive that it would be the will of the House as a whole that a measure on this important subject, which many Members, including the Opposition Front Bench, have long regarded as a matter of urgency and which enjoys the general favour of the House, should be debated at undue length in the early hours of the morning. On that basis, I commend the motion in my name to the House.

8.2 pm

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): Everyone recognises that we are faced with a procedural curiosity. For the first time in living memory, a Conservative Government is introducing a guillotine motion to stop Conservative Members talking. The motion has not been introduced because the Opposition are opposing the Bill.

The Labour party supports stricter controls on the advertising, sale, use and possession of guns and ammunition. As the Leader of the House has said, London Labour Members, faced with the increasing unlawful use of guns in the capital, and in response to representations made by those whom they represent and from the Metropolitan police at all levels, have been urging such controls on the Home Secretary, and began to do so long before the disastrous events at Hungerford, which precipitated the Government's change of view and the introduction of the Bill.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) made it clear on Second Reading that he supported the objects of the Bill. However, he expressed doubts, to say the least, about a considerable number of provisions and called for other provisions to be included by way of new clauses and amendments. Throughout consideration of the Bill in Committee the Opposition argued for amendments that have not been made and for new clauses that have not been included. On several occasions the votes of Opposition Members in Committee sustained the avowed objectives of the Bill as laid down by the Government. The Government would have lost a substantial number of Divisions to Conservative Back Benchers if the Labour Opposition had voted with those Back Benchers or had abstained. We voted with the Government in Committee on these occasions because we believed in the greater control of guns and ammunition.

We believe also that the Bill raises serious matters and deserves careful and well-informed consideration. It is because we want the Bill to succeed, and because we think that its provisions, the amendments and the new clauses deserve careful and well-informed consideration, that we oppose the motion.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): If that is so, will the hon. Gentleman tell us why there are only six Labour Members in their places to discuss the issue?

Mr. Dobson: It may have something to do with the usual quality of my oratory. I expect that many of my hon. Friends will arrive in the Chamber once the meat of the Bill is to be discussed.

Mr. Bennett *rose*——

Mr. Dobson: No. I shall not give way to the hon. Gentleman again. These are serious matters and I shall leave the hon. Gentleman to make his own comments in his inimitable way when he gets the opportunity to do so.

When we began to consider the Bill on Report, the Government had tabled no fewer than five new clauses and more than 60 amendments to cure some of the shortcomings that had been identified in Committee. They proposed, by a mind-boggling afterthought, to extend the provisions of the Bill to Northern Ireland. As everyone knows, death and injury from the use and misuse of guns are terrifying facts of everyday life in Northern Ireland. To think that a Bill that has been shown to be ill thought out and badly drafted even to meet the circumstances prevailing in England, Scotland and Wales can be applied in hasty afterthought to Northern Ireland beggars belief and is an insult to the House. To curtail debates on amendments that had to be tabled once it was known that the Government intended to extend the Bill to cover Northern Ireland is an extraordinary action on the Government's part.

If the motion is accepted—we believe that it will be—it will result in inadequate consideration of the Bill. That will lead to the enactment of a Bill that will be difficult to understand and difficult for the police to enforce. It will be puzzling for the courts to interpret. Legitimate gun owners and former legitimate gun owners will be left with a sense of grievance. All in all, it is a bad job and a botched job.

The inclusion of Northern Ireland at a late stage is not the only afterthought that the Government have had on the Bill. The right hon. Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins) has observed that at one stage the Government rejected the idea of compensation for those who owned guns that would have to be dispensed with when the Bill took its place on the statute book. At a later stage the Government said that they were willing to accept that the principle of compensation should be debated in Committee. So the House then had to consider a further supplementary money order, which was accepted.

I understand from hon. Members on both sides of the House that the debates in Committee were unsatisfactory and that important aspects of compensation have yet to be resolved. However, the guillotine motion will prevent the necessary discussions on compensation taking place. After the proceedings that are to take place this evening, and after the guillotine finally falls, the Bill will proceed to

[Mr. Dobson]

another place. It is curious that the guillotine motion does not propose a timetable for the consideration of any amendments that are made in another place. I am not sure whether this is a further oversight on the Government's part or whether it is the product of foresight. Can it be that the Government envisage that the shooting interests of those in another place will produce so many amendments that it will be impossible to avoid a lengthy debate upon them when they are referred to this place?

The Government have been crowing this week about the recent large majorities that they have enjoyed in the other place. It cannot be denied that when the Government sent their beaters through the backwoods they flushed out a remarkable collection of odd, old birds whose natural habitat is a long way from Westminster. There were even rumours running through this place that Lord Lucan had been spotted in one of the Lobbies—presumably among the Not Contents.

If the same hereditary peers who thronged within the other place to support the poll tax were urged to return to debate the Bill, the likelihood is that they would not like it and that they would do it severe damage. That makes it all the more odd to hear another rumour this afternoon—I hope the Lord President will take this opportunity to confirm its truth, or otherwise—that the Government have already decided they will not attempt to impose a Whip on the Bill in the House of Lords because they do not think it would stick. It seems preposterous and an odd way of doing things to guillotine the proceedings of this House without even trying to impose a Whip in the Lords.

8.10 pm

Mr. John Biffen (Shropshire, North): This is not a particularly happy evening for my right hon. Friend the Lord President of the Council, but I want to assure him at the outset that I shall be happy to join him in the Division Lobby to ensure the prosecution of this proposal. I shall do so for a number of reasons—*[Interruption.]*—and my hon. Friend the Member for Upminster (Sir N. Bonsor) should not be too distraught.

First, I do not think that my right hon. Friend is the author of this evening's misfortune. I listened to his unmistakeable honeyed words, but I fancy the authorship lies with the Home Office. This would not be the first or last occasion when Leaders of the House have been required to use brisk methods to get through matters of Parliamentary business that have been sanctified by Front Bench agreement. That is exactly what there was when, on a previous occasion, Tory dissidents were subject to a timetable motion.

The hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) said this was a procedural curiosity, but I remember only too well the time when the Northern Ireland Assembly Bill wound its way with perhaps too much dilatoriness through the House. The timetable motion was carried, but let us look at the work that was then fashioned. What happened to the Northern Ireland Assembly Bill? Just because some item of business is sanctified by cross-Front Bench approval, that does not guarantee that it has any more merit or likelihood of durability. That is the dilemma and agony of my right hon. Friend; it is why I feel such a sense of brotherhood with him this evening, and why I shall support him.

I hope that the fact that I shall support my right hon. Friend tonight will mean that the four observations that I want to make will be the more firmly bound to his heart. But there is one other reason why I shall support my right hon. Friend with deep affection: he has conducted speech and argument with no reference to morality. The moral peaks have been deserted—suddenly, here is a sanctuary. I want to speak on behalf of what I believe to be the silent majority in the House—the publicans and sinners. We have been given some welcome respite from the foghorn of conscience that has blasted through the Chamber over the past few days.

I believe that my four observations are of real concern to the House. The first is really rather like the C. Northcote Parkinson syndrome: the board votes £50 million or £500 million-worth of capital expenditure and then spends half the morning discussing painting the bicycle shed. Here we have a timetable motion that we can understand. No one could contest the fact that the Education Reform Bill or the community charge legislation require timetables. On this occasion we are bound to ask why it has not been possible to find some occasion, either this side of the recess or shortly thereafter, when the necessary number of hours could be found to dispatch this business without bringing us here for the formalities of a timetable.

Many people watching our procedures outside will conclude that the Government's programme must be running into difficulties, or at least into tight circumstances. They will wonder what on earth would have happened if the Lords had not loyally supported the Government on the community charge. They would think that there must surely have been some provision, just in case the vote went wrong, but now it seems that the whole programme is so tightly structured that we must have a timetable motion to dispose of half the Report stage of what I suppose is a grade 2 unlisted piece of legislation. The House would like some reassurance about these points.

Secondly, no timetable motion is an island unto itself. This one will be looked at not only in relation to what has happened in the past but to what might happen in the near future. I have no idea what the final fate of the arguments about the Abortion (Amendment) Bill will be, but should the provisions of that Bill be attached to another piece of legislation, as has been postulated in the press, I hope that my right hon. Friends on the Treasury Bench will think long and seriously before proceeding with any timetable motion that would affect legislation that incorporated the provisions of the Abortion (Amendment) Bill. We must consider that, because what happens now will inevitably cast a shadow on that possible legislative development some weeks hence. It may never come about, but the House would be neglectful if it did not consider the possibility.

Thirdly, the Bill now contains provisions for Northern Ireland that were introduced at a late stage. I would not anticipate the speech of the hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross) but the House knows, from its intimate concern with Northern Ireland affairs over the years, that the idea of transforming British legislation into United Kingdom legislation by making a common provision for the Province is a matter of considerable constitutional significance, which I suspect would split the House in several directions. I shall not dwell on that this evening, except to say that one cannot introduce legislation of this character, with its implications for

precedent, on some sort of side wind introduced on Report. That is not a proper use of parliamentary procedure.

My final point about what will happen in another place has already been made. This is not a happy evening, but I hope with all my heart that it will see the end of this Bill in the House of Commons.

Mr. Nicholas Budgen (Wolverhampton, South-West): What would be wrong if it had more time?

Mr. Biffen: That very intervention, coming from the quarter that it does, and with the zeal that it does, persuades me that it would be unhappy to have the Bill here again. It would all be stored up for the future, and its return in July would not be for the good health of the Government.

We know that the Captain of the Honourable Corps of Gentleman-at-Arms, rightly described this evening as more of a beater than a Whip, has been extremely successful. My anxiety is that the flock that flew on Monday were homing pigeons, and that they will come back again and provide more embarrassment for the Government on this legislation than they did on the community charge.

We have made no provision to deal with the Lords amendments under the security of the timetable motion. Why was it decided not to provide the security of a timetable motion for amendments in the other place? There must be some rationale behind that. The House is entitled to answers to those questions.

I end as I began. My right hon. Friend has had a difficult task to discharge. I shall be delighted to support him, and I urge my hon. Friends to do likewise.

8.19 pm

Mr. William Ross (Londonderry, East): We have listened to a most interesting and entertaining speech from the right hon. Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen). He referred to the fact that the Bill was extended to Northern Ireland at the last moment, a matter which annoys Northern Ireland Members intensely. That should not become a precedent. If the Government were to pursue this course in future, time and again legislation for Northern Ireland would be introduced and we would not even know it was coming. Only a fortnight ago today the amendment extending the Bill to Northern Ireland was tabled and it was just by chance that I happened to notice it the next morning.

That is not the only problem. The real difficulty is that, before we proceed with this Bill, we need to figure out exactly how we come to be here this evening and why we have a Bill which apparently needs so much amendment. It goes back to the Home Secretary's speech in September 1987, when he referred to rifles of the type used by Ryan. He gave a public undertaking at that time, no doubt speaking on behalf of the Government, that these rifles would be banned. Considering the period between the incident at Hungerford and his speech, he cannot have taken time to consult his hon. Friends, such as the hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro), who know about these matters. In other words, he reacted without thinking the matter through. The Hungerford horror is the foundation of this Bill, and a mighty poor foundation it is.

If I had not served in Committee I might not have tabled as many questions as I did, but my interest was aroused by what I heard there and the correspondence that I received. I understand that the police should carry out the firearms procedures with great precision. When I started to receive answers saying that events happened on or about certain dates; when I was told that the ammunition used was armour-piercing when it was nothing of the sort, thereby betraying that the Home Office did not have the expertise to distinguish the one from the other; when I was told that the alleged bullet-proof jacket was a Barbour body warmer; when I was given wrong dates which were subsequently corrected but only after I had tabled further questions; and when I found out that some of the information for which I asked but which I was not given was safe and well in a policeman's pocketbook, I began to wonder what on earth was going on.

The only reasonable and proper course to follow is to have a full public inquiry into the offence on the day at Hungerford when there was immense confusion—which one can understand considering the unprecedented conditions—and, more important, into whether the Thames Valley police followed their procedures on the possession of weapons in Ryan's case. I am particularly interested to know whether Constables Hoyes and Wainwright, who interviewed Ryan at various times, saw his membership cards and all that they were supposed to see, or whether they merely took his word on that.

If there is no public inquiry, there is no way that the Government can prevent the reopening of the inquest into the incident. Sixteen people were killed and a great deal of material damage was done. There are also undoubtedly an enormous number of claims for compensation against insurance companies which can be reopened, when clever barristers will undoubtedly ask nasty questions of the police force which is looking after the Home Secretary's constituents.

I am skimming over this because there is a great deal to do and I do not want to waste time. The Government in their panic quickly to allay public fear found themselves running with the mob and shouting against firearms. The truth is that firearms legislation is an extremely difficult and complex subject. There should normally be two or three years of gestation before it comes to light, with full, long debates among all interested parties. The fact that we have this huge number of sensible amendments tonight is positive proof to anybody who knows the subject that the Government have lost the argument and are using the jackboot.

In Committee it was interesting to see how Labour Members, who were initially as committed to the legislation as the Government, changed their minds. The Government were committed by the Home Secretary's speech, but ineffective law is not the answer to the problems of gun control. There should be a common-sense acceptance of the limits that the law can accomplish. The Government should have done what the 1984 working party on the firearms legislation sought, which was to have a single, comprehensive system of administration of our firearms legislation in all police forces. If the Home Secretary had noted such advice and questions, Ryan might never have got his guns and we might not have been here this evening.

8.25 pm

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): It is a sad day for me to know that we shall make further progress on a Bill which

[Sir Hector Monro]

I know to be wrong. I have been in the House for a long time and I have never felt less happy about the passage of a Bill through Parliament.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen) talked about morality, but with the high profile of the Home Office Ministers on moral standards, the words I use in this context are "fairness" and "justice". Few legitimate shooters feel that they are receiving justice from the Home Office tonight.

My right hon. Friend the Leader of the House said that we had had a lengthy time to debate the Bill on Monday night, but the Government have tabled a huge number of amendments at a late stage. We made good progress on the subjects that we are discussing, considering the grouping of amendments. Some people may describe this as a guillotine, but shooting people think it is more like a firing squad, and they have had no chance to plead their case properly. We should oppose the motion so that they get a fair hearing, particularly bearing in mind the enormous addition of Northern Ireland to the Bill.

The sad event that we all deplore was in August. Without consultation, although the British Shooting Sports Council and other governing bodies asked for consultation, the Home Secretary made his announcement at the end of September in such detail that he could not have consultations later to reverse his recommendations. So we had a White Paper and, a couple of weeks later, a Bill. Nobody can conceivably believe that they were not both printed together. There was no effective consultation between the White Paper and the Bill.

The Second Reading certainly showed that there was little support for the Bill. We had a good Committee stage with all-party discussion and a number of Government defeats. There would have been many more Government defeats had we not listened assiduously to the Under-Secretary of State, who gave many intimations that he would look favourably on the amendments before the Committee. We should have examined in greater detail the small print which he produced in answer to our pleas.

Tonight we should have two debates—it is unlikely that we shall have time for both, which is disappointing and the reason why I oppose the motion—on the self-loading rifle in relation to disablement. On Monday the Minister did not respond to that issue. I wish to read out three extracts from letters I received today. John Brough of Halewood on Merseyside writes:

"I now have arthritis throughout my body and can hardly shoot at all, although it has been central to my life. Occasionally, if I am picked up and put in position, I can fire with my old self-loading rifle. Without it, that is the end for me.

People like me had hoped and believed that Mr. Hogg was going to make an exception for small-magazine self-loading rifles. But now we see he has dropped the idea."

I have also received information about Mr. Dave Adams in my constituency who had a serious accident, was caught up in a lathe and can now shoot only with a self-loading rifle. He will have to give up his sport because of the Bill. I have also received information about Mr. Colin Marshall of Carlisle, who admits that he has an FN FAL 7·62 self-loading rifle. He says that he accepts that he must part with that, but he would buy an integral-magazine rifle so that he can continue the sport he loves.

Why are the Government hammering away at the disabled and not allowing them to carry on with small integral-magazine self-loading rifles? I hope that the Minister will give an early undertaking that he will concede amendment No. 91 for five-shot integral magazines. If he does that, we can make rapid progress tonight, but I want to know in detail, when he winds up, why the Government have their knife into those people who are disabled and want to use small-magazine self-loading rifles. I cannot find any reason to justify the attitude that they have taken.

There are many makes of such rifles available. I have today received a telex from Ruger in America saying that it can provide a five-shot six-magazine rifle. If we make small-magazine self-loading rifles legal, the gun trade will provide those guns so that people can continue to enjoy the sport. The Minister's attitude, that there are not sufficient rifles to justify that course, does not stand up.

We have not had time to debate this issue tonight, but I am concerned that some police forces are now behaving as if the Bill were already in force, although it has a long way to go. They are making great difficulties about SLRs and are now being difficult about automatic pistols as well.

Amendment No. 148 and the other amendments in that group have been selected early but will be voted upon late. If the Minister wants his party to go home early tonight, he has only to say that he will not move amendment No. 148 and the others in that group and will therefore leave the consultative committee in the Bill, as we had expected him to do following debate in Committee. We were particularly disappointed, having been assured by the Government last Thursday that the consultative committee would remain in the Bill, to find, on Friday morning, that a whole host of amendments had been tabled, making a mockery of what we put into the Bill. That is why we resent so much the Government's approach.

Those are the two main reasons why we need more time tonight. Nothing in the Bill will have any effect on the armed crime in this country that all of us are so keen to see reduced. The Home Secretary has hauled out the 1973 Green Paper which was thown out by the Conservative party at that time, and has transformed it into this Bill, which is so unacceptable to those who know a little about shooting. We have had a Second Reading, a Committee stage and a Report stage and—perhaps the only honourable exception has been my hon. Friend the Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson)—no one has spoken in support of the Bill, except the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley), which in itself should be the death knell for any Bill.

I ask the Government to think again about the SLR and the consultative committee. If the Minister agrees to do so, and announces it tonight, he will be able to make quick progress and the party can go home early. But he must announce those concessions.

8.35pm

Mr. Menzies Campbell (Fife, North-East): I also oppose the guillotine motion. Like other hon. Members, I look forward with interest to observing the fate of the Bill when it reaches the other place, but perhaps I might offer this advice to Ministers. If they ensure that the Bill reaches the other place after 12 August and before 1 February, many of those peers who turned out this week to help them on another matter might be engaged elsewhere and the Bill might have a better chance.

The unhappy circumstances in which we find ourselves this evening are a direct consequence of the history of this

measure. The unfortunate events in Hungerford in August promoted, or perhaps to put it more correctly provoked, a very early White Paper. I do not blame the Government for that because the general sense of apprehension and revulsion which those events caused was undoubtedly a justification for an early implication of what the Government might propose to do, but that White Paper was followed hard on its heels by a Bill.

There can be no question but that there was no proper consultation with the relevant shooting authorities between the publication of the White Paper and the publication of the Bill. That lack of consultation has given rise to so much of my mail—I have no doubt other hon. Members have received similar mail—from people who are legitimately entitled to use and keep weapons. If the White Paper was rushed out as an early and urgent response to the events of Hungerford, that itself made even more acute the requirement that there should be proper consultation.

The Bill then received its Second Reading. I do not believe that it does any disservice to history to say that, on that occasion, the Bill had hardly a friend in the House. If the fate of the Bill had been determined by speeches made about it on that occasion, it would certainly have gone no further. I was not a member of the Standing Committee, so I cannot speak with authority about that, but the hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) has told us of the concessions that the Government have made in relation to compensation and the consultative committee. One pauses only to observe that, if there had been a consultative committee such as was conceded in Committee, many of the defects of the legislation which have been isolated by scrutiny in this House would not have existed and the circumstances in which the Government now find themselves would have been eradicated.

I would not for a moment seek to do other than accept the constitutional observations of the right hon. Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen) about the Northern Ireland provisions. Those appear to be well taken points to which the House should give close scrutiny. However, the addition of Northern Ireland at that late stage was grossly provocative. What was in the Government's mind when they introduced Northern Ireland into the Bill? How did they expect Northern Ireland Members to respond? It was, at the very least, an insensitive and unnecessary provocation.

This legislation has been hasty. It may or may not deserve the description of botched, but it is certainly an example of Government mismanagement, and a guillotine in this House should not be available to save the Government from the consequences of their own actions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Perhaps I should remind the House that the longer we spend on this motion the less time there will be to debate the amendments.

8.39 pm

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson (Newbury): I have never hidden from the House the fact that my reason for being involved in this Bill is, at least to some extent, the dreadful massacre that happened in my constituency nine months ago. Therefore, my last duty to the 16 people, almost all of whom were my constituents, who were killed on that day and to the 14 who were wounded is to see the Bill through and on to the statute book as soon as possible.

We all remember the media reaction to the news of that event. The view was expressed in many quarters that it was time for greater control on guns in this country. I suggest that this 20-clause Bill achieves at least some of the objectives that we want it to achieve.

I am told endlessly by people in the shooting lobby that if they had been given more time the Bill could have been much better. The shooting lobby has sent me material which I have ploughed through. I sat through 27½ hours in Standing Committee, and all I can say is that the amendments and the speeches do not seem to have produced any strong, fresh proposals which could have been enacted by any Home Secretary. The Bill is as good as any Firearms Bill could be at the moment.

No doubt arguments will be set out in later stages for other changes in the law. I suggest that at the moment this is the best Bill that could come before the House. I hope that it will become an Act before we reach the first anniversary of what happened at Hungerford.

8.41 pm

Mr. Michael Colvin (Romsey and Waterside): We all echo sincerely the views expressed by my hon. Friend the Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson). If the Government refrain from amending the Bill, as they intend, perhaps the Bill will reach another place in a reasonably acceptable fashion. The purpose of this guillotine motion is to remove from their shoulders the embarrassment that the Government feel at having got themselves into this position and place it on the shoulders of hon. Members on both sides of the House who have spoken on behalf of the 2 million shooters and 3 million people who support the shooting lobby—5 million people in all.

The Standing Committee did a first-class job. I was not a member of the Committee, but the Bill came out of Committee much better than it went in. The Government are now doing their best to emasculate the Bill and the consultative committee. They are not honouring their commitment on self-loading rifles with integral magazines of five rounds, and they are not going far enough on compensation. I do not want to be party to a conspiracy to rob people of their property. That is what the Bill does. Conservative Members are sometimes criticised for believing in private property. I do not want to support a party which says that it will make unlawful some property which has been purchased and provide only 50 per cent. of the value when unlawful weapons are confiscated.

On Monday the House should have recommitted the Bill to the Standing Committee, as my hon. Friend the Member for Weston-super-Mare (Mr. Wiggin) proposed. It did not do so because when the decision to debate the Bill on Report was made the previous week, we had been given a firm sign from the Government that they would listen to our representations and perhaps compromise on their stand. We should have tabled the motion on Thursday. Had that happened, we would have had time to brief our Conservative colleagues, many of whom were supportive of the motion on Monday, but would not follow us in the Lobby because they had not been through the normal practice of warning the Whips that they would vote against the Government on a three-line Whip.

Hon. Members have referred to Ulster. I have tried to discover how the House forms legislation for Ulster. The answer is simple. The Government do what they feel they

[Mr. Michael Colvin]

should do according to the circumstances. There are no rules. The hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross) was treated very shabbily in that respect.

The Government are likely to find themselves in an embarrassing position in another place. I have no idea what will happen this evening with regard to votes. We will listen attentively to what Ministers have to say. If we win the small concessions that we want, the chances are that the Bill will go to another place in a reasonable state.

We understand that there is no really effective official Opposition in this Parliament. Presumably that is why the Government now seem intent on winning recruits for their awkward squad from Conservative Members who have hitherto been among the Government's staunchest supporters. The Government are becoming the opposite of Austen Chamberlain. People said of him that he always played the game and always lost. This Government are beginning never to play the game, and, because of the three-line Whipping system, they will never lose.

8.45 pm

Sir John Farr (Harborough): I want, first, to comment on the remarks made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen), who criticised my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House for saying that there should possibly be a mechanism in the motion to provide for a guillotine in another place. My right hon. Friend the Member for Shropshire, North may not have thought of the fact, which I understand to be true, that the other place, by and large, believes that the Bill is not bad. Therefore, it may not be necessary for a guillotine to operate there. The Bill was considerably amended in Committee—more than it should have been, in my opinion—and when it is considered in the other place there may be only a few amendments, which would make a guillotine unnecessary.

My hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) said that he had not heard anyone in this place speak in favour of the Bill. I believe that the Bill is first-class. It has been first-class all along, and the only thing wrong with it is that the Government were bamboozled in Standing Committee into making outrageous concessions. The one concession which no self-respecting Government should have made relates to compensation for firearms that are removed from circulation. I have received information which establishes firmly for me the fact that anyone with a weapon that is taken out of circulation as a result of the Bill will receive the market price. There are always European and world prices for weapons. It is immaterial whether they are licensed.

The Government made another concession by agreeing to set up a statutory standing consultative committee, for which the firearms lobby has been clamouring for years. I never heard anyone say, "Thank you for the committee." For years my hon. Friends have said that that committee should exist to allow the firearms lobby to be heard and consulted by the Government. They have been given the committee, but I am not sure that they deserve it. They have been given the right to compensation, and also a statutory committee. In addition, the Government made a concession, which I believe was unwise, over Northern Ireland.

Most of my constituents believe that Hungerford changed the tenor and course of firearms legislation in Britain. They demand that the Home Secretary take action. I believe that the original Bill that my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary placed before the House some time ago was far better than the amended creature before us today.

Another reason why I shall vote in favour of the guillotine motion, apart from the public's general desire for a new, meaningful Firearms Act on the statute book, is related to an incident that occurred nearly a year ago. Many people may have forgotten this. Alan Bray, a gun dealer at Hinckley in Leicestershire near my constituency, was beaten up by intruders, bound, doused with petrol and set alight while he was still alive. Local people will have to deal with such problems. The sooner we have a meaningful new Firearms Act, the better.

8.49 pm

Mr. Jerry Wiggin (Weston-super-Mare): I had not been in the House very long before I realised the great merits of guillotine motions. Therefore, it is with a heavy heart that I shall vote against this one tonight. I have great sympathy for my hon. Friend the Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson), who joined the House on the same day as me. I too had a disaster in my constituency and I know what my hon. Friend has been through. I must tell the House that if the Bill had been enacted before the incident at Hungerford, it would not have prevented it. More than half of those who were killed in that terrible incident were not killed with a self-loading rifle. My hon. Friend has admitted that that proposition is correct.

I know that the House is in a hurry, and I have just one point to make because this is the first opportunity I have had to seek a response from my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary. What is the reason for the Bill? Throughout the Committee stage, the Under-Secretary denied that Hungerford was the reason. There is no secret in the fact, however, that a Bill was hastily brought down from a dusty shelf and produced before us in answer to some imaginary public demand that something should be done.

Nothing is being done in the Bill that will affect crime and nothing is being done that would have stopped the tragedy at Hungerford. I believe that the Government have made a grave mistake in responding so hastily and so unwisely. I make no apology for having given the Bill as rough a ride as possible. I believe that those who agree with me have won the argument, and I am sorry that we shall lose the vote.

8.51 pm

Sir Nicholas Bonsor (Upminster): I do not intend to delay the House long because I am aware that we want to get to the vote. *[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) is making a lot of noise in support, which makes a pleasant change.

It saddens me that, and I confess that I do not understand how, somebody for whom I have the deepest respect—my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary—can bring to the House a Bill that initially contained a clause that amounted to confiscation of lawfully owned property. That is something that the Conservative party has always opposed, and I understood it to be among the most important of our principles.

My right hon. Friend the Leader of the House, in a speech marked for its humour and not its content, told us that a concession had been made in Committee. He said that the Government are now going to give compensation for taking away a lawfully owned rifle. I find it extraordinary that anyone can describe as a concession something that is fundamental to the beliefs that we hold. When we discuss that compensation, I hope that my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary will be able to confirm that he is prepared to be even more lenient in his treatment of people who hold such weapons. I hope that that compensation will accurately and properly reflect the value that the owner could expect to get on the market. At the moment, the clause does not offer that.

On Monday night, we discussed Northern Ireland at some great length. I pay great credit to my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office for apologising to the House for having introduced the amendments so late. I agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen) that this is no way in which to bring in legislation of such great significance. It is disgraceful that the Government should have introduced such amendments after the Committee stage—which lasted a long time. The hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross) sat on that Committee, but was denied the opportunity to discuss the implications for Northern Ireland because he did not know that such amendments were to be introduced. As I understand it from Monday night's debate, the Government were well aware during the Committee stage that they were proposing to bring in amendments to affect Northern Ireland.

The Government's decisions on compensation and on Northern Ireland are wholly unacceptable to me and I believe to most of us on the Government Back Benches. When the dreadful day comes when our party moves back to be the Opposition, we will rue the precedents we are creating in the Bill.

The first specific point that I wish to make relates to firearms. I do not understand why my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary will not be more flexible about SLRs. It has been rightly pointed out many times that, in Committee, my hon. Friend was flexible and understanding on all the important issues in the Bill—or appeared to be—and he made concessions which we all recognise have vastly improved the Bill. In its initial drafting the Bill must rank as one of the worst ever brought before the House. Why is my hon. Friend sticking on SLRs? *[Interruption.]* I would be grateful if Opposition Members spoke more quietly, as I can hardly hear myself.

I want to know why the Under-Secretary believes that the banishment of the SLR from the arsenal of weapons that are held lawfully in this country is essential. I accept the argument that my hon. Friend the Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson) has made, and I understand why he has done so. Of course a Bill had to be introduced, but it should not have been so rushed and it should not have been introduced in its present form.

What is so significant about the SLR? My hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) has already said that it is essential to the handicapped. It is useful to many deerstalkers and particularly for culling, as opposed to the sporting pursuit of deer. That rifle is essential to our sporting teams in international competition. They should be able to use the same weapons as their competitors.

The Under-Secretary of State has said that there are not many such rifles, and he mentioned the Beretta. I am sure that my hon. Friend is aware that more than 30,000 such weapons exist in the United States and more than 3,000 are to be found in Europe. I did not understand the logic of his argument that the number of SLRs is insignificant and that we should not allow for them in our legislation. That weapon is essential for our international sportsmen to compete adequately in the international arena. I must repeat that the compensation offered in the Bill is inadequate and must be improved.

You said earlier, Mr. Speaker, that when we moved on from discussing the guillotine, we could discuss the Bill in detail. In reality, we can do nothing of the sort. We took six hours to debate the first five groups of amendments on Monday and I can say with honesty that nobody to whom I listened during that debate—I was present for all of it—filibustered. All the contributions were sensible and to the point. We have 33 such groups left and we are supposed to debate them in the next four hours. That is absurd. I believe that the Government, aware of the weakness of their case, do not wish us to consider the Bill properly.

I do not accept what my hon. Friend the Member for Harborough (Sir J. Farr) said. I did not understand the logic of his speech. He was not here on Monday night, he did not listen to the arguments. If he had been here, I am sure that he would not have made the speech that he did tonight. Nothing that he said in support of the Bill bears examination. I hope that he was wrong when he said that our noble Friends in another place will accept the Bill. I should have thought that when they consider the arguments they will find the Bill unacceptable. I look forward to a different Bill coming back to the House in due course.

8.57 pm

Mr. Nicholas Budgen (Wolverhampton, South-West): I shall vote against the guillotine, for two reasons. First, I believe that it is a demonstration of extraordinary maladroit man management by the Government. I played some small part on the last occasion when a guillotine was directed by the Government against their own supporters on the Northern Ireland Assembly Bill. Certainly we were prolonging the proceedings with a view to trying not only to appeal to the broad spirit of Unionism within the country, but also to demonstrate that the Northern Ireland Assembly would never work. The fact that we were right and that the Government have since suffered a major humiliation is not material to this argument.

There are perhaps between six and 10 hon. Members who have strongly felt views about the details of the legislation. They are not seeking to appeal by great principles to a broad body of people outside the House of Commons; they wish merely to get a slightly better deal on some of the details of the legislation. Their legitimate complaint could have been dealt with perfectly adequately over a longer period by those on the ever-growing payroll in the Conservative party. If the payroll cannot stay up occasionally to vote down 10 people, it is a poor lookout.

This is a most disagreeable display of macho vigour, presumably by junior Ministers at the Home Office and the more energetic and less wise members of the Whips Office. It would have been a great deal better if the matter had been argued through for a few more evenings, if the

[Mr. Nicholas Budgen]

payroll had been here to vote and if some of the younger and more enthusiastic members of the Tory party who wish to ingratiate themselves with the Administration had been obliged to look up a few points which no doubt would have been supplied to them by the Home Office. Instead, 10 or 12 hon. Members have been given a legitimate grievance which they will feel for the rest of this Parliament. That is a small House of Commons point, and it shows that even the Tory party, which used to pride itself on its wisdom and sensitivity in man management, can make mistakes.

However, there is a wider and more constitutional point. Some hon. Members in the Conservative and Unionist parties have tried to explain to the people of Northern Ireland that their interests and their grievances should properly be ventilated in this place. The people of Northern Ireland are entitled to say, "First of all, we had Stormont foisted upon us, and we did not want that. Over 50 years we achieved some affection for that institution. As our affection for that institution developed, our respect and affection for Westminster sadly diminished. Then they gave us direct rule and tried to persuade us that our interests would be dealt with in the House of Commons. They said to us, quite legitimately, that they in the House of Commons have proper rules of procedure and if we have a grievance we can write to our Member of Parliament and proper time will be given for him to consider our representations, and if he happens to agree with us, he will raise it on the Floor of the House and perhaps in Standing Committee."

It was an impertinence by the Government, who are still the historical holder of the flag of Unionism, to say to the people of Northern Ireland a week ago, "We shall extend the provisions of the Bill to Northern Ireland. We give you at most three days to consider the way in which the Bill will affect Northern Ireland." What chance has anyone who is not directly involved in politics to write to his Member of Parliament and explain, for instance, the special security aspects of Northern Ireland and to say whether he wishes the legislation to be extended to other activities, whether he wishes the legislation to be tightened or loosened in respect of Northern Ireland? That is the most offensive way in which to legislate for Northern Ireland.

I say that with great regret, because it is widely known that many Opposition Members who represent constituencies in Northern Ireland are coming to the view that the only proper future for Northern Ireland is to have some separate or devolved constitution. Those of us who wish to retain the union must be extremely careful to ensure that proper constitutional proprieties are always observed in respect of Northern Ireland.

This method of dealing with Northern Ireland is a disgrace. It has deprived the citizens of Northern Ireland of their proper rights. It is a manifestation of the most crass, arrogant English attitude towards Northern Ireland. Every hon. Member who has any sense of history and any sense of the union and of the great sacrifices made by Northern Ireland for the United Kingdom should vote with vigour against this disgraceful guillotine.

9.4 pm

Mr. Henry Bellingham (Norfolk, North-West): My hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, South-West (Mr. Budgen) has given one good reason why we should oppose the guillotine this evening, but some of my hon. Friends may be in doubt as to what happened in Standing Committee and in Monday night's debate. There was not one single filibuster. We had a constructive debate on a lot of technical matters. Throughout the Committee, we made very quick and good progress, given the complexities of the legislation. I was under the impression that the guillotine was imposed only after deliberate filibustering by hon. Members trying to foul up the works, but in this case there was none of that.

Furthermore, I remember well that in Committee my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State told us that firearms legislation depended on trust and co-operation between the shooting community and the police. We want to expedite the Bill to put it on the statute book as soon as possible, but the patience of the shooting community is being pushed to the limit by the Bill's provisions. If the shooting community can say, as it will be able to, that the House of Commons did not even discuss measures that affect it, its freedoms and its liberties, it will resent the Bill even more.

If we support the guillotine, we shall bitterly regret doing so. The Bill is pushing the patience of the shooting community a long way, and if we support the guillotine motion it will have a genuine grievance. That is why I shall vote against the motion this evening.

9.6 pm

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hurd): Let me deal briefly with a number of points that have come up. My right hon. Friend the Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen), in his glittering, amoral speech, expressed the hope that another place would not change the Bill. I share that hope, but we cannot be sure, so it is right to provide against that possibility. That is the purpose of paragraph 6 of the order which provides for a timetable if necessary in that event. It is opaque, it is difficult to constitute, but my right hon. Friend of all people should perhaps recognise that that is the traditional way of dealing with that particular problem.

My hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, South-West (Mr. Budgen) has just made a powerful speech in favour of the union and gave that as a reason for voting against the guillotine. However, he seems to be under the misapprehension that the application of the Bill to Northern Ireland falls under the guillotine. This matter was discussed at some length on Monday night. As my hon. Friend the Member for Upminster (Sir N. Bonsor) rightly pointed out, my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office did, as it were, come clean on that matter. Therefore, it is not subject to the guillotine.

Mr. Budgen: The point I made was that, if a constituent in Northern Ireland wishes to make representations to his Member of Parliament, he will not have sufficient time to do so and to receive any sort of answer from his Member of Parliament.

Mr. Hurd: I am not talking about the whole question of the application, because that was dealt with on Monday night. It is not an argument for voting against the timetable motion.

Mr. Budgen *rose*——

Mr. Hurd: No, I shall not give way. My hon. Friend and I will continue to disagree on that point.

Mr. Dobson: Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that, although the new clause extending the Bill to Northern Ireland was debated earlier this week, a large number of amendments relating to Northern Ireland will be caught by the guillotine?

Mr. Hurd: The general principle that my hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, South-West was addressing is not touched on by the timetable motion and is not relevant to a vote on it.

Mr. Colvin: Will my right hon. Friend clear up one point for us? If Ministers knew that the Bill would be extended to Northern Ireland before the Committee concluded its consideration of the Bill, why was the Committee not told?

Mr. Hurd: My right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office dealt with that specific point at some length on Monday night, as my hon. Friend will probably know. The question who received what letter when was exhaustively discussed that night.

Any firearms legislation is likely to be deeply controversial. Anyone who knows the history of the subject knows that to be true. On this occasion, the controversy on the Bill surfaced late. If we had rushed a Bill through using some emergency procedure in the autumn, we might have got it relatively easily. That is what we were urged to do by the Opposition and a large part of the press. We did not do that. We deliberately followed a normal procedure which allowed for reflection, criticism and change, and reflection, criticism and change is exactly what there has been.

All this time we were urged by the Opposition to move faster and further. I was accused of spending too much time with the gun lobby. I have all that history in mind when I hear accusations that there was some kind of knee-jerk reaction.

Since Second Reading, we have taken the view that certain pillars of the Bill had to be held to, and we have held to them. There are other matters on which we have been moved, and I congratulate my hon. Friends on their powers of persuasion. It was persuasion, because we could have removed at this stage clauses that were carried against us in Standing Committee. By and large, we have not done so. The result is a raft of Government amendments. The amendments are to a large extent the result of concessions, made and promised in Standing Committee, exacted by my hon. Friends. It is a little hard to press us to show flexibility and open-mindedness and then, when we do, to complain of the amendments tabled as a result.

Mr. Ian Bruce (Dorset, South): Does my right hon. Friend concede that the one aspect of the Bill which has been omitted is that concerning the availability of weapons to people with mental health problems? That point appears to have been ignored. The application form makes provision for self-certification, and applicants are asked to declare whether they have a mental health problem. However, the general practitioner is not asked to countersign. Should not an amendment be brought forward to cover that point?

Mr. Hurd: My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department advises me that that matter will be raised at various stages in our discussions later, when my hon. Friend the Member for Dorset, South (Mr. Bruce) will have an opportunity to intervene and to receive an answer.

In the meetings which my hon. Friend the Minister and I have had with our hon. Friends, they have emphasised three points on which they sought concessions. The first was the modification of the prohibition on self-loading rifles, with my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) in the van. The second concerned the buy-in procedure. The third related to the statutory advisory committee. We have done what my hon. Friend promised. We weighed up carefully whether concessions could be made in respect of self-loading rifles which would meet the arguments of my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries without weakening a central pillar of the Bill.

For reasons which my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State has already given, and which he will repeat this evening, we concluded that that concession could not be made. However, the buy-in scheme and the statutory committee have been conceded. If my hon. Friends knew with what pain and difficulty my hon. Friend and I shook those two plums from the tree, they would be a little more generous when we offer that fruit to them on a dish.

Mr. Higgins: As my right hon. Friend has failed to provide an amended financial memorandum to the Bill, now that the one provided on Second Reading has been overtaken by events, will he explain why it is that the compensation arrangements propose to ask for certification of what was paid for the weapon but to reimburse only 50 per cent?

Mr. Hurd: There is an amendment covering that point, and I draw the attention of my right hon. Friend to the Firearms (Amendment) Bill [Money] (No. 2) resolution, which was carried on 1 March, after Second Reading, as a result of the concession in principle that was made on that aspect.

We are anxious to continue and to complete informed discussion——

Mr. Higgins: My right hon. Friend has not answered my question. He must not try to rush this through and brush matters aside in that way. He has not explained why it is that somebody with a receipt showing what he paid for the weapon should be compensated only to the extent of 50 per cent. of its value.

Mr. Hurd: My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State will deal with that point later this evening. I thought that my right hon. Friend wished to refer to the point he raised when intervening originally, because it is that point with which I have dealt. I shall certainly give my right hon. Friend an answer to his other detailed point.

Mr. William Ross *rose*——

Mr. Hurd: I shall not give way to the hon. Gentleman.

Hon. Members: Give way!

Mr. Ross: There was considerable debate in Committee on the number of weapons that would be confiscated—the Home Secretary calls it compensation. Does the Home Secretary yet know how many of those weapons there are, and what will be the total cost, even on his miserly sums?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I remind the House that we are debating the allocation of time motion.

Mr. Hurd: The best estimate that we have, I am advised, is 8,000 to 10,000 rifles.

We are anxious to continue, and to complete, in an informed way, the proceedings on the Bill. I do not need to state the background and the reasons for it, because they have been eloquently stated by two of my hon. Friends who are in a particularly good position to comment—my hon. Friends the Members for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson) and for Harborough (Sir J. Farr). I do not need to labour or repeat their arguments. I hold those views strongly and believe that they amount to a powerful case for the motion.

Question put:—

The House divided: Ayes 278, Noes 142.

Division No. 327] **[9.15 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorst, John
Gower, Sir Raymond
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Moate, Roger
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walden, George
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David

Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Stephen Dorrell.

NOES

Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beggs, Roy
Bellingham, Henry
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Buchan, Norman
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buckley, George J.
Budgen, Nicholas
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Colvin, Michael
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Eadie, Alexander
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Flynn, Paul
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Galbraith, Sam
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Haynes, Frank
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Ingram, Adam
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kennedy, Charles
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leighton, Ron
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
McAvoy, Thomas
McCusker, Harold
Macdonald, Calum A.
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Quin, Ms Joyce
Redmond, Martin
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rowlands, Ted
Salmond, Alex
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Whitney, Ray
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Winnick, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Ken Eastham and
Mr. Martyn Jones.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That the following provisions shall apply to the remaining proceedings on the Firearms (Amendment) Bill:

Report and Third Reading

1.—(1) The remaining proceedings on Consideration and the proceedings on Third Reading shall be completed at this day's sitting and, if not previously concluded, shall be brought to a conclusion five hours after the commencement of the proceedings on the Motion for this Order.

(2) Paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) shall apply to those proceedings.

(3) Standing Order No. 80 (Business Committee) shall not apply to this Order.

Dilatory motions

2. No dilatory Motion with respect to, or in the course of, the proceedings shall be made except by a member of the Government, and the Question on any such Motion shall be put forthwith.

Motion under Standing Order No. 20: extra time

3. If the proceedings are interrupted by a Motion for the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 (Adjournment on specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration), a period equal to the duration of the proceedings on the Motion shall be added to the period at the end of which the proceedings on the Bill are to be brought to a conclusion.

Conclusion of proceedings

4.—(1) For the purpose of bringing the proceedings on the Bill to a conclusion at the time required by this Order, Mr. Speaker shall put forthwith the following Questions (but no others)—

(a) any Question already proposed from the Chair;

(b) any Question necessary to bring to a decision a Question so proposed (including, in the case of a new Clause or new Schedule which has been read a second time, the Question that the Clause or Schedule be added to the Bill);

(c) the Question on any amendment or Motion standing on the Order Paper in the name of any Member, if that amendment is moved or Motion is made by a member of the Government;

(d) any other Question necessary for the disposal of the business to be concluded;

and on a Motion so made for a new Clause or a new Schedule Mr. Speaker shall put only the question that the Clause or Schedule be added to the Bill.

(2) Proceedings under sub-paragraph (1) above shall not be interrupted under any Standing Order relating to the sittings of the House.

Recommittal

5.—(1) References in this Order to proceedings on Consideration or proceedings on Third Reading include references to proceedings, at those stages respectively, for, on or in consequence of recommittal.

(2) No debate shall be permitted on any Motion to recommit the Bill (whether as a whole or otherwise) and Mr. Speaker shall put forthwith any Question necessary to dispose of the Motion, including the Question on any amendment moved to the Question.

Supplemental orders

6. The proceedings on any Motion made in the House by a member of the Government for supplementing the provisions of this Order shall, if not previously concluded, be brought to a conclusion one hour after they have been commenced, and paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) shall apply to the proceedings.

Orders of the Day

Firearms (Amendment) Bill

As amended (in the Standing Committee) further considered.

New Clause 15

COMMITTEE TO REVIEW FIREARMS LEGISLATION

'The Home Secretary shall establish, within 12 months of the coming into force of this Act, a standing committee of no more than 15 persons, who shall elect their own chairman each year and whose members shall normally serve for no more than three years, which shall keep under review the operation of the Firearms Act 1968 and subsequent firearms legislation and which may make proposals for the amending of such Acts at time to time. The standing committee shall include representatives of the police, shooting interests, the gun trade and no more than two competent and qualified independent persons'.—*[Mr. Corbett.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

9.30 pm

Mr. Robin Corbett (Birmingham, Erdington): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): With this it will be convenient to take the following: Government amendment No. 148.

Amendment No. 85, in clause 16, page 8, line 27, after 'Committee', insert

'of whom the chairman shall be a senior member of one of the major institutions of criminology or a senior member of the legal profession chosen after consultation with the appropriate professional bodies.'.

Amendment No. 84, in clause 16, page 8, line 28, leave out 'eight' and insert 'fifteen'.

Amendment No. 87, in clause 16, page 8, line 29, after 'State', insert

'to include at least one representative of the Police, the Home Office, the Military, and firearms users'.

Government amendments Nos. 149 and 150.

Amendment No. 90, in clause 16, page 8, line 40, at end insert

'(3A) The Secretary of State shall publish the agenda and minutes of all meetings of the firearms expert consultative committee.'.

Government amendment No. 151.

Amendment No. 137, in clause 16, page 8, line 41, leave out

'except in cases of special urgency.'.

Amendment No. 139, in clause 16, page 8, line 41, leave out 'special' and insert 'extreme'.

Amendment No. 138, in clause 16, page 8, line 41, leave out 'special'.

Amendment No. 81, in clause 16, page 8, line 44, at end insert

'(4A) The firearms expert consultative committee shall be empowered to call for submissions, evidence and figures concerning the administration of the principal and this Act from Chief Officers of Police.'.

Amendment No. 140, in clause 16, page 9, line 6, at end insert

'or the committee itself decide'.

Amendment No. 142, in clause 16, page 9, line 12, leave out subsection (7).

Government amendment No. 152.

Amendment No. 88, in clause 16, page 9, line 12, leave out 'five' and insert 'three'.

Amendment No. 141, in clause 16, page 9, line 12, leave out 'five' and insert 'ten'.

Amendment No. 89, in clause 16, page 9, line 13, at end insert

'(7A) The Committee shall be empowered to call in for advice experts or persons with specialist knowledge in any particular field as the committee thinks fit.'.

Mr. Corbett: It is an outrage that we should have to discuss important amendments and new clauses to the Bill against a timetable. However, that is what the Government have just delivered through its Whipping system, because they know that there is no natural majority on the Government Benches for many of the provisions of the Bill. The new clause and the amendments which go with it illustrate that point.

In a sentence, the amendments tabled by the Government to the clause in the Bill setting up a consultative committee have one purpose, and one purpose only, and that is to neuter the powers of that consultative committee. The committee was imposed upon the Government, and, having been beaten in Standing Committee, they now move to ensure that the committee has no real powers and is confined in such a way that it stands little or no chance of earning the respect of those who shoot for leisure or as part of their job.

The Government have yet to understand—and I hope that they will—the hostility that this Bill has aroused among legitimate shooters. All of us who had the privilege of serving on the Committee have been overwhelmed, not just by the number of representations which we have had, but by the range of objections. Some of us on the Committee tried our best to respond to them.

There is the contentious area of the differing attitudes of chief constables towards those applying for firearm certificates. Again, that is something on which the consultative committee could properly give advice.

I was told today—and I hope that the Under-Secretary will say something about it later—that the chief constable for north Wales is refusing to renew firearms certificates for SLRs, and is issuing instead a piece of paper claiming to authorise the holder to keep the weapon until it is disposed of under the Bill. That anticipates the Bill passing into law. I hope that the Under-Secretary will confirm that that action is now unlawful.

In some earlier cases refusals have led to the courts, where the alleged unreasonable behaviour of chief constables for refusing certificates has been rejected. It can perhaps be best summed up in this way:

"We have seen over recent years a belief growing amongst shooters that certain senior police officers are hostile to the shooting community and are abusing their discretion to the extent that they are seen to be writing what amount to new laws themselves."

That is a serious criticism from the point of view of the police, the shooters, and relations between the police and the public.

Those are not the words of some wildcats intent on fomenting trouble between police and shooters or police and public. They are not even the judgments of a police consultative committee. These charges come from a body with which the Government should have a special affinity. It is called the Association of Conservative Shooters. That is the measure of the gap that the Government have torn between legitimate shooters and the police. It was one

reason why the Committee insisted on the setting up of a representative group of those concerned with firearms and their proper use to try to heal those wounds and to build and develop a new and more positive partnership. Shooters do not object to proper firearms control. However, they properly insist that such controls should be fair and workable and that the police have a matching interest in that.

What do the Government propose for the consultative committee? They want to put it in a straitjacket. They insist, in amendment No. 151, that its main role shall be narrow and be simply

"to keep under review . . . the provisions"

unless the Secretary of State "requests" the committee

"to make proposals for amending"

them.

However, the position is even worse than that and the gag is even more secure. Seemingly the committee can advise the Secretary of State on any other matters relating to those provisions only when asked to do so. I advise the Under-Secretary of State and the Secretary of State that, if the Government's amendments are passed tonight, no self-respecting person will serve on that committee under those confining terms of reference. No adult will volunteer for a "speak only when spoken to" role that does no more than reflect what went on in the nursery where the Secretary of State and his Under-Secretary of State spent some of their formative years, and retained its bad habits.

What is at issue is the role of the committee. Seemingly the Government see it as just another collection of the great and the good, sipping their coffee and waiting for the Secretary of State's messenger to arrive with some trivial request on which they can leisurely pass their time. It is a born-again Home Office working party. We want—that is why there was this argument and decision in Committee—a thoroughly representative committee of all the interests—police, shooters of all kinds, experts in weapons technology and criminologists, as independent members. We want them to have unfettered powers to speak and to offer advice to the Secretary of State, especially—I stress this—when he has not asked for it.

Let it be understood that no one is asking, as the Minister has suggested, that the committee should have powers to veto. Those powers belong only to the Secretary of State, who is accountable to this House. We want a free-standing committee as much concerned with the provisions of the Bill and the way in which they work as with looking ahead and into other areas of firearms legislation. It cannot be effective if it is to be no more than a group to monitor the effectiveness of the Bill. It must be able to wander more widely and to ask for submissions from whoever it feels can help, and its agendas and minutes should be published.

Although clarifying the committee's role, the Government amendments gag it in a vital manner. Unless specifically asked by the Home Secretary, the committee is forbidden from recommending changes in legislation. That lies at the heart of our objections because it shows that the Government do not trust the committee or the people whom they hope will serve on it.

The Government remove the direct representation of people with knowledge of or expertise in sport, recreation and competition shooting. It does little good to say they can be smuggled in under the terms of amendment No. 148, which refers to people with

"knowledge and experience of . . . the possession, use or keeping of"

firearms. That is no way to deal with this matter and it is no way in which properly to reflect the legitimate interests of those who use weapons for sport, recreation or competition. People who use weapons for those purposes deserve and demand direct representation as of right.

This is the first major revision of firearms legislation in 20 years. That makes it more important that the committee listens and learns from the experience of the implementation of that legislation and is able to say to the Secretary of State from time to time, and by its own decision, "This bit of the Bill is fine and is working, but you got this bit wrong. This is what you should now do." I thought that that was what democracy was supposed to be about. Unfortunately, the Government dislike the idea of the committee and they have gone out of their way to hamstring its work. In clause 16(4) the Secretary of State even gives himself a loophole to avoid consulting the committee by saying that that need not be done when there is "special urgency". What does that mean? What is likely to happen with such hidden suddenness that the Secretary of State needs to rush to the Chamber to propose another class of weapon to be added to the banned list behind the backs of the members of the committee?

The Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hogg): The hon. Gentleman is criticising the terms of clause 16(4) as they stand. He will remember that it is not a Government provision. He will note that amendment No. 151 seeks to delete the provision that he is criticising and to replace it with another.

Mr. Corbett: I am grateful to the Under-Secretary of State for responding in that way. Those outside the House are not able to follow the ins and outs of the amendments in the same way as ourselves. I wanted him to say what he has said, and I am grateful to him for having made the position clear.

The nub of the matter is that the Committee will not be able to propose changes in firearms legislation unless and until the Secretary of State requests it to do so. That should not be acceptable to anyone, and it gives me no pleasure to repeat that it is my belief that no adult will agree or volunteer to serve on a committee that will be hamstrung and will be no more and no less than the Secretary of State's poodle.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I have a high regard for the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett), but his criticisms of the Government's amendments are devoid of truth. There is no intention of emasculating the consultative committee. In many respects we have greatly improved the clause which was agreed to in Committee. It is no secret that I on behalf of the Government strongly opposed a statutory consultative committee. I was in favour instead of a consultative committee. The Government were beaten in Committee and we have accepted the defeat with good grace. We have tabled amendments that will meet a long-standing desire on the part of the shooting community for a statutory consultative committee. As it considers the terms of the Government amendments, I think that it will understand and accept that it meets its legitimate desires.

[Mr. Douglas Hogg]

I am encouraged by the constructive approach of my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) to the statutory consultative committee. I refer him and the House to the passage in which he said:

"If the Minister feels that it needs to be drafted in a different way, we are more flexible than he has been from time to time, and I shall be glad to change anything that might be required, except on the issue of whether it is statutory or not. Advisory committees get us nowhere in this world, we need a statutory one."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee F;* 10 March 1988, c. 377.]

My hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries, who spoke with great eloquence during the debate, laid down one essential condition—that the committee should be statutory—and we have met it. He made it plain that he had no objections to other significant changes, and I am grateful to him for his constructive approach. I look forward to hearing his comments, but it would be a pity if they showed a marked departure from the approach that he so generously adopted in Committee.

9.45 pm

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): One would have expected my hon. Friend not to devalue the committee, but to keep its original strength and content. Instead, one finds the truncated and emaciated rubbish that he has put in now.

Mr. Hogg: We shall now examine the detail of the committee. I hope that my hon. Friend will concede—certainly the shooting community will—that what we have done is a substantial improvement on what was passed in Committee.

The qualifications for membership are much the same in the Government amendments as they were in clause 16. The hon. Member for Erdington complained that there was no specific reference to people involved in sport, recreation and competition, but they are subsumed within the description of those having expertise in

"possession, use or keeping of, or transactions in, firearms".

People who have experience in the possession, use and keeping of firearms are those who use them for a variety of purposes, such as sport, competition and recreation. Clause 16 made no provision, for example, for those who happen to like collecting guns because they are collectors. Nor did it make much provision for museum experts or refer specifically to those who deal with firearms on a commercial basis. We have tried to devise a formula that encompasses within the criteria for membership every interest group that is legitimately represented. Those whose expertise is in shooting, recreation and competition are certainly among those whom I would expect to see on the consultative committee.

There is one other great advantage that I hope my hon. Friend will be the first to concede—the increased number. His was a committee of no fewer than five and no more than eight. If he could have only eight he would find it difficult to include all those whom he wanted to include. We have enlarged the committee. We propose that the membership should be not fewer than 12. The object of the extension is to ensure that all the legitimate interests about which my hon. Friends are concerned find expression on the statutory consultative committee, along with representatives of the police service, the forensic laboratories and so on. I suggest that the Government amendments are clearly to be preferred on these grounds.

I come now to the second major issue—the purpose and functions of the statutory committee. The Government have greatly improved the terms of reference and remit of the committee. In clause 16 the committee had essentially only two functions. One was to be consulted before the Secretary of State did anything about the application and implementation of the principal Act. That was a right to be consulted, no more. It was not a right to make representations, to report to Parliament or to make suggestions.

Secondly, under clause 5 the committee has a right to publish a code of practice. I shall return to that in a moment. It does not have a right to keep legislation, its implementation and administration under constant review, to make representations for its improvement or to make an annual report to Parliament. In each of those regards our amendments achieve just that. I suggest that we have greatly improved the functions of the committee.

Amendment No. 151 states:

"It shall be the function of the committee—

(a) to keep under review the workings of the provisions mentioned in subsection (1)(c) above"—

which is a reference to the relevant legislation—

"and to make to the Secretary of State such recommendations as the committee may from time to time think necessary for the improvement of the working of those provisions."

Thus, the committee is empowered to do exactly what the shooting lobby has long asked for a statutory committee to have power to do. It is associated with an express power to present to Parliament each year an annual report. That is a manifest improvement on anything that appears in clause 16.

Mr. Henry Bellingham (Norfolk, North-West): Will my hon. Friend confirm that the Home Secretary will have an obligation to consult the committee?

Mr. Hogg: No, the Secretary of State does not have an obligation to consult, because clause 16(4) is being deleted. But the converse is true: the committee has a mandatory duty to keep the legislation, its implementation and administration under review. It has a duty and a right to make representations and recommendations for approval, and it has a duty and a right to lay an annual report before Parliament. That is infinitely better than a loose commitment to consult, which in the end is meaningless.

Mr. Corbett: I readily concede that these amendments improve what was done in Committee, but we are still left with paragraphs (b) and (c) of amendment No. 151. The committee can make proposals for amending legislation only if requested to do so by the Secretary of State, and it can advise the Secretary of State only on any other matter relating to those provisions which he may refer to it. In other words, it will be a kept committee which can speak only when it is spoken to.

Mr. Hogg: No. I am sorry to say that the hon. Gentleman simply has not followed what I have been saying. It may be my fault and I am prepared to apologise if it is. He is wrong. I have made it plain on two separate occasions that the function of the committee is to keep the implementation and administration of existing and new

legislation under review, to make recommendations for its improvement and to make an annual report to Parliament. That is an enormous step forward, and it is different in kind from saying, "Incidentally, we recommend that clause 14 of a particular Bill should be drafted in different language," which is a more specific point.

The committee is there to make representations and recommendations on how gun law can be improved. That is mandatory and is its duty and right. It can do that in its annual report or specifically to the Secretary of State. Under the amendments, the Secretary of State would feel that the consultative committee had a particular role to play on what would then be a fairly narrow issue. Therefore, it has a broad reviewing role together with the power, which the Secretary of State would greatly appreciate, to advise on specific points put to it.

I appreciate that my hon. Friends may say, "Why has subsection (4) been struck out?" The answer is twofold. First, the right to be consulted adds up to nothing unless it is associated with positive rights and duties, which I have mentioned. It is also a recipe for delay and bureaucracy and it undermines the constitutional relationship between the Executive and Parliament. It would be nonsensical, because it would mean that the Secretary of State would have to consult on any of the decisions that he has to take under the firearms legislation; for example, whether to approve a Home Office approved club, to issue a section 5 certificate, or to issue a museum licence. One does not put such matters to a consultative committee. They are the day-to-day business of the Executive.

The second matter about which, as I well understand, my hon. Friends are upset is the code of practice. They believe that the consultative committee should publish a code of practice relevant to legal proceedings. I have not heard of many consultative committees, which by their nature are accountable to no one, which can publish documents that have a direct impact on the way that courts conduct civil and criminal cases. That is offensive in principle. It is also nonsensical, because the advice on the implementation of firearms legislation is contained in the rules and the memorandum of guidance. What happens if there is incompatibility between the memorandum of guidance and the code of practice? It becomes nonsense.

We have met a legitimate desire of the shooting community. We have given them a statutory committee for which they have long asked. We have framed it in such a way that it has a duty and a right constantly to review the implementation and administration of firearms legislation and to make recommendations for its improvement. That is a huge step forward for the shooting community. It is better than anything in clause 16, and on that basis I commend the Government amendment to the House.

Sir Charles Morrison (Devizes): My hon. Friends who were responsible, in Committee, for persuading a majority of Committee members to introduce clause 16 into the Bill should be congratulated on what they did because they have achieved something that has been the objective for many years of a great number of people concerned with firearms. The Government should be congratulated on at last accepting that a statutory firearms consultative committee is necessary.

However, I am not quite certain, as the committee has now been set up, why my hon. Friends in Committee and now the Government in amendment No. 152 intend to give the committee a limited life. I cannot help thinking that rather more permanence written into the Bill would provide greater confidence on the part of all those people involved with firearms. Perhaps my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State will comment on that.

The Government are right to try to amend clause 16 to the effect that the committee should consist of no fewer than 12 persons in addition to the chairman. I take the point made by my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State that, if all interests are to be covered, it would have been difficult for that to happen under the provisions of clause 16.

However, I do not understand why, having increased the membership of the committee to a minimum of 12, my hon. Friend decides that it is right to cut out sport, recreation and competition membership. He has argued in amendment No. 148 that, it is possible for the Home Secretary to include every interest group in the membership of the committee, but, if amendment No. 148 is passed, the phrase "every interest group" will be within the judgment of the Home Secretary of the day. There is no guarantee that every Home Secretary will be as wise, sensible or broadminded as my right hon. Friend the current Home Secretary.

Mr. Bellingham: Does my hon. Friend agree that if, perish the thought and God forbid, we had a Home Secretary who believed that it was wrong for anyone to use a weapon—a shotgun or whatever—for sport, vermin control or game shooting, he could decide that they should not sit on the statutory committee? That is why it would be so dangerous to remove that subsection.

10 pm

Sir Charles Morrison: I accept my hon. Friend's point, which I was about to cover. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility, as far as I can see, for considerations of sport, recreation and competition to be outside the limitations of the consideration of the consultative committee. It is very important that representatives of sport, recreation and competition should be referred to specifically in the committee so that people who use firearms for sport, recreation and competition can feel completely confident that the consultative committee will be able to assess, advise on and judge their affairs.

I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will give further thought to that. I appreciate that he may not be able to give an undertaking tonight, but I hope that at least he will tell us that the matter will be reconsidered in another place.

Sir Hector Monro: The Minister's passionate speech tonight must mean that he has relatives called Houdini or Paul Daniels. He was passionately against the statutory committee in Standing Committee, yet tonight he argued for it as if it was his long-lost friend that he was welcoming from central Africa. He appeared desperately keen to have the committee.

I will refer to the *Official Report* of the Standing Committee, to which my hon. Friend the Minister likes to refer when that helps him. My hon. Friend said:

> "I am . . . positively against a statutory body . . . I am not in favour of a statutory committee—I am not in favour of quangos—I am not in favour of involved terms of reference, rules as to appointment, powers on pay and such matters." —[*Official Report, Standing Committee F*, 10 March 1988; c. 384.]

[Sir Hector Monro]

No one argued more strongly against the statutory committee than my hon. Friend the Minister. However, the Minister and my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, in his reply to the guillotine motion, both took credit for setting up the statutory committee. Previously it appeared as if such a committee would be established only over the Minister's dead body. The way in which my hon. Friend tried to take credit for something that he had bitterly opposed was truly astonishing.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State was taking credit—I hope that he will be given credit for this—for responding to the criticism of our position as expressed in Committee. We were beaten in Committee. We recognised that and we have come forward with proposals to respond positively to what the Committee wanted.

Sir Hector Monro: It is all very well to say that now, but my hon. Friend the Minister did not put it that way in Committee. We are now watching the small print very closely.

I support my hon. Friend the Member for Devizes (Sir C. Morrison) on the issue of writing in sport, recreation and competition as responsibilities of the statutory committee. I cannot take the gamble that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State might appoint someone from those areas to the committee unless they are specifically mentioned in the legislation.

The whole history of this matter has shown the lack of consultation by my hon. Friend the Minister and my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary over this legislation. We are talking about an advisory committee which already exists in the form of the British Shooting Sports Council, made up of representatives from the governing bodies of shooting sports in this country. Yet the Minister went ahead and announced the main thrust of the legislation without consulting the advisory committee that had been set up to help the Home Office.

I find it truly astonishing that, when the chairman of the British Shooting Sports Council, Lord Swansea—one of the best shots in the British Isles—wrote to the Home Secretary immediately after the disaster at Hungerford and said that he had at his finger tips all the governing bodies which wished to help, the Home Secretary did not consult them before he made his speech at Torquay to the police officers. That was a fatal flaw in the progress made by the Government when introducing the legislation.

If the Home Secretary and the Minister are not prepared to consult the governing bodies of the sport which are in a unique position to advise the Government, how can we be certain that the Government will consult them in future unless we include in the consultative committee the things that matter?

Mr. William Ross (Londonderry, East): The hon. Gentleman is well known throughout the House and to Ministers as a person with a keen interest in shooting. In late August and September, did he happen to bump into anyone from the Home Office in the Corridor who said, "Look Hector, old boy, we are thinking about introducing a Bill. Would you like to give us some advice?" Was he approached by the Home Secretary or any of his other right hon. and hon. Friends?

Sir Hector Monro: I am president of the National Small-Bore Rifle Association, vice-president of the National Rifle Association and in touch with other organisations. During the summer, those organisations, together with Lord Swansea, offered help, but I was never asked for my advice on how best to proceed, despite my parliamentary and ministerial experience.

Mr. Corbett: As long ago as last July, the International Shooting Sportsperson Liaison Committee offered to meet officials of the Home Office. It received a dusty answer. When that offer was repeated in the past couple of days, the Committee was told that there was no way in which it would ever see the Home Secretary.

Sir Hector Monro: That shows that the Home Office appears to have a built-in opposition to consulting anyone who might give it wise advice. I am afraid that Ministers must carry the can for failing to react to offers of consultation. That is why we are so concerned that the new clause, which receives all-party support, has been severely tampered with by my hon. Friend's amendments Nos. 148 and 151.

My hon. Friends the Members for Norfolk, North-West (Mr. Bellingham) and for Devizes have already said that the specific interests of sport, recreation and competition are important. They have also said that if other Home Secretaries use the wording contained in the Minister's amendments they could appoint to the consultative committee people with astonishing special interests, which might not be the interests of the shooting world.

The whole idea of the consultative committee is a committee of experts—those who know the weapons and the shooting sports. I do not believe that it is a committee on which other voluntary organisations that are opposed to such sports should sit. It would be a technical committee of skilled knowledge.

In Committee I was pleased that we had the support of my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths), who has great experience in police matters; the police are included in the new clause.

Mr. Bellingham: Is my hon. Friend aware that one of the reasons why my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds supports the consultative committee is that he believes strongly in the uniform implementation of firearms legislation? The consultative committee would issue a code of practice that could be quoted in the courts. That would aid the uniform implementation of the legislation throughout the country and someone in Norfolk would receive the same treatment as someone in Tayside. Surely that is crucial.

Sir Hector Monro: We frequently discuss uniformity. I hope that the Minister will respond, particularly as police forces throughout the United Kingdom seem to be acting as if the Bill were law, although there are a great many stages before that happens. Chief constables in different parts of the country are interpreting the law in different ways and producing different forms, and, as we heard from the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett), they are becoming very restrictive about pistols, which are excluded from the Bill. If we do not have self-loading pistols, we can say goodbye to target shooting with pistols in this country.

Mr. William Ross: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Gentleman again, but was not the question of uniformity raised in 1984 by the working party on the administration of the Firearms Act? Is it not a fact that the Home Secretary has sat on that recommendation from that day to this? If the Government had acted upon that recommendation, we would have had uniformity throughout the country in dealing with firearms applications. If we had had that uniformity in detail, and if the recommendations of the body referred to by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett) had been followed, Ryan might not have slipped through the net.

Sir Hector Monro: The hon. Gentleman is absolutely right. If uniformity had existed we would not have needed this legislation at all. We are always asking for detailed statistics about armed crime and the use of rifles, but the Home Office has not yet produced them.

Other hon. Members wish to speak in this truncated debate, so I shall make only one more point and I shall not labour it. Last week we were given the assurance that the statutory committee would remain in the Bill as it was, but the following day that assurance was reversed by Government amendment. That was not the way to treat colleagues in the House. My hon. Friend the Minister must be prepared to amend the Bill in another place, bringing in specific groups such as sport, recreation and competition, and bringing back codes of practice. If we cannot have uniform codes of practice throughout the country for every aspect of sport and recreation, we shall never have a really constructive approach to firearms control in this country.

The hon. Member for Erdington made a splendid speech proposing his new clause and, like him, whatever the Minister said, I still have grave doubts that the Home Secretary will go to the statutory committee frequently enough and ask for its advice. The boot has to be on the other foot. That highly technical and specific committee must be able to look at legislation continually and tell the Home Secretary what he should do about it. That is the only way to proceed. I am very disappointed with the Minister's answer. He has let us down several times on what he said in Standing Committee. If he does not accept the will of the Standing Committee more frequently, I wonder what democratic legislation is all about.

Mr. William Ross: I intervene briefly in the debate to draw attention to the amendments tabled by my right hon. Friend the Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux) and me. If the Minister looked carefully at our proposals about the consultative committee, he would see that his proposals would be vastly improved by accepting them. It may well be that the Home Office does not want the proposals to be improved as that might make life difficult for it because the expert advice would be frequent and solid. It seems to want to avoid that at all costs.

The Minister will see that we ask for the chairman to be a senior member of one of the major institutes of criminology or a senior member of the legal profession. That is an excellent idea as such an individual would add greatly to the deliberations of any consultative committee. I must confess that I was very pleased that the Home Secretary has decided that the committee should consist of the chairman and 12 other people, making a total of 13. That is a considerable improvement. My right hon. Friend and I preferred 15, but we shall not quibble over the extra two. However, perhaps he would be minded to give us the 15, which would give us a slightly wider spread.

We should have representatives not only of the police, the Home Office and firearms users, but of the military. The one outstanding feature of our debates has been the sheer lack of expert technical knowledge which seems to be available only in military circles. If the Home Office would make use of serving military officers or ex-military officers with expertise in this area, it would be a great improvement.

10.15 pm

Above all, we need to know what the committee is talking about. There is no point in having a nice cosy little set-up of chief police officers, the Home Office and one or two other do-gooders unless the shooting world in general knows what is being discussed. For all that the shooting world knows, these committees might never meet unless the agendas and minutes of all the meetings are published. I commend that to the Minister.

Government amendment No. 148 refers to

"the administration or enforcement of the provisions of the principal Act, the Firearms Act 1982 and this Act."

In our amendment No. 81 we should like to go further than that. We ask that

"The firearms expert consultative committee shall be empowered to call for submissions, evidence and figures concerning the administration of the principal and this Act from Chief Officers of Police."

We are lacking in our knowledge of detail, and if those figures could be extracted from the chief officers of police, it would be a great help to us all.

Amendment No. 89 says:

"The Committee shall be empowered to call in for advice experts or persons with specialist knowledge in any particular field as the committee thinks fit."

That goes rather further in seeking expert advice than the Government want to go. The Government should give that careful consideration and be sensible for once and accept what is said. If that is done, the committee will be vastly improved and will serve the shooting interests rather than those who are trying to keep guns out of the hands of law-abiding citizens.

Mr. Michael Colvin (Romsey and Waterside): The hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett) ably moved new clause 15. He made the case for the expert consultative committee so convincingly that he really destroyed the argument for his own review committee, which will be no more than a talking shop when what we need is a committee with some statutory teeth. What he was proposing was not at all what the shooting fraternity would like to see.

Other amendments in the group deal with the firearms expert consultative committee, established by Standing Committee F with the support of my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths), speaking, presumably, with the authority of the police. What the Government are now proposing will largely emasculate the powers that clause 16 gives the committee.

First, it changes the committee's composition. It increases its number from five to eight members to not fewer than 12 members and a chairman. That may seem to be of little consequence. My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State made the point that the increase

[Mr. Michael Colvin]

was a good thing because it brought more people on to the committee and therefore more of the vested interests would have an opportunity to participate.

The problem is, as most people who have experience of committees will know, the bigger committees are the less they achieve. They tend to become talking shops. If the membership of a committee is so wide as to permit every organisation to push and shove and get on to it, its individual members, rather than being representatives with a broad experience of shooting, will tend to become delegates for their own narrow interests and will take up stances on that basis which will completely destroy what such a consultative committee is all about.

To increase the membership to a minimum of 12 plus the chairman—and in time it could be much larger—might achieve precisely what I believe is the Government's real intention, which is to pay lip service to the idea of the committee but eventually to kill it off because it will become nothing more than an ineffective talking shop.

My hon. Friends have already spoken about the need for people to serve on the committee who have knowledge of sporting, recreational and competition shooting. It is highly regrettable that the Government have left out that wide group.

Government amendment No. 151 is crucial because it greatly reduces the committee's powers as enshrined in clause 16. It removes the code of practice which Standing Committee F felt was extremely important, and which is essential to effective administration and to ensuring the consistency and uniform administration of firearms legislation among police authorities. Uniformity has been mentioned by many hon. Members. One example of why it is important is that there exists considerable inconsistency in application forms. The Opposition moved new clause 16 on Monday evening, but my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State did not reply to their arguments for a uniform application form in respect of firearms and shotguns.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I reminded the House that there were already powers under the rules to prescribe a common form of application. In fact, a common form of application is now prescribed in the rules and is commonplace throughout the country.

Mr. Colvin: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his reply, because that would certainly be an improvement on what we have at present.

Mr. Hogg: It is what we have at present.

Mr. Colvin: In that case, why is it that the following is the case. Schedule 1 to the Firearm Rules 1969 sets out the rules for a form of application for the granting of a shotgun certificate. It calls for a counter signature from a person who shall be a Member of Parliament, a justice of the peace, a minister of religion, a doctor, a lawyer, a bank officer or a person of similar standing. However, schedule 4 to the same rules provides that the form of application for the grant, renewal or variation of a firearm certificate requires no counter signature whatsoever. Is that not rather strange?

Mr. Hogg: It might help my hon. Friend if he will refer to rule 3 of the Firearm Rules 1969:

"Subject to Rule 7 of these Rules, an application for the grant of a shot gun certificate shall be in the form set out in Part 1 of Schedule 1 to these Rules."

If my hon. Friend will read schedule 1, he will find the appropriate form printed there.

Mr. Colvin: Can my hon. Friend say whether applications for firearm certificates will need to be countersigned, as applications for shotgun certificates have to be countersigned, by a responsible person?

Mr. Hogg *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Colvin: It appears that he cannot do so.

Mr. Corbett: The hon. Member for Romsey and Waterside (Mr. Colvin) is unknowingly enabling me to clear up some misunderstanding. The standard application form to which new clause 16 refers was meant to relate to a common form of documentation for use by all police forces and not to the form which the applicant originally completes. The standard application form is that which would be used to ask additional questions.

Mr. Colvin: That was a useful intervention. I think that we are at one on this. We want uniformity, but we also want consistency between applications for shotgun certificates and those for firearm certificates. I do not think that the reply given by my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary provides the answer.

Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop (Tiverton): Before my hon. Friend leaves that point, may I raise another that bears on it? Would it not be much better if the referee were asked to give his view that the person was suitable to hold the certificate? As I have said to the Under-Secretary before, this point was made to me by a parson. At present referees are asked to certify only that the facts on the face of the application are true; they are not asked to certify that in their view the person is a suitable applicant. The parson told me that the facts were true and that he therefore felt obliged to sign the application, although in his view the applicant was not suitable for reasons of temperament.

Mr. Colvin: My hon. Friend makes a valid point which I hope the Minister will take on board and consider seriously.

The new clause and amendments allow the consultative committee to keep firearms legislation under review and to make recommendations to the Home Secretary from time to time. The committee can make proposals for changing the law or tackling other matters only if asked to do so by the Home Secretary. The new clause removes all obligation from the Home Secretary to consult the committee unless he happens to want to do so, which I think greatly weakens clause 16(4).

The amendments would leave us with a large, flabby committee, like a perpetual working party, examining the way in which the legislation is working but having no power of independent action, no code of practice, no relevance to the courts and no point of reference from all those engaged in firearms control. The committee can and will be ignored by Home Office officials. It will be obliged to submit an annual report to Parliament which is bound to be of limited value. After five years it will lapse, and it is very unlikely, in view of its unwieldy nature, that it will ever come into being again. That is why we strongly resent what the Government are trying to do to emasculate what was a very good proposal in Committee.

I ask my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary to think very seriously about what is being said this evening, and to reconsider his stand before the Bill is discussed in the other place.

Sir John Farr (Harborough): I welcome the proposal for a consultative committee. As some of my hon. Friends have said, it has been considered at the top level in Home Office circles for many years. Strong and persuasive arguments have always been put forward for a statutory firearms committee, yet the Home Office has always found good reasons for not putting the proposal into effect. I do not regard this as a concession by my hon. Friend the Minister. I would describe it as a wise adjustment of his position. What would the consultative committee do in the future that has not been done in the past 20 years or so? That is the basis on which we should decide whether the committee will be useful.

It is exactly 20 years since the Firearms Act 1968 was passed. That, of course, was only a consolidating Act. It is 30 years since we had any major firearms legislation, good or bad. In that time there has been no real need for massive legislation, although from time to time it has been said that a consultative committee should be set up to see what people think about new legislation. There has been effective consultation between the British Shooting Sports Council—and the Long Room committee which preceded it—and representatives of the Home Office at all levels. For 20 years they got the answer right without a high-powered committee.

If a member of the NRA, the NSRA, the Clay Pigeon Shooting Association or any of the other shooting bodies had a particular grievance, he knew that it would be considered right away by the Home Office—generally by the relevant very helpful officials. Therefore, while I agree that my hon. Friend the Minister has probably made a wise political concession by agreeing to the establishment of a consultative committee, I do not see how we have lost in the past 20 years by not having one.

10.30 pm

People may say, "If we had had a consultative committee 20 years ago we should not have had the fiasco of the 1973 Green Paper." That is probably true, and that Green Paper certainly was a fiasco. The then Conservative Administration came away with egg on their face and on firearms matters we have never really recovered from that. It could be argued that had we had a consultative committee, with all its representatives, no Conservative or Labour Government would ever have been so foolish as to present such a document.

There is another respect in which such a consultative committee might have helped matters over the past 15 or 20 years. The members of such a committee would have made strong representations to the Home Secretary so that by now we should enjoy what I call a six-year certificate for shotguns and firearms. Not so long ago, a previous Home Secretary was in favour of a six-year certificate for shotguns. I feel that if a statutory standing committee had been in place then it would probably have proceeded with that Home Secretary and established a six-year certificate. On the whole, I welcome the idea of a committee because I think that the provision could help to frame future firearms legislation which may be round the corner and which we cannot foresee.

There is one omission from clause 16, which the Home Office is to amend. I have had a look at the amendments tabled by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, and they seem to improve matters. As drafted, the clause omits a reference to dealers. It concentrates almost entirely on the users of firearms and the effect of firearms legislation on them. Today the position of dealers is becoming more important. Their position is one of great responsibility. In many cases they hold large stocks of weapons, sometimes at great risk. The firearms consultative committee would be a better committee if the position of dealers could be considered from time to time.

A little while ago I mentioned Alan Bray of Hinckley, a firearms dealer in Leicestershire, who was attacked by robbers masquerading as policemen. They got into his firearms shop, doused him with petrol and set him alight. They stole hundreds of weapons and thousands of rounds of ammunition. The incident was bad for Alan Bray, who will never be the same again. He represented Britain at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, shooting with a handgun. He is lucky to be alive, but a far greater risk was created by the amount of arms that went underground and became available for every criminal to use.

I support amendment No. 148. I should like dealers and suppliers to be covered too, however, so that we can ensure that they are first-class people and have the most sophisticated protective devices to guard their weapons, ammunition and premises 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Mr. Alick Buchanan-Smith (Kincardine and Deeside): The establishment of a statutory consultative committee is a great improvement. I was therefore interested to see how the Government would deal with the idea, and I was impressed, as were others of my hon. Friends, by the fervour of the conversion of my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State.

I am worried about the failure to include on the consultative committee sport, recreation and competition interests. I shall not go into the matter in detail because of the lack of time and because many others have already said how important it is that those two interests should be included. I listened carefully to what my hon. Friend the Minister said about amendment No. 148. He said that it was not necessary to specify such groups, but it is necessary, because they are important interests. They are the most directly concerned, and the Home Secretary can get the best advice from them.

My hon. Friend the Minister said that we should not worry that such interests would not be included by the amendment, but he gave the show away when he said that he would expect to see those interests represented on the consultative committee. It worries me that he only expects. It is not good enough simply to expect to see people on the committee. Such interests should be specified in the Bill. I beg my hon. Friend to think again and to include those special interests. They are the most relevant ones and their inclusion should not be left to chance.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I know that the House wishes to proceed, I think to a Division, so I shall be brief.

My hon. Friend the Member for Devizes (Sir C. Morrison) mentioned the limited life of the committee. The explanation for that lies partly in the fact that my hon. Friends in the Standing Committee suggested it. Indeed, my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E.

[Mr. Douglas Hogg]

Griffiths) said that he was converted to the prospect of a statutory consultative committee because it had a limited life but there was a possibility of its continuation. We have no reason to depart in that respect from what was decided in Committee.

Several hon. Members have understandably spoken about people involved in sport, recreation and competition. I told the House earlier, and it is absolutely right, that those interest groups are covered in paragraph (a) of amendment No. 148, they being persons who have expertise in

"the possession, use or keeping of, or transactions in, firearms".

The paragraph is drawn widely to catch all the interest groups. The problem with clause 16 is that it positively excludes lots of people who have a legitimate interest, such as collectors, museums and dealers, to name but three.

I say to my right hon. Friend the Member for Kincardine and Deeside (Mr. Buchanan-Smith) that, with a committee of five—and that is the minimum—and no more than eight, there is always a risk, under the clause 16 procedure, of excluding precisely those interest groups which my hon. Friend would like to include. One of the advantages of an enlarged committee is that it is possible to accommodate a much wider range of people.

I do not want to fall out on this issue——

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North): Settler.

Mr. Hogg: The hon. Member is quite right: I am a settler. I had always thought that those who are engaged in sport, recreation and competition would be on the consultative committee, because they are the people who are involved in

"the possession, use or keeping of, or transactions in, firearms."

The problem is one of listing. Once we start listing everybody, what happens if we overlook somebody? My hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) has overlooked museums, collectors and dealers, yet they are legitimate interests to have on the statutory committee.

Without commitment and without undertaking—I give no guarantee and I give no promise—I will see if it would be right specifically to identify in the clause sport, recreation and competition. If we so decide that, it can be dealt with in another place. However, I am hostile to specific listing, because of those groups that it will exclude if we do not include everybody.

Sir Hector Monro: My hon. Friend has it in reverse. Our new clause 16 has covered the use of firearms, security and safekeeping and weapon technology—which cover the museums, collectors and dealers he has in mind—but his clause does not include sport and recreation. I think he has it inside out.

Mr. Hogg: I really do not agree with that. We will have to make a judgment about this but I have studied the new clause of my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) carefully and I do not believe that any of the language he uses is apt to include collectors, museums or dealers. I make the point also that it does not include farmers.

There is a problem with specific listing. I am prepared to look at it again, but I am not giving a commitment that we will include it, because I am fearful of excluding people if we go in for the list approach. That is why I prefer the generic approach.

I say to my hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside (Mr. Colvin) that the Government amendments do not emasculate the powers of the statutory committee; they enhance them in a number of important respects. At the moment, the consultative committee, under new clause 16, would have the right to publish a code of practice and a right to be consulted. Nothing looser could be imagined, whereas under the Government amendment there is a positive right and duty to review existing legislation, its implementation and administration, to make recommendations for its improvement and to report to Parliament. It greatly enhances the powers of the committee.

I say to my hon. Friend the Member for Tiverton (Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop) that on Monday, at a rather inconvenient time—I know that he was not always able to be here, because he has other business to attend to—we debated new clause 5, when precisely this kind of issue was discussed. In new clause 5 we have introduced the concept that a person should verify on the application form that he —the person making the verification—knows no reason why the applicant should not have a firearm. I use loose language and not the technical language. We felt that we could do it that way rather than ask people to make the positive assertion that someone was fit to hold a firearm.

On that happy note, I finish by inviting the House not to approve the new clause but to accept the Government amendments.

Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 43, Noes 201.

Division No. 328] **[10.44 pm**

AYES

Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beggs, Roy
Bermingham, Gerald
Buckley, George J.
Callaghan, Jim
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Corbett, Robin
Cryer, Bob
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Eastham, Ken
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Golding, Mrs Llin
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
McCusker, Harold
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Murphy, Paul
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Salmond, Alex
Skinner, Dennis
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Spearing, Nigel
Vaz, Keith
Walley, Joan
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wigley, Dafydd

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Alan Meale.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Alton, David
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Boswell, Tim

Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, John
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Staml'd & Spald'g)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorst, John
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kennedy, Charles
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
Maclean, David
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walden, George
Wallace, James
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wood, Timothy
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tony Durant.

Question accordingly negatived.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Do I understand that the hon. Member for Stockton, North (Mr. Cook) wants a Division on new clause 16?

Mr. Frank Cook: Yes, Sir.

New Clause 16

STANDARD FORM OF FIREARMS CERTIFICATES

'The Home Secretary shall authorise the use of a standard application form by all police authorities in respect of the grant or renewal of firearms certificates after consultation with the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Police Federation and representatives of shooting interests within 12 months of the coming into force of this Act'.—[*Mr. Frank Cook.*]

Brought up, and read the First time.

Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 56, Noes 191.

Division No. 329] **[10.57**

AYES

Alton, David
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Battle, John
Beggs, Roy
Bellingham, Henry
Bermingham, Gerald
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buckley, George J.
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Corbett, Robin
Cryer, Bob
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Eastham, Ken
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Golding, Mrs Llin
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Livsey, Richard
McCusker, Harold
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McWilliam, John
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Murphy, Paul
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Salmond, Alex
Skinner, Dennis
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Vaz, Keith
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wiggin, Jerry
Wigley, Dafydd
Winterton, Mrs Ann

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Alan Meale

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Anderson, Donald
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.

Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, John
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorst, John
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
Maclean, David
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wood, Timothy

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tony Durant.

New Clause 19

AMNESTY

'(1) When a firearms holder voluntarily surrenders all rights to firearms previously possessed on firearms certificate which firearms are surrendered to any Chief Officer of Police there shall be—

(a) a 28 day cooling off period when the lawful owner may be allowed to direct the possession of the firearms to a new owner, such as a registered firearms dealer, an auctioneer, or firearms certificate holder with appropriate authority to possess that firearm, or

(b) the return of such firearms to the owner providing the owner has the authority to possess.

(2) All such amnesty and voluntarily surrender notices should include the advice that the holder of the firearms should obtain a current valuation of the value of the firearms and in suitable cases a temporary firearms certificate should be issued to the owner.'.—*[Mr. William Ross.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mr. William Ross: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

We are familiar with the stories of the individual who finds an old painting in an antique shop or a little painting hanging on the wall of the study, or who buys an old painting at an auction and, to his intense surprise, discovers that he has come across a masterpiece worth many hundreds of thousands of pounds. That is extremely unlikely in the case of a firearm, but a close friend of mine who is keen on collecting firearms of all kinds once went to an auction where several old firearms were for sale. He did not succeed in purchasing any firearms, but he did buy some other stuff which he thought was junk including a locked tin box that rattled. He took the box home, prised it open and found in it a .31 calibre Colt of the earliest type. Conservative Members who know anything about firearms will realise that he had found the crowning piece of the day, which no one knew was in the box. My friend has kept that gun.

Chance finds like that can be made in every old house in the country. I understand that, whenever there is an amnesty, people turn their guns over to the police and the guns immediately become police property. People cannot get the guns back. All rights to a particular firearm are surrendered. However, there are occasions when the person finding a firearm is not able-bodied or sensible or someone who knows the value of the find. Often firearms turn up in a house after a death and the widows have to dispose of them. The weapon may fall into the hands of the deceased person's relatives, who may sometimes be quite distant relatives. They may be women who do not know the value of those weapons, do not like them and simply want to get rid of them. Sometimes they may fall into the hands of children or more distant descendants who have no interest in them. Those people may turn the weapons over to the police.

Sometimes those guns may be very valuable. In the nature of things, that is bound to be so. New clause 19 will give people a chance to check on the value of the firearm. It will provide a 28-day cooling-off period to allow the person to get the firearm back if he so chooses so that he can dispose of it in another way. As every one knows, in this day and age there is a cooling-off period for most types of hire-purchase agreements. I do not see why the same facility should not be extended to people who find themselves in the position that I have described.

New clause 19 would provide a protection for people who come across something of considerable value—possibly in the attic—or who may have had the firearm left to them and who then foolishly hand that weapon over to the police. New clause 19 is designed purely and simply for that purpose.

In our debate on the guillotine motion, the right hon. Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen) expressed some concern about the contest for the high moral ground and delighted that it was not being fought this evening. I hope that Ministers will restore that high moral ground because there is a very Everest of morality waiting to be scaled and claimed. Heaven knows, the Minister needs all the help he can get. We would be delighted if he would seize the opportunity and accept this sensible and socially acceptable new clause which would do his reputation—which has been much tarnished during the passage of the Bill—an enormous amount of good and restore his high standing in some respects.

If the Government refuse to accept the spirit of the new clause, they will plunge from the heights of morality that the Prime Minister claimed for her party the other day —*[Interruption.]* I have a bachelor of divinity beside me, so perhaps I should leave it to my hon. Friend the Member for Belfast, South (Rev. Martin Smyth) to expand on these matters. He can do that better than most hon. Members because he at least has a theological training, which is sadly lacking among most hon. Members this evening.

I have moved the new clause in the full expectation that it will be supported by all those who value high morality and believe in looking after the poor people who by sheer chance find something of considerable value—perhaps worth several thousand pounds—lying in an old attic which appears utterly useless, but which is very valuable to collectors of such items.

11.15 pm

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson (Newbury): I want to ask the Minister a number of questions arising from the introduction of an amnesty. The Home Secretary referred to that possibility when we originally debated the White Paper. I have not heard any subsequent statement from a Minister about when such an amnesty might be introduced.

What are the Government's proposals for an amnesty? Do they intend that it should run for a comparatively short time or for up to three months, as in 1968? Does the Minister consider an amnesty as an attempt to persuade those who may simply have such weapons in their households to look out such weapons and take them to a police station or an arms dealer, or does he see it as a pardon for a wrongdoer?

The hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross) has already said that many weapons are held by people without firearms certificates, but in their imagination those weapons will not be held illegally. They will simply suppose that the weapon, which may have been left to them by a member of their family, is one of their possessions. The fact that they have no intention of using it means that it is nothing more than a souvenir of the last war or some other event in their family's past. I do not believe that one can describe such people as criminals or as being illegally in possession of such weapons, although I accept that strictly, within the law, that is the case.

[Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson]

I am sure that the Minister will agree that the purpose and benefit of an amnesty is to get as many weapons as possible which are held without firearms certificates out of the possession of individuals and into the possession of either the police or firearms dealers.

Am I right to suggest that, if someone is in possession of a firearm and takes it to a registered arms dealer, that dealer is able to buy it even though the owner does not have a certificate? Does the fact that that owner does not have a firearms certificate deny that person the right to sell it on the open market?

Mr. William Ross: If the hon. Gentleman considers the last part of my clause, he will see that a temporary firearms certificate would be provided in suitable cases.

Mr. McNair-Wilson: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman, and I endorse his remarks.

As the hon. Gentleman has said, we are aware that many weapons made before the last war have a considerable market value. Obviously they represent a capital sum to many who may not have considerable financial resources. It would be wrong for such people simply to hand in those weapons to the police and to be given nothing more than a receipt, given the fact that one of the armourers involved in the last amnesty told me that the Home Office sold such weapons to the gun trade. That sale took from people who were not aware that they were breaking the law and denied them a cash benefit that could have been available to them had we allowed firearms dealers to participate in the last amnesty.

If we want the amnesty to winkle out as many weapons as possible and if we want it to encourage people to hand in those weapons for which they do not hold certificates, we must make it attractive for them to get rid of them. In those circumstances, I believe that the new clause has much to commend it.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: A number of points have been raised, one of which I hope will be answered by the document to which I have just received. I shall deal with the questions put by my hon. Friend the Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson).

The object of the amnesty is to reduce the pool of illegally held weapons. I announced the amnesty in a written answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths), when I said:

"My right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for the Home Department and for Scotland propose that an amnesty be held for one month from 1 September this year. Planning is nearing completion; further details will be announced". —[*Official Report*, 17 May 1988; Vol. 133 c. *376*.]

The pardon will be for unlawful possession. That is the offence to which the amnesty will apply. If, however, the weapon has been used in substantive offence, prosecution could be commenced.

The police will offer the weapons to the armed services, the forensic services or the museums. Subject to that, they will be destroyed. The answer to my hon. Friend's question about a person who has a gun and wishes to sell it is that a dealer can buy a firearm regardless of whether the seller has a firearms certificate. Of course, the seller would be committing an offence by having a firearm without a firearms certificate, and the amnesty will simply exonerate him from the consequences of unlawful possession, but he must hand the gun to the police, who will destroy it if they do not wish to offer it to the museums, the armed services or the forensic services.

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson: If that is the case, surely it should be made known as widely as possible. Surely all those who have weapons and would be obliged to hand them in to the police during the amnesty and receive no compensation, could, between now and September, take those weapons to a firearms dealer and gain some financial benefit from the sale. Is the firearms dealer bound to report to the police that he has bought a weapon from someone who does not have a firearms certificate, or is that not a requirement?

Mr. Hogg: We are going into great detail. I shall try to answer my hon. Friend, but I do not guarantee that my answers will be completely right.

If a person finds a gun in his attic for which he should possess a certificate and does not, during the amnesty he can surrender the gun to the police without any consequences in respect of the offence of unlawful possession. If, however, before the amnesty has commenced, he goes to a dealer and seeks to sell it, although the dealer lawfully can buy the gun, the person seeking to sell it will be committing an offence of unlawful possession of a gun if he does not hold a certificate for a section 1 gun, for example. The amnesty to be held during the month commencing 1 September does not apply now, and does not apply to a transaction between the owner and the dealer, so the answer to that question is no.

The register that a dealer has to keep would contain a record of the transaction, and no doubt it would be possible for the police, if they were so minded, to discover that the seller did not possess a section 1 certificate. My hon. Friend might consider that to be a trifle remote, but that is a fairly accurate account of the law.

The hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross) invited me to depart from the high moral ground which I am glad he recognises I occupy. I find it a bit rum that I should be asked to depart from the high moral ground which I occupy with such elegance to assist people who are in unlawful possession of firearms. That seems a bizarre proposition, but that is what the hon. Gentleman argued, although it is not what his new clause proposes. Even more rumly, his new clause deals with an amnesty in respect of guns which are lawfully held and which can be sold to any old dealer at any time without the owner committing an offence. The hon. Gentleman will have to reconcile that little problem of the difference between his speech and the new clause.

As I am on my high moral ground, I am glad to see my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) in the Chamber. I hope that he will forgive me, but there was one thing that I should have said about the consultative committee. We have to pay its members expenses. We have all forgotten that. We shall have to introduce a small amendment in another place to take account of expenses, which may result in a money resolution.

Sir Hector Monro: My hon. Friend may have suddenly woken up to the matter of expenses, but we are still waiting to know what the legislation will cost in police time, which must be millions of pounds more than the cost of the consultative committee.

Mr. Hogg: I was giving way. I was also trying to occupy the high moral ground. It seemed to me to be important that I should tell the House that the expenses of the members of the consultative committee will have to be met. We propose to make provision for that in another place and it may involve a money resolution. I wish that I had told the House that earlier. I am thoroughly ashamed of myself for not doing so, and I apologise and take this opportunity to tell the House what has to be done.

Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 50, Noes 178.

Division No. 330] **[11.25 pm**

AYES

Alton, David
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Battle, John
Bermingham, Gerald
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buckley, George J.
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Corbett, Robin
Cryer, Bob
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Galbraith, Sam
Golding, Mrs Llin
Haynes, Frank
Henderson, Doug
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Livsey, Richard
McCusker, Harold
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Morgan, Rhodri
Murphy, Paul
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Salmond, Alex
Skinner, Dennis
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Turner, Dennis
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wiggin, Jerry
Wigley, Dafydd
Worthington, Tony

Tellers for the Ayes:
Rev. Martin Smyth and
Mr. Roy Beggs.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, John
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorst, John
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
Maclean, David
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Walden, George
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wood, Timothy

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Stephen Dorrell and
Mr. Alan Howarth.

Question accordingly negatived.

Clause 1

PROHIBITED WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION

Mr. William Ross: I beg to move amendment No. 120, in page 1, line 16, leave out 'any self-loading or'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this we may take amendment No. 119, in page 1, line 16, leave out 'or pump action.'

Mr. Ross: Although the two amendments are being taken together, I hope that it will be possible for me to press them to two separate Divisions, as they deal with two rather different matters. Those matters occupied us at length in Committee in regard to Great Britain, but since then the Bill has moved forward, with the result that this

[Mr. Ross]

part of it is to be applied to Northern Ireland. I, at any rate, feel that it is in the Northern Ireland context that we must discuss it now.

As the House knows, there has been an enormous amount of terrorist murder in Northern Ireland over many years, during which time weapons and explosives of every conceivable type have been used. The one outstanding feature of all those weapons and explosives is that they were all illegal. As a result, people look askance at anyone who seeks to obtain possession of a self-loading or pump-action rifle.

If we are to consider whether people should be allowed to hold such firearms, we should consider very carefully whether they are actively used in crime. The powers already referred to this evening are ever present, hanging like a shadow over our proceedings from the moment of the Bill's conception until now, and they will probably be there until the Bill passes from the ken of the House.

The number of legally held firearms in Northern Ireland that have been used for murder is remarkably small. The number used by their legal owners is smaller still, and of the weapons used, very few have been either semi-automatic rifles of any description or pump-action rifles. We are talking not about ·22 rifles, which are excluded from the restrictions imposed by the Bill, but about full-bore rifles. There are not many of them in Northern Ireland and very few of them have been used illegally. In Committee, we embarked upon a learning curve and it is right that we should go through the same process this evening.

Mr. Corbett: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross), but he has a soft voice and it is difficult to hear what he is saying. I wonder whether you, Sir would invite right hon. and hon. Members who have pressing matters to discuss to do it elsewhere.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): I hope that hon. Members will listen to the hon. Member who has the Floor.

Mr. Ross: I am grateful to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett) for his support. I had thought that hon. Members who were chatting had finally decided that they would learn something and were discussing my remarks among themselves. After all, we had a great deal of discussion in Committee as we tried to educate those present. The process of self-education was very beneficial in Committee and I hope that it will prove equally beneficial in the House. That is why I tabled the amendment.

If the Government had not been so damn silly as to extend the Bill to Northern Ireland, the amendments would never have been tabled. I thought that the matter was over and done with, but the Government's diabolical decision to extend the legislation to Northern Ireland made it evident to me that we needed to discuss the matter in that context and to give the Government a chance to rethink their foolishness in trying to ban the weapons in the first place. The only known incidents in which a Ryan murders type weapon was used were the Ryan murders; he had two and he used only one.

The self-loading rifle should be left out of the Bill, as should the pump-action rifle. The use and storage of the weapons should be left to the good sense of the gun owners under proper police controls, which are usually exercised very firmly in this country. The fact that the crimes involving such weapons are so few that they cannot be quantified is proof positive that they are no great danger to the community at large.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I can take this point fairly briefly. In substance we are considering whether the prohibition directed against self-loading and pump action rifles should be excluded from the Bill. We debated that matter extensively on Monday night. The House knows the Government's views on the matter. I know that I do not carry all my hon. Friends with me and I regret that, just as I regret that I do not carry the hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross) with me. It does not seem to me very helpful to go over the ground again, bearing in mind that the House may like to discuss the very important question of the buy-in policy.

I make two points about Northern Ireland. First, my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office outlined both law and practice in very great detail on Monday, and they require no repetition from me. Secondly, the plain fact is that in Northern Ireland people are not entitled by practice to hold self-loading rifles lawfully. Therefore, nothing is being taken away from them that they lawfully possess at the moment. For all those reasons, I invite the House to reject the amendments.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 23, Noes 190.

Division No. 331] **[11.44 pm**

AYES

Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Battle, John
Bermingham, Gerald
Buckley, George J.
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cryer, Bob
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dixon, Don
Galbraith, Sam
Golding, Mrs Llin
Haynes, Frank
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
McCusker, Harold
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Michael, Alun
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Morgan, Rhodri
Murphy, Paul
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Skinner, Dennis
Spearing, Nigel

Tellers for the Ayes:
Rev. Martin Smyth, and
Mr. Roy Beggs.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Alton, David
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, John
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den

Dunn, Bob
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorst, John
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kennedy, Charles
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
Maclean, David
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wallace, James
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wood, Timothy

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Tony Durant and
Mr. Mark Lennox-Boyd.

Question accordingly negatived.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): I understand that the hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross) would like a separate Division on amendment No. 119. Is that correct?

Mr. William Ross: Yes.

Amendment proposed: No. 119, in page 1, line 16, leave out 'or pump action.'—*[Mr. William Ross.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 21, Noes 190.

Division No. 332] **[11.55 pm**

AYES

Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Battle, John
Bermingham, Gerald
Buckley, George J.
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cryer, Bob
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dixon, Don
Galbraith, Sam
Golding, Mrs Llin
Haynes, Frank
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
McCusker, Harold
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Morgan, Rhodri
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Skinner, Dennis
Spearing, Nigel

Tellers for the Ayes:
Rev. Martin Smyth and
Mr. Roy Beggs.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Alton, David
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, John
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorst, John
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kennedy, Charles
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lilley, Peter
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard

Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
Maclean, David
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wallace, James
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wood, Timothy

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. Stephen Dorrell.

Question accordingly negatived.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I beg to move amendment No. 31, in page 1, line 17 leave out from 'cartridges' to end of line 18.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take the following: Government amendment No. 33.

Amendment No. 8, in page 1, line 23, leave out
'or which was manufactured before'
and insert
'and which was manufactured after'.

Amendment No. 131, in page 1, line 23 leave out 'before' and insert 'after'.

Mr. Hogg: These amendments are important. Their object is to delete from the Bill the amendment made in Committee to the effect that guns made before 1 January 1939 should not be caught by the ban. I refer to self-loading rifles and related weapons.

I cannot commend the amendment made in Committee. There is no obvious justification for the date chosen. Guns made before 1 January 1939 are just as lethal as those made thereafter. I have already explained that I think there is no justification for such weapons anyway. Moreover, the burden on the police of trying to decide whether a gun was made before 1 January 1939 and is thus permitted, or after that date and is thus prohibited, makes no sense. On that basis I invite the House to support the Government amendments.

Sir Hector Monro: I do not accept that the amendment should be made. My hon. Friend should realise that this is the eighth of 37 debates, and his wish to get on with compensation is impossible. If he wanted to discuss compensation he could have tabled a Government amendment to give us an opportunity to do so. That merely highlights the iniquity of the guillotine motion.

Everything in the amendment will be overtaken if we debate the next amendment in detail. It deals with self-loading rifles, so it would seem better to agree to this amendment and move on to the next group so as to save time. However, I do not want my hon. Friend to leave the House thinking that I agree with what he has said.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 174, Noes 42.

Division No. 333] **[12.8 am**

AYES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowis, John
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, John
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorst, John
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
Maclean, David
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moss, Malcolm

Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Walden, George
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wood, Timothy

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Kenneth Carlisle and
Mr. Stephen Dorrell.

NOES

Alton, David
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Battle, John
Beggs, Roy
Bellingham, Henry
Bermingham, Gerald
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buckley, George J.
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Corbett, Robin
Cryer, Bob
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dixon, Don
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Golding, Mrs Llin
Henderson, Doug
Howells, Geraint
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Livsey, Richard
McCusker, Harold
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Michael, Alun
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Morgan, Rhodri
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Salmond, Alex
Skinner, Dennis
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Steel, Rt Hon David
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wallace, James
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wiggin, Jerry
Wigley, Dafydd

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Frank Cook.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): I beg to move amendment No. 91, in page 1, line 17, after 'cartridges', insert

'or the magazine of which is incapable of holding more than five rounds'

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): With this it will be convenient to consider the following amendments:
No. 128, in page 1, line 18, at end insert

'or which has an integal or detachable magazine the maximum capacity of which is not more than eight cartridges and the detachable magazine and/or rifle—

(a) bears a mark which has been approved by the Secretary of State for denoting that fact and which has been made either by one of the two companies mentioned in section 58(1) of the principal Act or by such other person as may be approved by the Secretary of State for the purposes of this section, and

(b) that company or person has certified in writing that the magazine was initially so manufactured or that work has been carried out on the magazine in a manner approved by the Secretary of State as to render it incapable of storing or containing more than eight cartridges of the calibre for which it was designed, manufactured or modified.'.

No. 129, in page 1, line 18, at end insert

'or which has an integral or detachable magazine the maximum capacity of which is not more than ten cartridges and the detachable magazine and/or rifle—

(a) bears a mark which has been approved by the Secretary of State for denoting that fact and which has been made either by one of the two companies mentioned in section 58(1) of the principal Act or by such other person as may be approved by the Secretary of State for the purposes of this section, and

(b) that company or person has certified in writing that the magazine was initially so manufactured or that work has been carried out on the magazine in a manner approved by the Secretary of State as to render it incapable of storing or containing more than ten cartridges of the calibre for which it was designed, manufactured or modified.'.

Sir Hector Monro: We now come to the most important amendment and the last opportunity for the Government to redeem themselves in the eyes of hundreds of thousands of sportsmen, including target shooters, game shooters and clay pigeon shooters. Amendment No. 91, provides an opportunity for the Government to show that they understand firearms legislation and are not just bulldozing such legislation through the House irrespective of the arguments that they have lost with regularity throughout the passage of the Bill.

I have referred to self-loading rifles many times, so I shall not go into details now as my hon. Friends want to highlight the importance of the amendment. There are two matters on which I want answers from my hon. Friend the Minister tonight. The first, to which my hon. Friend the Minister has refused to respond so far, is about the disabled. Will my hon. Friend explain why the Government support the Sports Council and the Central Council for Physical Recreation and do everything to encourage recreation and sport for the disabled, yet turn their backs on the disabled in the matter of rifle shooting? *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Will hon. Members who wish to hold private conversations please do so outside the Chamber? I am trying to follow the hon. Gentleman's speech.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is important to get things in the right perspective. We were discussing the possible result of the Bill going to another place. I was saying that when Lord Whitelaw——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. If the hon. Gentleman wants to do that he should do it outside the Chamber. Matters for debate should be raised in the Chamber. The hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) has the Floor. He is entitled to be heard and I need to listen to him.

Sir Hector Monro: I hope that my hon. Friend will respond also to my point about women. We have raised this issue frequently because many women find it impossible to use bolt-action rifles because of the kick and the difficulty of operating the action. As the Government appear dedicated to dealing with sex discrimination, will my hon. Friend tell us why he is preventing women from enjoying the sport of shooting with a full-bore rifle?

[Sir Hector Monro]

One of the more damaging arguments that my hon. Friend must answer relates to his attitude to the five-round integral magazine weapon, which we have talked about in great detail. Under the proposal there would be no more than five rounds in the magazine. Some magazines would hold only four, some three. It would be impossible to have large or detachable magazines. This would apply to the type of action, not to the volume of fire, because a 10-round bolt-action rifle, if it is well operated, can produce more fire power than five rounds in a self-loading rifle.

The Minister keeps returning to his argument—and in doing so sounds like an old 78 gramophone record—that the proposal is unnecessary because there is not an enormous number of rifles currently being manufactured. The point is that there is a significant number of fixed magazine rifles in production and I have given my hon. Friend their names. If those rifles became the only legal type available in this country, manufacturers would produce more of them. Surely my hon. Friend is not trying to prevent the production of weapons. He seems to be excited about the type of weapon.

My hon. Friend must answer those points. Many hon. Members want to raise other issues and we have less than 30 minutes left. I have spoken on this matter at length because it is something about which I feel very strongly. The amendment offers my hon. Friend the last opportunity to bring some common sense into a very bad Bill.

Mr. Colvin: I will not detain the House for long. It was significant to note that in the last Division 174 Members voted on the Government's side, out of a total vote of 356 Conservatives. Perhaps the fact that fewer than half the Government's supporters turned out on a three-line Whip shows the lack of support on the Conservative Benches for those measures. It also shows the lack of support for being here at this early hour with so many amendments still to be debated and so little time to discuss them. I support my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro).

The Government's lack of understanding about the five-round integral magazine rifle is demonstrated by the White Paper that was published in December. That defined the rifles that would be added to the prohibited list under section 5 of the Firearms Act 1968. It referred to SLRs and pump-action rifles, but it did not make any specifications about the number of rounds. I have searched the White Paper to see if I can find any reference to five rounds but nothing is said. A lot is said however, about those military SLRs, of which Kalashnikovs are one example.

Mr. Skinner: When I was discussing this matter earlier with my hon. Friend the Member for Leigh (Mr. Cunliffe) we talked about the gunslingers in the other place cleaning up the Bill. Why are Conservative Members getting worked up about this, when they know that there are several hundred in the other place who are only too anxious to get hold of the Bill and sort it out—especially Lord Whitelaw? I made inquiries as to whether he was using a five-rounder on the day he was running the country during the miners' strike. The Prime Minister had gone to Switzerland to count her money or to deal with Nestlé or whatever. When Lord Whitelaw went on the grouse moor for the first time that day he happened to shoot two fellers. What gun did he use?

Mr. Colvin: The hon. Member for Bolsover has made a valid point—it is the finger on the trigger that counts, not the weapon. The Government are trying to ban certain weapons but that will do nothing to reduce the amount of armed crime.

Paragraph 47 of the White Paper refers to compensation and states:

> "We have concluded that as a matter of principle it is undesirable and unjust to require the taxpayer at large to pay for the removal from the public domain of weapons which are an acknowledged threat to life."

The Government are arguing that the five-round SLR, with an integral magazine for those rounds, is a threat to human life. I do not believe that. I have asked the Under-Secretary before, and I ask again, how many crimes have been committed with SLRs with only five rounds?

Mr. Menzies Campbell (Fife, North-East): Throughout the unhappy course of the Bill, the hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) has been notable by his sensible suggestions and by his constructive comments about the proposed legislation. Yet again he has demonstrated that good sense by his brief contribution to the debate.

I support everything that the hon. Gentleman has said. The views that he has expressed have support in other parts of the House than the Government Back Benches.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: I support my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro). The Minister should reconsider the argument and accept the amendment. I discussed SLRs on Second Reading and I am sorry that the Government have acted as they have.

My hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries mentioned two categories of people who use SLRs—the disabled, and women who wish to use rifles. In Scotland there is a great deal of afforestation and another category of user who has come to my notice is those people who use SLRs to control vermin. With the first shot, vermin may just be wounded and the advantage of a SLR is that a second shot can be fired quickly. In a densely wooded area, as opposed to an open hill, there is not the opportunity to dispatch vermin, without suffering on the first shot. Therefore, there a humane reason for considering such users. The Minister should consider this third category, whose argument has been put forcibly by those with direct experience of the control of vermin.

Mr. Bellingham: I do not plan to detain the House for more than half a minute, but I was on the Standing Committee when the matter was discussed in some detail. We raised this point at considerable length, in terms of the disabled, women and young people and in terms of the humane aspect, which has just been mentioned by my right hon. Friend the Member for Kincardine and Deeside (Mr. Buchanan-Smith), of the importance of shooting the second round very quickly during deer culling or vermin control.

I remind my hon. Friend the Minister that there was a strong possibility of a vote against clause 1 stand part. After some discussions, he told the Committee that he would consider seriously whether it would be right to leave in section 1 integral magazine self-loading guns. He went on at some length, and said:

"Therefore, there is a case for that limited range of rifles, but a wholly different argument applies to the large magazine guns."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee F*, 8 March 1988; c. 326.]

12.30 am

On 8 March, the Minister said that he would consider the matter sympathetically and seriously. He used that quote from *Hansard* on Monday evening in response to my comments. He was less robust two days later, but I remind him that on 8 March he promised to look at it very carefully and seriously. On that basis, I and my colleagues on the Committee agreed to support him on clause 1 stand part. Had he not given that undertaking, we would have voted against him and won. Therefore, I urge him to look again at the matter with consideration for the quasi-commitment and to think in terms of the damage that could be done through legitimate sport to disabled people, young people and women.

Mr. William Ross: The amendments in the name of my right hon. Friend the Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux) deal with this matter. My right hon. Friend says that he is not a shooter; he had enough to do with it during the war. I tabled the amendments so that the Minister could consider—if he is not past considering—what can be done to help practical shooting organisations in this country.

I am not sure what practical shooters do, but I do know that they use semi-automatic rifles. The only time that I have fired a semi-automatic rifle at a target was when I fired a course with the Ulster Defence Regiment. They thought that they were pretty good, and I had never used a semi-automatic before. I am happy to report to the House that this old ex-B man beat the whole blooming lot. That gave me a great deal of pleasure, but also worried me about the outcome of the conflict as the UDR were on my side. I hope that they have improved since. Perhaps I beat the raw recruits that day.

The two amendments are exactly the same, except that one refers to 8 cartridges and the other to 10. I understand from the practical shooters that a 10 cartridge magazine is quite sufficient for their purposes. However, the Minister has shown no willingness to meet the needs of that group of sportsmen, and I consider that he should think again very seriously.

The amendments show that if the Government are prepared to be sensible, it is possible to use a detachable magazine with which the rifle would be a legal weapon. If it went beyond the stated capacity, it would become an illegal weapon, and no reputable gun dealer would sell such a weapon, nor would any reputable club allow such a weapon to be used on its ranges.

The matter has been raised in the context of deactivation of weapons. When the Government were laying down the rule that a gun would have to be marked that it was completely deactivated, there is no reason why a gun or the magazine should not be marked or individually licensed on the permit for such use. If that could be done, there would be no problem. It removes the problem of the large capacity magazine on which the Minister dwelt so much on Monday night.

The Minister's understanding of large capacity and the shooters' understanding of large capacity seem to differ widely. The Minister is considering the full 30-round military magazine. That is what he means by a large capacity magazine. I am talking about something one third of that.

In Committee, the Minister kindly took us to a certain establishment not all that far from here and demonstrated weapons to us. Those who went will remember clearly that he demonstrated that a five-shot shotgun could not keep up over about 20 rounds with an ordinary double-barrelled shotgun. What holds true for a double-barrelled shotgun as opposed to a five-shot automatic shotgun holds true for the limited capacity semi-automatic rifle, and well the Minister knows it. That is the reality. The plain truth is that if the Minister were not so blind to reality and so determined to go down this silly road, he would accept the amendment, or something very like it. He knows perfectly well that it is reasonable and practical.

I understand that it is possible to buy a silencer for a ·410 shotgun. As long as it is on the shotgun, I understand that it is legal. The same silencer will fit the 45 Colt automatic pistol and that would be a highly illegal weapon. The Minister must try to understand the technicalities of these things. He must put his mind to them and come to understand the problems that are associated with these technical matters. Once he has done that we might start to make some reasonable and sensible progress.

The amendments meet the needs of the sporting world and the Government's purposes. They are perfectly satisfactory and I hope that the Minister will say that he is prepared to think again, rather than fooling on in the way that he has been.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): I rise to speak for the first time in the many debates on the Bill and I do so to support my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro).

As hon. Members will know, I have a 2,000 square mile constituency and hundreds of square miles in my constituency contain forests. In those forests are many vermin which have to be controlled. There is no question but that the people who understand and know about these matters fail to understand why the Government cannot see that the use of firearms is a legitimate way of controlling vermin, a proper way, and, more importantly, a humane way to do so.

If the amendment is not accepted this evening, the people who will be upset and distressed are, without exception, Conservative supporters, and they will wonder quite what the Government are about. They realise that the Government are, quite properly, concerned with the activities that go on in the cities, but equally they must understand what goes on in the country, and, in particular, in the highland areas of Scotland where we have to control vermin which can do enormous damage to the crops and everything else. Unless they are kept under control, we shall find ourselves with huge problems and many establishments and homes will be put at risk because they will not be able to control vermin as effectively as they have done in the past. That could affect the economics of what at present is a marginal——

Sir John Farr: Will my hon. Friend explain exactly what he means by vermin?

Mr. Walker: I mean all types of vermin, including deer. There is no question but that deer are a big problem to us in the highlands of Scotland. Anyone who disagrees will be

[Mr. Walker]

welcome to come to my constituency. I shall be able to take them to see the many deer wandering around close to my home.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: My hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) argued that it is necessary to have a small capacity self-loading rifle to deal with vermin. Within the definition of the word "vermin", he includes deer. I do not agree with him. I have before me, for example, a letter from the chairman of the British Deer Society, on which I addressed the Committee.

The chairman of that society wrote to my hon. Friend the member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) and dealt in some detail with my hon. Friend's assertion that a self-loading rifle is necessary for the killing of deer. He wrote:

"I have taken great trouble to find out the extent to which these rifles"—

that is to say, self-loading rifles—

"are used for deer management. I have spoken to the chairman of the Forestry Commission and the chairman of the Red Deer Commission, both of whom are happy with the British Deer Society position, which is that there is no heavyweight argument for these weapons to be used for deer management."

He continues:

"As far as I can discover, it is simply not true that many roe stalkers throughout the United Kingdom use five shot, self-loading rifles. Even if they do the society would argue that the art of deer management is to stalk into the beast that you wish to kill and place one well-aimed shot to kill that animal immediately."

People who have studied this matter at some length and who represent the interests of those who act in this sport do not believe—I repeat, do not believe—that a self-loading rifle is necessary, or even desirable, for the purposes to which my hon. Friend referred.

It is extremely difficult to believe that my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North is right when he says that the only suitable weapon for the killing of vermin—by which I assume he means foxes, grey squirrels, and the like—is a self-loading rifle. Those of us who have spent most of our lives shooting vermin have used other weapons perfectly satisfactorily—such as a shotgun or a small rim fire .22, which for these purposes can even be a self-loading rim fire .22.

Sir Hector Monro *rose*——

Mr. Hogg: I am told to finish this. My hon. Friend may not like it, but I am going to do so.

The idea that one needs a self-loading rifle of the kind that is designed for military purposes to shoot vermin is simply preposterous.

Mr. Frank Cook: Does the Minister recall the occasion in Committee when I presented a letter from a farmer of many years' experience? That letter was accompanied by a photograph of the fox which that farmer had shot the previous Wednesday night and which was badly afflicted with mange. A fox has very quick reactions, and when firing at a fox from some distance it is essential that one's gun has the capacity not only to loose off a second shot, but also a third if necessary. The alternative is to leave the animal, disease-ridden as it may be, to limp around the countryside in great pain and suffering. Does the Minister accept that that letter came from an expert who has spent a lifetime on the land and who knows what he is talking about? Is his opinion not to be respected?

Mr. Hogg: The comments of the hon. Member for Stockton, North (Mr. Cook) illustrate why the arguments in favour of this amendment are so bad. First, is it really right that people should be banging away many times with self-loading rifles? They may very well be doing it near their neighbours, near a road, near a village, or near other people picnicking in a field.

Mr. Colvin: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Hogg: No, I shall not give way for the moment.

Secondly, the basic rule that I would commend to anyone who goes out shooting is to make sure that he is close enough to his target to kill it with the first shot, instead of shooting from a distance, or—as my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North-West (Mr. Bellingham) suggested—shooting at foxes at night with a self-loading rifle with night sights. That sort of thing makes no sense at all.

12.45 am

Mr. Colvin: Inadvertently, my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) has given the Minister an escape route down which he is running as fast as he can. Will he please forget about this digression on vermin and address himself to the points made by my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) and myself, which are far more pertinent?

Mr. Hogg: I do not suppose that my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North would like the cavalier way in which his hon. Friend has described his argument. I was taking that argument seriously, as my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North expected me to. Incidentally, it is extremely similar to the argument put by my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North-West, and identical to that put earlier this evening by my right hon. Friend the Member for Kincardine and Deeside (Mr. Buchanan-Smith). The latter made the point very plainly that he needs his guns for deer shooting. He is not—and this is the point that I am making—supported by the chairman of the British Deer Society.

Mr. Michael Fallon (Darlington): Is it not true that a Scot who requires five rounds to kill a deer is neither a good shot nor a good Scot?

Mr. Hogg: I confess that I very much wish that I had thought of such an elegant way of expressing a criticism that I must say I feel.

Sir Hector Monro: It is very disappointing that we are about to run out of time and my hon. Friend the Minister still will not answer the points about disability or women. Will he please do so now?

Mr. Hogg: My hon. Friend really must expect me to deal with the issues that have been put before the House, and I am doing that.

Another point made from time to time by various hon. Members is that many rifles of this kind are available on the market. That is simply not true. I had this carefully checked. There are six rifles—I am excluding derivatives—known to the forensic services at Huntington which contain no more than five shots in an integral magazine.

One, and only one, is in production. We are being asked, as I understand it, to legislate against the possibility that someone, at some unspecified time, in respect of a limited market—namely, this country—will try to devise a self-loading rifle that falls within the category and would be certified as such by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State.

The idea that numerous people possess these limited self-loading rifles is an illusion, if only because they do not exist in great numbers. What my hon. Friends want is something different. They want a larger self-loading rifle. My hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries wants the Garand. [HON. MEMBERS: "He is wriggling."] I am not wriggling. I am concentrating on the essential issues. My hon. Friend wants the eight-shot Garand, and everything that he has argued tonight is a stalking horse for that proposition. He is not particularly interested in the five-shot integral magazine.

Sir Hector Monro: May I ask my hon. Friend to respond to the amendment, which does not deal with anything more than five rounds?

Mr. Hogg: My hon. Friend is not correct. There are three amendments before us. I recommend that he reads amendment No. 128, for example, which refers specifically to eight cartridges in the magazine. We are dealing with a variety of guns—five-shot and eight-shot, on which I am concentrating. My hon. Friend knows that the Garand is an eight-shot, which is why he wants it. The question about women and the disabled is a stalking horse for the eight-shot Garand——

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have sat patiently listening to the debate on the fundamental question of the disabled and women, for which debate I came into the Chamber specifically.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. What is the point of order?

Mr. Bermingham: The hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) made his point succinctly and clearly. The Minister, on the other hand, spent half his time——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. That is not a matter for me. Mr. Douglas Hogg.

Mr. Bermingham: May I complete my point of order, Sir. It is a matter of courtesy——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I am here to deal not with points of courtesy but with points of order.

Mr. Hogg: I was talking about the eight-shot Garand, because that is the subject of one of the amendments in this group.

Mr. Bermingham: Why does the Minister not speak to the House, rather than to his Back Benchers?

Mr. Hogg: It is usual to address the Chair, which is what I am doing at the moment, as you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will have observed. From time to time I address my hon. Friends, and I address Opposition Members, too.

There is no reason to suppose that women and the disabled use the limited shot self-loading rifle, if only because such rifles do not exist in large numbers. We have considered carefully whether we could define disability in a meaningful way. We have to wrestle with the question of a discretion that would be given in any event to chief constables. We have concluded that it is not possible to extend a concession only to those——

It being five hours after the commencement of proceedings on the motion relating to the Firearms (Amendment) Bill (Allocation of Time), MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *proceeded, pursuant to the order this day, to put the Question already proposed from the Chair.*

The House divided: Ayes 42, Noes 171.

Division No. 334] **[12.52 am**

AYES

Alton, David
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Battle, John
Beggs, Roy
Bermingham, Gerald
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buckley, George J.
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Colvin, Michael
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Corbett, Robin
Cryer, Bob
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dixon, Don
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Galbraith, Sam
Golding, Mrs Llin
Haynes, Frank
Howells, Geraint
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kennedy, Charles
Livsey, Richard
McCusker, Harold
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Michael, Alun
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Salmond, Alex
Skinner, Dennis
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Steel, Rt Hon David
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wigley, Dafydd

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Jerry Wiggin and
Mr. Henry Bellingham.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowis, John
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Buck, Sir Antony
Burt, Alistair
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, John
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorst, John
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael

Jack, Michael
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
Maclean, David
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Riddick, Graham
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walden, George
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wood, Timothy

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

Question accordingly negatived.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Do I have the leave of the House to put together all the outstanding Government amendments?

Mr. Colvin: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is it in order for all the remaining Government amendments—there are 47 still on the Order Paper—to be swept through on the nod as if they were—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I only asked a question. Does any hon. Member wish to divide the House on any Government amendment, and if so, on which ones——

Hon. Members: Every one.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *then proceeded to put forthwith the Questions necessary for the disposal of the Business to be concluded at that hour.*

Amendment proposed: No. 32, in page 1, line 19, at end insert

'is not chambered for ·22 rim-fire cartridges and'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 167, Noes 35.

Division No. 335] **[1.05 am**

AYES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowis, John
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Buck, Sir Antony
Burt, Alistair
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, John
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorst, John
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
Maclean, David
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Riddick, Graham
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard

Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walden, George
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wood, Timothy

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Alan Howarth.

NOES

Alton, David
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Battle, John
Beggs, Roy
Bermingham, Gerald
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buckley, George J.
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Corbett, Robin
Cryer, Bob
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dixon, Don
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Galbraith, Sam
Golding, Mrs Llin
Haynes, Frank
Howells, Geraint
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kennedy, Charles
Livsey, Richard
McCusker, Harold
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Michael, Alun
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Salmond, Alex
Skinner, Dennis
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Wallace, James
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wigley, Dafydd

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Peter L. Pike and
Mr. Alan Meale.

Question accordingly agreed to.

1.15 am

Amendment proposed: No. 33, in page 1, leave out line 23.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 168, Noes 34.

Division No. 336] **[1.16 am**

AYES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowis, John
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Buck, Sir Antony
Burt, Alistair
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorst, John
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
Maclean, David
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Renton, Tim
Riddick, Graham
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walden, George
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wood, Timothy

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Mark Lennox-Boyd and
Mr. Kenneth Carlisle.

NOES

Alton, David
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Battle, John
Beggs, Roy
Bermingham, Gerald
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buckley, George J.
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cryer, Bob
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dixon, Don
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Galbraith, Sam
Golding, Mrs Llin
Haynes, Frank
Howells, Geraint
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kennedy, Charles
Livsey, Richard
McCusker, Harold
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Michael, Alun
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Salmond, Alex
Skinner, Dennis
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Wallace, James
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wigley, Dafydd

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Peter Pike and
Mr. Alan Meale.

Question accordingly agreed to.

1.30 am

Amendment proposed: No. 34 in page 1, line 24, leave out 'revolving magazine smooth-bore gun' and insert 'smooth-bore revolver gun other than one which is chambered for 9mm rim-fired cartridges or loaded at the muzzle end of each chamber;'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division—

Sir Peter Emery (Honiton) *(seated and covered):* On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. May I refer you to Standing Order No. 39, which deals with unnecessarily claimed Divisions? It says:

"Mr. Speaker may . . . take the vote of the House, or committee, by calling upon the Members who support, and who challenge his decision, successively to rise in their places; and he shall thereupon, as he thinks fit, either declare the determination of the House".

As there have been majorities of more than 130 in the previous Divisions, I believe that it may well be considered that the Divisions are unnecessary.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Perhaps I can put that to the test when I come to collect the voices in a minute or so.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 35, in page 1, leave out lines 25 and 26 and insert—

'(ae) any rocket launcher, or any mortar, for projecting a stabilised missile, other than a launcher or mortar designed for line-throwing or pyrotechnic purposes or as signalling apparatus;".'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made—

The House proceeded to a Division—

Mr. Bermingham *(seated and covered):* On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As I understand the precedent in this matter, the last occasion on which Standing Order No. 35 was acted upon—[HON. MEMBERS: "No. 39."]—I accept that correction—was after five Divisions. Tonight —*[Interruption.]* I do not know what the hilarity on the Conservative Benches is all about, but it shows the arrogance—*[Interruption.]*

If on a matter that clearly divides the Government Benches, even after a guillotine against their own Members and when there are still 46 amendments on the Order Paper for discussion after the guillotined time has run out, it is permitted after only three or four Divisions on the amendments that Standing Order No. 39 should be invoked, that must be a negation of the democratic rights of the House. I therefore challenge your ruling, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It seems to me that there was a time when your honourable predecessor, Mr. Deputy Speaker, ruled——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I understand what the hon. Gentleman is saying. I do not know of any benchmark that should guide me in these matters. I only know that the House determined that there should be a Standing Order No. 39, and presumably it intended that it should be used, I cannot understand under what circumstances the House would decide that it should be used, were it not under the present circumstances, when the will of the House is clear and Divisions are being called.

Mr. Skinner *(seated and covered):* On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want to draw your attention to the fact that—[HON. MEMBERS: "Put on the hat."] *[Interruption.]* During the 1970-74 Government, on the occasion when the Standing Order was invoked by the then Speaker, there were only seven Members in one Lobby. It was only after several votes had taken place that the Speaker decided that he would invoke the Standing Order.

Another important factor to which I wish to draw your attention, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that those seven Members were seven members of the Labour party. On this occasion there are people going through the Division Lobby who represent several different parties, including members of the Tory party. I should have thought that you *would have waited some time longer* before invoking Standing Order No. 39. The numbers have not been static on the Opposition Benches and there have been variations during the course of several Divisions.

You will have noticed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there has also been a reduction in the vote on the Conservative Benches. Therefore, who is to know whether, in the course of the next 10 Divisions, the Tory Members would not have got tired of staying here? Their numbers would have decreased much faster, and therefore the difference between the two parties would have been much greater. I believe that what has happened tonight is that you have given the Government the opportunity to fly in the face of parliamentary democracy and——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I regret that the hon. Gentleman has tended to spoil his argument, to which I was listening carefully——

Mr. Skinner *rose——*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

—by his latter remarks. If the hon. Gentleman and the hon. Member for St. Helens, South (Mr. Bermingham) had intended to suggest that the Chair might have been wiser to allow the House to divide on one or two more amendments before invoking the provisions of Standing Order No. 39, the Chair might take account of that. The implication is that the hon. Gentlemen are prepared to understand that the Chair might, at its discretion, invoke the provisions of the Standing Order at the appropriate time.

I believe that that was the sense of the points of order, and I believe also that the Chair might be wise to take that into account. Therefore, if we now proceed to the next amendment——

Mr. Frank Cook *(seated and covered):* On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You will recall that the normal procedure for voting on Divisions in this House allows a time delay of eight minutes from when the Division is called, before you, Sir, instruct that the doors be locked. When the Standing Order was invoked, that time limit had not been allowed, so it is possible that some hon. Members may even yet be on their way to take part in that Division. Therefore, I appeal to you——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. On the last occasion when the House divided, I called for the doors to be locked on the advice of the Clerk at the Table who takes account of the automatic time recording device which switches on automatically at the appropriate time. If the hon. Gentleman is suggesting that somehow the time limit was incorrect, certainly I shall have that equipment examined. I can only tell the hon. Gentleman and the House that I take account of the flashing red light that comes on at the appropiate moment.

Mr. Bermingham: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I have listened to the hon. Gentleman. I am sure that the House is getting rather anxious to get to bed, as I am.

Mr. James Molyneaux (Lagan Valley): Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) pointed out, quite rightly, that hon. Members representing various parts of the United Kingdom took part in the Divisions. Through no fault of yours, Mr. Deputy Speaker, or of Mr. Speaker, some of us are being deprived of adequate opportunity to discuss some of the very important matters that are now being steamrollered through. That is through no fault of yours, Mr. Deputy Speaker; it is simply because the Government did not give adequate notice that Northern Ireland would be included in the Bill. We had no opportunity to consult our constituents. The maximum period of consultation was three days. The normal courtesy of notifying the party leaders in Northern Ireland was not observed on this occasion.

If you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, would be willing to take up the point with which you seemed to find some sympathy, I would be content if you were to reconsider that narrow point without any other implications and allow us to take some more Divisions. Then, although we have been deprived of speaking on these new amendments and new clauses, at least hon. Members representing the component parts of the United Kingdom will be able to vote.

1.45 am

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The House would expect me to have regard to the points of order and the substance of the points of order that have been expressed, particularly the point made by the leader of the Official Unionist party.

The House having divided: Ayes 167, Noes 33.

Division No. 337] **[1.40 am**

AYES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowis, John
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Buck, Sir Antony
Burt, Alistair
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hesseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
Maclean, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Renton, Tim
Riddick, Graham
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walden, George
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wood, Timothy

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Alan Howarth and
Mr. Stephen Dorrell.

NOES

Alton, David
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Battle, John
Beggs, Roy
Bermingham, Gerald
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cryer, Bob
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dixon, Don
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Galbraith, Sam
Golding, Mrs Llin
Haynes, Frank
Howells, Geraint
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kennedy, Charles
Livsey, Richard
McCusker, Harold
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Michael, Alun
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Salmond, Alex
Skinner, Dennis
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wigley, Dafydd

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Peter Pike and
Mr. Alan Meale.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 36, in page 1, line 27, leave out subsection (3).—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 167, Noes 32.

Division No. 338] **[1.54 am**

AYES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowis, John
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Buck, Sir Antony
Burt, Alistair
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
Maclean, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Renton, Tim
Riddick, Graham
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walden, George
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wood, Timothy

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Mark Lennox-Boyd and
Mr. Kenneth Carlisle.

NOES

Alton, David
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Battle, John
Beggs, Roy
Bermingham, Gerald
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cryer, Bob
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dixon, Don
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Golding, Mrs Llin
Haynes, Frank
Howells, Geraint
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kennedy, Charles
Livsey, Richard
McCusker, Harold
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Michael, Alun
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Salmond, Alex
Skinner, Dennis
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Wallace, James
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wigley, Dafydd

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Alan Meale and
Mr. Peter Pike.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We now come to a Government amendment No. 37. Do I have the leave of the House to put Government amendment No. 38 with it?

Hon. Members: No.

Amendment proposed: No. 37, in page 2, line 2, leave out 'containing an explosive charge' and insert 'designed to explode on or immediately before impact'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 166, Noes 31.

Division No. 339] **[2.07 am**

AYES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowis, John
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Buck, Sir Antony
Burt, Alistair
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil

Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
Maclean, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Renton, Tim
Riddick, Graham
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walden, George
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wood, Timothy

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Alan Howarth

NOES

Alton, David
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Battle, John
Beggs, Roy
Bermingham, Gerald
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cryer, Bob
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dixon, Don
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Golding, Mrs Llin
Haynes, Frank
Howells, Geraint
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kennedy, Charles
Livsey, Richard
McCusker, Harold
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Michael, Alun
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Salmond, Alex
Skinner, Dennis
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Wallace, James
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wigley, Dafydd

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Alan Meale and
Mr. Peter Pike.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 38, in page 2, line 7, leave out 'explosive rocket or shell' and insert 'or rocket or shell designed to explode as aforesaid'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:

The House divided: Ayes 166, Noes 31.

Division No. 340] **[2.22 am**

AYES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowis, John
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Buck, Sir Antony
Burt, Alistair
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lord, Michael
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
Maclean, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Renton, Tim
Riddick, Graham
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*

Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walden, George
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wiltshire, David
Wood, Timothy

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Peter Lloyd and
Mr. Stephen Dorrell.

NOES

Alton, David
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Battle, John
Beggs, Roy
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cryer, Bob
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dixon, Don
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Golding, Mrs Llin
Haynes, Frank
Howells, Geraint
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kennedy, Charles
Livsey, Richard
McCusker, Harold
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Michael, Alun
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Salmond, Alex
Skinner, Dennis
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Wallace, James
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wigley, Dafydd

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Gerald Bermingham and
Mr. Alan Meale.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 39, in page 2, line 10, after 'which', insert '(a)'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. Cryer: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As we are apparently not having a Division, it is handy not to have the headgear on. The first Division on this measure gave the Government a majority of 136. The votes for the Ayes on the guillotine motion were 278, and for the Noes 142. In the last Division before the one that took place under Standing Order No. 39, the Ayes were 166 and the Noes were 31, giving a majority of 135. That was one less than the Government's majority on the guillotine motion.

Adopting the principle that a majority of 135 or 136 implies that we can abandon Divisions, we could have abandoned the Division even for the guillotine motion. Each side has lost 100, but the majority has been maintained. It is a dangerous precedent to allow Standing Order No. 39 to be used when the majority is very much of the order that the Government obtain in their day-to-day business.

By using Standing Order No. 39, Members who wish to register their objections in the Division Lobbies are denied that wish because no record of names is taken. That is a very important principle and the reason why we do not have a secret ballot and why a record is taken at the desk for publication the following day. It is a very important and a treasured principle that hon. Members are accountable by the record of their votes. The use of Standing Order No. 39 is a denial of that right in circumstances in which the Government are obtaining exactly the same or a smaller majority than that which they obtained when the full panoply of the Standing Orders was applied for the guillotine motion. I therefore hope that you will not use Standing Order No. 39 again in the remaining Divisions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I believe that the House would like me to deal with this point. The argument that the hon. Gentleman has advanced is not an argument against the use of Standing Order No. 39. Rather it was an argument against Standing Order No. 39. If the House agreed that Standing Order No. 39 was an appropriate addition to our Standing Orders, these are presumably the circumstances in which the House envisaged that the Standing Order should be used.

The size of the majority in the Divisions has been very consistent. It is clear that in exercising my judgment—as I am required to do—I was fully justified in taking account of the very large majority to which the hon. Gentleman has drawn attention. Perhaps we should move on now.

Rev. Martin Smyth (Belfast, South) *(seated and covered):* Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Following the line of reasoning of the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) may I have some guidance from the Chair? As I understand it, no record is taken of hon. Members who vote. In another tradition, those of us who wish to record our dissent or have our votes registered have a right to do that so that people can know that we have represented their interests.

I appreciate that some right hon. and hon. Members may not wish to have their votes registered in these circumstances. However, those of us representing constituencies in Northern Ireland would be very happy to have our votes registered to give account of our stewardship.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. One point at a time. I draw the attention of the hon. Member for Belfast, South (Rev. Martin Smyth) to the fact that "Erskine May" makes it clear on page 402 that it is our practice in these circumstances to record the numbers of those who wish to vote contrary to the motion before the House, but not to record the names.

Mr. Skinner *(seated and covered):* On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. One of the problems that you face is that when Standing Order No. 39 is used you must be satisfied that it is being used only very sparingly; otherwise anyone in the Chair could be charged with taking decisions and not giving people an opportunity to cast their votes in the proper fashion.

I realised many years ago when we had a series of Divisions between 1970 and 1974 when we got down to seven hon. Members that the charge hardly became sustainable in terms of points of order. However, we raised them and we lost. There were seven of us from one party. Throughout tonight there have been hon. Members from the different sections in Northern Ireland, there have been Liberals, Social Democrats, people from the Labour party and on odd occasions there have been Tories. We have also had members of the Scottish National party and the Welsh

national party. In other words, we probably have had more parties supporting the Opposition than there were people engaged in the Divisions way back between 1970 and 1974.

It would be unfortunate if the practice of using Standing Order No. 39 was continued in future. For instance, when we debated the Firearms (Amendment) Bill before it was halted the other night, the number of people who voted against it——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I do not believe that we can carry on a debate about the exercise of my discretion. This is a matter for my discretion. I have exercised it, and I do not believe that it is a matter for debate in the House. I have ruled, and the House must accept my ruling.

2.45 am

Mr. Frank Cook: Further to that point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am not seeking to challenge your ruling, but I ask you to ponder, if only briefly, the fact that you gave your ruling on the grounds that the majority had been remarkably consistent. The majority in this Chamber has been remarkably consistent for the past 12 months. If you base the application of Standing Order No. 39 on that premise, you could apply it on every day that the House sits. I believe that that would be a denial of democracy and quite unacceptable to the electorate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman would realise that the rarity of the invocation of Standing Order No. 39 refutes the point that he is seeking to put to the House.

We use Standing Order No. 39 when, in the judgment and at the discretion of the Chair, it seems appropriate to do so. I have deemed it appropriate to do so in these circumstances. I did so having regard to points of order that were put to me earlier in our proceedings. I took them into account, weighed them heavily, and am satisfied that I have exercised my judgment and discretion properly in the circumstances. I believe that we should now get on.

Mr. Bermingham: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I do not seek to challenge your ruling, but I seek your guidance [HON. MEMBERS: "Sit down."] When they have quietened down, hon. Members may realise that I am seeking to make an important point.

As I understand the procedure that will now follow —*[Interruption.]*—if the chuntering dies down, hon. Members may hear something to their advantage—you will ask each side to rise either for or against each amendment. Were it to reach a time when the number rising for the motion decreased significantly, whereas the number of hon. Members rising against the motion were to remain constant, would it still be your ruling that Standing Order No. 39 apply?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: If the hon. Gentleman had listened carefully to the statement that I made when collecting the voices when the Question was last put he would have heard it prefaced with the words "The Chair's opinion". It is a matter for the opinion of the Chair. In the hypothetical circumstances that the hon. Gentleman has described to the House, if the Chair was of a contrary opinion, it would rule accordingly.

Amendment proposed: No. 40, in page 2, line 11, leave out 'which'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division——

Mr. William Ross *(seated and covered)*: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Although I would not wish to challenge your ruling, may I draw your attention to the statement in "Erskine May" about Standing Order No. 39 —originally No. 38—which was introduced to avoid frivolous Divisions. Tonight's Divisions cannot be described as frivolous, because the matters under discussion are of considerable importance. In the light of that, I wonder whether you might care to reconsider whether further Divisions should take place in the normal fashion?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the last occasion that the Question was put I ruled from the Chair that in my opinion the Division was unnecessarily claimed. As it is manifest that the view of the House is overwhelmingly on one side, there seems no point in taking up the time of the House and of hon. Members when the outcome is so obviously predictable. That is the sense in which Standing Order No. 39 was conceived.

Mr. Skinner: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. Gentleman must be seated and covered.

Mr. Skinner *(seated and covered)*: I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that you failed to take into account the fact that in the Division Lobby we had nearly half the Ulster Unionist party, about one third of the SLD, two thirds of the Welsh nationalists and all the Scottish National party. Those parties are all recognised in the House. We should get to the point that those people are being deprived of the opportunity to be properly represented in the Lobbies in the form that they have taken tonight and that is a negation of parliamentary democracy. On the basis of the representation of those minority parties, I would ask you, Mr. Deputy Speaker seriously——

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 41, in page 2, line 12, after 'dangerous', insert; and

(b) in the case of a firearm, was not lawfully on sale in Great Britain in substantial numbers at any time before 1988,'.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I shall now respond to the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner). In normal circumstances, after a Division, the Tellers come to the Table and announce the result. The result is not split into

[Mr. Deputy Speaker]

parties, but is given as the numbers taking part in the Division. That is what the Chair must have regard to when putting the Question.

Mr. Ray Powell (Ogmore): Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What were the numbers taken for the last Division?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: They were 166 to 31.

Mr. Frank Cook: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I should like to know how it is possible to determine that those in favour were 166? I wish to challenge the vote.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I beg the hon. Gentleman's pardon and that of the House. That was the last time that we had a Division when Tellers announced the result to the Chair. The Clerk has the number of Noes for the last occasion. However, that is irrelevant, because this is a matter for the Chair. The number voting Aye was significantly greater than those who voted No. I hope that no one in the House will express a view contrary to that.

Mr. Frank Cook: You, Mr. Deputy Speaker, informed the House that "Erskine May" contained the necessity of a record to be kept of those who had voted against. We are simply asking that that information be imparted to the House on each occasion. Is there no obligation on the Chair or on the Table—*[Interruption.]* If "Erskine May" contains an obligation that the operation be carried out, surely there must be an obligation that the result of that operation be reported to the House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I have explained to the hon. Gentleman and to the House that these are matters for the discretion and judgment of the Chair. I have exercised my discretion and my judgment.

Mr. Peter Pike (Burnley): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is it not a fact that the Government have put you in the difficult position of having to exercise your discretion this evening? We are debating a Government Bill and the Government amendments to that Bill could not be debated because of the Government's guillotine.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman is seeking to reopen a debate which has already taken place, which has reached its conclusion, and on which the House has voted. The House voted on this matter yesterday—or today, by our conventions—and came to a decision. Under the terms of the motion which the House passed, I am required to put the Question on these matters without further debate.

Mr. Pike: I accept your ruling, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I seek your guidance. Would not the Government assist you if they were to withdraw the remaining amendments?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. Gentleman says that he is seeking my guidance. My guidance to him is not to pursue that matter any further, because it is irrelevant.

Mr. Cryer: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Am I correct in thinking that, when I earlier raised the question of names not being recorded under the Standing Order No. 39 procedure, you stated that numbers would be recorded? My recollection is that you made that response to satisfy my point that it was a dereliction of our democracy not to have those names recorded. On the last Division, no numbers were recorded for either side. I specifically recall that you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, said that the number of objectors would be recorded, but that did not happen.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I hope that I did not mislead the House. Names are not taken but the numbers are recorded by the Clerks and are recorded in the *Journal* of the House. We ought to get on.

Mr. Harold McCusker (Upper Bann): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On the basis of the remarks you have just made, am I not entitled to know by how many I lost the last vote? On the last occasion, 126 Members rose from their seats; if the Clerk did not count them, I can advise him of that fact. I imagine that between now and 4 o'clock a larger or smaller number of Members than that may rise from their seats. May the House be given an assurance that the Clerks will count those Members each time they rise?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Under our Standing Orders, the hon. Gentleman is not entitled to know.

Mr. McCusker: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You said that the number would be recorded in the *Journal*.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: As I said earlier, the minority vote —the number of those Members voting against the motion —will be recorded in the *Journal*. However, under Standing Orders the hon. Gentleman is not entitled to know now the numbers who voted either for or against on the last occasion that the Question was put.

Mr. Molyneaux: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is it not a fact that at some point the number of Members voting for or against will be recorded in the *Journal*? If so, with respect, is sufficient time being given to the Table to count the numbers voting on each side of the House?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Only those Members voting against a motion—the minority—will be counted and recorded in the *Journal*.

Mr. Bermingham: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to raise two points of order. The first is that the number against the motion in the last vote was not counted and recorded. I raise a second point, Mr. Deputy Speaker——

3 am

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I think that that is incorrect. The Clerk counted the number who voted against the last time that the Question was put to the House.

Amendment proposed: No. 41, in page 2, line 12, after 'dangerous', insert

'; and

(b) in the case of a firearm, was not lawfully on sale in Great Britain in substantial numbers at any time before 1988,'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the*

Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. Frank Cook: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Am I right in understanding that it is out of order for Members to take part in debates if they are outside the Bar or in the Under Gallery? If that is so, how is it possible for hon. Members in those areas to take part in the Division?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am not aware that they voted. The fact that someone stands, sits down or does something else beyond the Bar of the House is not a matter for me and is not taken into account in our proceedings unless it interferes with or disrupts those proceedings.

Mr. Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is it possible for us to be told as we go along how many Members are voting against the motion? I would like to know whether we are winning.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I want to be helpful, but I think that it might facilitate our proceedings if the hon. Gentleman sought the advice of the Clerks as to the numbers who have voted at the end of each Division.

Mr. William Ross: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You will recall the previous point raised about the hon. Members standing outside the Bar of the House. You will have noted that when you last called a Division——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for raising the matter, because it gives me the opportunity to suggest that hon. Members beyond the Bar of the House who are not taking part in our proceedings should not presume to do so. They are only creating confusion, and I would urge them either to leave the House or to take no part.

Clause 2

RE-DEFINITION OF EXEMPTED SHOT GUNS AND SHOT GUN AMMUNITION

Amendment proposed: No. 42, in page 2, line 27, leave out from 'which' to 'gun' in line 32 and insert—

'(i) has a barrel not less than 24 inches in length and does not have any barrel with a bore exceeding 2 inches in diameter;

(ii) either has no magazine or has a non-detachable magazine incapable of holding more than two cartridges; and

(iii) is not a revolver'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division—

Mr. Salmond *(seated and covered):* On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As I understand the procedure, you have to use your discretion and judgment in determining whether a Division is necessary. Presumably you do that on the basis of the noise on each side of the House. How can you differentiate between the noise made by hon. Members in the Chamber and that made by those outside the Chamber?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I use not only my ears but my eyes.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 43, in page 2, line 32, at end insert—

'(2A) After subsection (3) there shall be inserted—

"(3A) A gun which has been adapted to have such a magazine as is mentioned in subsection (3)(a)(ii) above shall not be regarded as falling within that provision unless the magazine bears a mark approved by the Secretary of State for denoting that fact and that mark has been made, and the adaptation has been certified in writing as having been carried out in a manner approved by him, either by one of the two companies mentioned in section 58(1) of this Act or by such other person as may be approved by him for that purpose.".'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it: and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. Cryer: I spy Strangers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. We are in the middle of a series of decisions, and I am not prepared to accept that motion.

Amendment proposed: No. 44, in page 2, line 33, leave out subsection (3).—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it: and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4

TRANSFERS OF SHOT GUNS

3.15 am

Amendment proposed: No. 24, in page 3, line 12, leave out from beginning to 'to' and insert

'This section applies where a person—

(a) sells, lets on hire or gives a shot gun; or

(b) lends a shot gun for a period of more than forty-eight hours,'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it: and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 25, in page 3, line 17, leave out '(a)' and insert '(1A)'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it: and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 26, in page 3, line 20, leave out 'forty-eight hours' and insert 'seven days'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division—

Mr. William Ross *(seated and covered):* On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It will be within your recollection that your colleague in the Chair drew attention to the fact that certain hon. Members were standing when the votes were taken although they were beyond the Bar. I have been watching carefully and have noticed that the hon. Member for Staffordshire, South-East (Mr. Lightbown), who is at present beyond the Bar; together with one of his colleagues directly in front of him, and several Members on the Back Benches, have been standing every time. Is that in order? Surely they are beyond the Bar and cannot vote.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: As my predecessor in the Chair said, it would be helpful, in the fairly unusual situation that we are going through, if hon. Members were actually inside or outside the Chamber. That would make it easier, especially for the Clerks, to take the count of those who do not support my decisions.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 27, in page 3 line 26, leave out '(b)' and insert '(1B)'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 28, in page 3, line 26, leave out 'forty-eight hours' and insert 'seven days'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

3.30 am

Amendment proposed: No. 29, in page 3, line 29 leave out '(1)' and insert '(1A) or (1B)'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division—

Mr. William Ross *(seated and covered):* On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am getting to like this hat. We are having great difficulty in hearing which amendment you are calling, because of the noise. Would it be possible for you to turn down the volume on the Government side of the House or to turn up the volume of your loudspeaker so that we can hear more clearly?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am glad to respond to the hon. Gentleman's request.

Mr. Ross: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Which amendment are we on now?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No. 29.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 6

SHORTENING OF BARRELS

Amendment proposed: No. 45, in page 4, line 10 leave out 'revolving magazine' and insert 'revolver'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 8

FIREARMS DEALERS

Amendment proposed: No. 51, in page 4, line 38, at end insert

'Or as an essential part of another trade, business or profession.'—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and Mr. Deputy Speaker *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 46, in page 4, line 44, leave out subsection (4).—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and Mr. Deputy Speaker *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 52, in page 5, line 5, leave out from 'that' to end of line 6 and insert

'each entry made after the coming into force of this subsection will be available for inspection for at least five years from the date on which it was made.'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and Mr. Deputy Speaker *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 11

VISITORS' PERMITS

3.45 am

Amendment proposed: No. 53, in page 6, line 28, leave out 'will have' and insert

'has a good reason for having'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 54, in page 6, line 30, leave out from 'ammunition,' to end of line 31 and insert

'for purchasing or acquiring it, while he is a visitor to Great Britain;'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 55, in page 6, line 32, leave out 'will have' and insert

'has a good reason for having'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 56, in page 6, leave out line 34, and insert

'for purchasing or acquiring it, while he is such a visitor.'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 57 in page 6, line 36, leave out from 'believe' to 'that' in line 38 and insert—

'(a) that his possession of the weapons or ammunition in question would represent a danger to the public safety or to the peace; or

(b)'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being chailenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

4 am

Amendment proposed: No. 58, in page 7, line 3, at end insert—

'(5A) A single application (a "group application") may be made under this section for the grant of not more than twenty permits to persons specified in the application if it is shown to the satisfaction of the chief officer of police that their purpose in having the weapons in question in their possession while visiting Great Britain is—

(a) using them for sporting purposes on the same private premises during the same period; or

(b) participating in the same competition or other event or the same series of competitions or other events.'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 59, in page 7, line 5, leave out from beginning to 'shall' in line 7 and insert

'on the grant of a permit under this section a fee of £12 except that where six or more permits are granted on a group application the fee shall be £60 in respect of those permits taken together.

(6A) Subsection (6) above'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 12

SHOT GUNS ACQUIRED FOR EXPORT

Amendment proposed: No. 60, in page 7, line 23, at end insert—

'(1A) A person may, without holding a firearm certificate, purchase from a registered firearms dealer a firearm to which section 1 of the principal Act applies if—

(a) that person has not been in Great Britain for more than thirty days in the preceding twelve months; and

(b) the firearm is purchased for the purpose only of being exported from Great Britain without first coming into that person's possession.'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 61, in page 7, line 24, after 'gun', insert 'or other firearm'.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 62, in page 7, line 25, after '(1), insert 'or (1A)'.—*Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 13

FIREARMS IN MUSEUMS

Amendment proposed, No. 68, in page 8, line 1, after 'firearms', insert 'and ammunition'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 15

PAYMENTS IN RESPECT OF PROHIBITED WEAPONS

4.15 am

Amendment proposed: No. 63, in page 8, line 23, leave out from 'them' to end of line 25 and insert

'; or

(b) which before that date they had contracted to acquire and were entitled to have in their possession on or after that date by virtue of such certificates held by them,

and the possession of which will become, or has become, unlawful by virtue of section 1(2) above.'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 16

FIREARMS CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Amendment proposed: No. 148, in page 8, line 27, leave out from 'a' to end of line 35 and insert

'firearms consultative committee consisting of a chairman and not less than twelve other members appointed by the Secretary of State, being persons appearing to him to have knowledge and experience of one or more of the following matters—

(a) the possession, use or keeping of, or transactions in, firearms;

(b) weapon technology; and

(c) the administration or enforcement of the provisions of the principal Act, the Firearms Act 1982 and this Act.'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 149, in page 8, line 36, leave out 'Consultative'—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 150, in page 8, line 39, leave out from 'the' to end of line 40 and insert

'committee may resign by notice in writing to the Secretary of State; and the chairman may by such a notice resign his office as such.'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 151, in page 8, line 41, leave out from beginning to end of line 11 on page 9 and insert—

'(4) it shall be the function of the committee—

(a) to keep under review the working of the provisions mentioned in subsection (1)(c) above and to make to the Secretary of State such recommendation as the committee may from time to time think necessary for the improvement of the working of those provisions;

(b) if requested by the Secretary of State to do so, to make proposals for amending those provisions; and

(c) to advise the Secretary of State on any other matter relating to those provisions which he may refer to the committee.

(5) The committee shall in each year make a report on its activities to the Secretary of State who shall lay copies of the report before Parliament.'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

4.30 am

Amendment proposed: No. 152, in page 9, line 12, leave out from 'shall' to end of line 13 and insert

'cease to exist at the end of the period of five years beginning with the day on which this section comes into force unless the Secretary of State provides by an order made by statutory instrument for it to continue thereafter, but no such order shall continue the committee for more than three years at a time.'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 17

MINOR AND CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS AND REPEALS

Amendment proposed: No. 64, in page 9, line 14, at beginning insert—

'( ) In section 4 of the principal Act (conversion of weapons) in subsection (4), for the words "converted contrary to subsection (3) above" there shall be substituted the words "converted as mentioned in subsection (3) above".'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 65, in page 9, line 14, leave out 'the principal' and insert 'that'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 66, in page 9, line 18, at end insert—

'(1A) In sections 13(1)(c), 40(4) and 49(1) of that Act (which refer to officers of police) for the words "an officer of police", wherever occurring, there shall be substituted the words "a constable".'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it: and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 30, in page 9, line 31, leave out from beginning to 'there' in line 33 and insert

'In subsection (1) of section 42 of that Act (transferor of firearm to which section 1 applies to give notice of transaction to a chief officer of police) for the words "forty-eight hours" there shall be substituted the words "seven days" and after that subsection'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it: and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

4.45 am

Amendment proposed: No. 67, in page 9, line 37 at end insert—

'(4A) In Part I of Schedule 6 to that Act (penalties), in the entry relating to section 9(3) (false statement to obtain permit for auction of firearms) for columns 3 and 4 there shall be substituted the following—

"Summary	6 months or a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale; or both.".'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That *the amendment be made:*—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 19

INTERPRETATION AND SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS

Amendment proposed: No. 47, in page 10, line 12, leave out from 'Act' to 'containing' in line 13 and insert

'"revolver", in relation to a smooth-bore gun, means a gun'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That *the amendment be made:*—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly*

called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 48, in page 10, line 14, at end insert—

'(2A) In section 57(4) of the principal Act after the definition of "registered" there shall be inserted—

"'rifle' includes carbine;",'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 20

SHORT TITLE, CITATION, COMMENCEMENT AND EXTENT

Amendment proposed: No. 21, in page 10, line 35, leave out

'This Act shall come into force on'

and insert

'Except for section *(Corresponding provisions for Northern Ireland)* and this section the provisions of this Act shall not come into force until'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 22, in page 10, line 38, at beginning insert

'Except for section *(Corresponding provisions for Northern Ireland)* and this section'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

SCHEDULE

FIREARMS IN MUSEUMS

5 am

Amendment proposed: No. 69, in page 11, line 12, after 'firearms', insert 'and ammunition'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it: and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 70, in page 11, line 16, after 'weapons', insert 'and ammunition'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 71, in page 11, line 21, after 'firearms', insert 'and ammunition'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 72, in page 11, line 24, leave out from 'securing' to the end of line 25 and insert 'the safe custody of the firearms and ammunition in question'.—*[Mr Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 73, in page 12, leave out lines 33 to 40.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 74, in page 12, line 42, leave out 'or under sub-paragraph (4)(b)'.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division—

Mr. Tim Smith (Beaconsfield) *(seated and covered):* On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I wonder whether, before we reach amendment No. 23, you could give me some advice because I do not know how to vote on it. Do you have any information about why we should leave out:

"The Museum of Naval Ordnance, Priddy's Yard"?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That is not a matter for the Chair.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed,*

and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.

Amendment agreed to.

5.15 am

Amendment proposed: No. 23, in page 13, line 23, leave out

'The Museum of Naval Ordnance, Priddy's Yard'.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division, and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *stated that he thought that the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessarily claimed, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it.*

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The House will wish to know that I am prepared to allow a Division on Third Reading.

Question put, That the Bill be now read the Third time:—

The House divided: Ayes 154, Noes 12.

Division No. 341] **[5.18 am**

AYES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowis, John
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Burt, Alistair
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
Maclean, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Renton, Tim
Riddick, Graham
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walden, George
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wood, Timothy

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

NOES

Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Beggs, Roy
Cryer, Bob
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kennedy, Charles
McCusker, Harold
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Salmond, Alex
Skinner, Dennis
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Alan Meale and
Mr. Andrew Welsh

Question accordingly agreed to.

Bill read the Third time, and passed.

Takeover Bids

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Alan Howarth.]*

5.29 am

Mr. John Greenway (Ryedale): I doubt whether there can have been many occasions in recent years when an hon. Member who has been lucky enough to raise an issue on the Adjournment for the first time has had such a large and supportive audience, has chosen to discuss a subject that has dominated the day's national news, has had to wait such a long time and has witnessed such bizarre scenes while preparing for the debate. I apologise to my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs for the fact that he has had to stay up all night. I hope he will find, after my speech, that it has been worth while.

As the House knows, early today my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry announced that, following advice from the Director General of Fair Trading, Sir Gordon Borrie, there were, in his view, no grounds for the Government to intervene in the Nestlé bid and the 29·9 per cent. Suchard interest in Rowntree, and that he would not therefore refer the matter to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

This decision is a cause of deep regret to many of my constituents and to many people in Yorkshire and the rest of the country. It is also a matter of considerable regret to me that I find myself so greatly at odds with my right hon. and noble Friend, for whom I have such great admiration.

I and my hon. Friends, whose support this morning I much appreciate, find it difficult to accept that there is no case for referring the Rowntree issue to the MMC on grounds of lack of reciprocity. In his speech to the Retail Consortium early this morning, the Secretary of State admitted that the London stock exchange would not accept the restrictive approach of Swiss companies.

I ask the House to consider the following points. Foreign companies cannot take over listed Swiss companies. Practically no Swiss-quoted companies have been acquired by non-Swiss companies of any nationality in recent years. No quoted Swiss companies have been the subject of hostile takeovers in recent years by predators of even Swiss nationality—let alone by United Kingdom or European ones.

Quoted Swiss companies can defend themselves in a way that is not possible for United Kingdom-listed companies. They can simply refuse to register the shares acquired by an unwelcome shareholder. United Kingdom stock exchange rules prevent a United Kingdom company from taking such defensive action. Almost all quoted Swiss companies do not allow non-Swiss shareholders to be registered with significant shareholdings. With rules enforced by Swiss banks, the main stockbrokers in Switzerland, these companies have adopted anti-foreign shareholder policies which allow them to refuse to sell registered shares in these companies to foreigners.

Early today the Secretary of State suggested that

"nothing in our law prevents a company, with the consent of its shareholders, making it virtually impossible to have a hostile takeover."

He mentioned several companies that have ended up in that position.

But the Secretary of State must know that these companies are in the minority; they are very much the exception. In most cases their rules were formulated under original private ownership and no major United Kingdom company would have a realistic chance of persuading the financial institutions to underwrite share issues on Swiss terms. But that is not all. The real point that the Secretary of State has not answered is that to which I have already referred: Swiss companies can refuse to register shares. Reciprocity is not so much about voting rights as about transferability. Public companies in the United Kingdom cannot refuse to register; in Switzerland the right of refusal to register is the everyday creed.

The DTI Blue Paper on mergers policy, published only two months ago, states in paragraph 2.26:

"There are instances in which foreign ownership of a UK company may raise particular concerns, and in such cases the power to make a reference to the MMC is available for use. One consideration that may be relevant in some cases is the extent to which UK companies have reciprocal freedom to acquire companies based in the home country of the prospective acquirer."

If ever there was a case for a reference on grounds of lack of reciprocity, the Swiss interest in Rowntree is it. Perhaps my hon. Friend can tell the House which other cases or circumstances the Government had in mind when drafting that recommendation.

The attitude of the Swiss Government towards those matters also deserves further scrutiny and consideration. The Secretary of State confirmed earlier today that,

"at that level—government intervention—there are no barriers to British firms taking over Swiss firms."

It is my understanding that, on 23 February 1983, the Federal Government of Switzerland recommended changes in Swiss company law which supported the proposition that the board of a Swiss company should be free to refuse to register foreigners as registered shareholders. I understand that those recommendations and concerns about the protectionist position the Swiss firms have led the Federal Government to promulgate a review of the regulations. That surely shows that the Swiss authorities may well have intervened.

Referral of the Nestlé bid to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Selby (Mr. Alison) suggested earlier today, would have sent a very clear signal to the Swiss authorities that the protectionist regimes of the public quoted companies in Switzerland are not acceptable. It is a lost opportunity to create the pressure needed to even out the ground rules. I am not alone in taking that view. On 11 May, my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary told the Swiss Government:

"Swiss companies expect to make takeovers in our market. Their Government must ensure British firms can make takeovers in theirs. We want the single market to be an open market. But if the away teams are going to play on a level pitch when they come to the Community we shall want to see them levelling their pitch too for the return match."

As it is, by not referring the Rowntree issue to the MMC, the Secretary of State has sent a signal to the Swiss not to mend their ways, but to prepare for more predatory takeovers. Other non-EEC-based companies will have felt encouraged to take similar action.

It does not require much imagination to envisage that Nestlé or Suchard, having lost the battle for Rowntree, might then bid successfully for Cadbury. How could the United Kingdom Government or the European Commission prevent a future Nestlé-Rowntree and then Suchard-Cadbury merger? By that means, we could yet pass from six major confectionery companies in Europe at

present down to five, then quickly to four and even then to three, all outside the control of either this Government or the European Commission.

After confectionery firms, what else may be at risk? The issue has certainly exposed opportunities for other major takeovers. The food and drinks industries look vulnerable, as much comment in the media yesterday has suggested and has been reflected in share price movements. In my own profession, insurance, which has always been international in outlook, fears are being expressed and, without any intervention by or approach from me, representations were made on news of this debate that the leading position of major United Kingdom insurers to take advantage of the opportunities of 1992 has been fully recognised abroad. Those issues must be reviewed urgently. The Leisner review did not address them. A referral of the Rowntree issue would have been the ideal opportunity to do so.

I fully recognise and appreciate the tremendous benefits that inward instment and acquisitions overseas are playing in the spectacular recovery of the United Kingdom economy. It is a recovery which only the policies that this Government have pursued could have brought about, but there are occasions when the questions raised are sufficiently important to warrant consideration of other interests without running the risks of damaging other investment opportunities. That must be why the policy on mergers provides the opportunity for referral on grounds other than competition.

I share my right hon. and noble Friend's belief that stock markets are better judges of the viability of mergers than Governments and politicians, but, as my hon. Friend the Member for Boothferry (Mr. Davis) outlined so clearly in an article in *The Guardian* yesterday, to work for the public good, capital markets must be efficient. Therein lies the virtue and importance of reciprocity. Any company which is the subject of a bid from a less efficient company can counter-bid or look to a white knight to do so. Investor interest will always bring the efficient company out on top, but this option is not open to Rowntree. If the control of Rowntree is lost to Switzerland, it will be lost for ever. That is surely the acid test of riciprocity.

Throughout the country the advertising hoardings show Sir John Harvey-Jones, the former chairman of ICI, declaring of 1992:

"History is in the making."

Those words have a hollow ring about them in York this morning. Is it too late? Can Rowntree be saved? The Rowntree board must decide how to respond to the Nestlé and Suchard interest and attempt to convince shareholders of its arguments. That is the board's job and it must do that.

However, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry could yet intervene. The Suchard bid, which it has announced it will launch shortly, must now be considered by the Office of Fair Trading. Unlike Nestlé, Suchard has no factories in the United Kingdom and no history of investment here. As a consequence, it has no employees in the United Kingdom. Suchard is under private control. On both national interest and reciprocity grounds, the Suchard bid sould be considered by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. I urge the Secretary of State to make such a reference.

5.40 am

Mr. Conal Gregory (York): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway) on securing this debate. It is most timely for the House to consider the matter further. Even at this late hour, I welcome the continued support of my hon. Friend the Member for Pudsey (Sir G. Shaw) and my right hon. Friend the Member for Selby (Mr. Alison) who have joined us on this occasion.

In recent years Rowntree has nurtured a European seed. Its brands in mainland Europe are successful and gaining momentum. We should consider that background as we build towards 1992. Now a Swiss predator has threatened that European drive and determination. Although Rowntree is well placed for the magic date of 1992, it cannot effectively stop a hostile bid from a non-European Community company.

At this stage, I should ask several questions related to reciprocity. The Rowntree case shows the probability that successful British companies well prepared for 1992 will become the targets of foreign companies that are less well prepared. We have seen and are seeing a struggle for a major confectionery company. A pharmaceutical company may be next.

It is true that red tape is being cut away, but at the same time my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry is showing the green light for takeovers. That trend will be reinforced because aggressive bidders know that they are unlikely to see successful British companies ripe to be plucked elsewhere in the European Community.

If we follow the analogy used by my hon. Friend the Member for Ryedale, and if the bid from the Swiss predator is successful and the American bid for Cadbury succeeds, some 80 per cent. of the United Kingdom confectionery industry will be taken out of European Community hands. The Swiss are likely to be particularly aggressive because of their concern about exclusion from the European Community, but they will continue to protect their own companies from aggressive purchase by foreigners.

Our cri de coeur is that the Swiss are not playing cricket. They are not playing at fair and free competition. We want the freedom of the skies in Europe and freedom in manufacturing industry. We also want fairness and that is not contained in the Government's policy.

When my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs replies, I hope that he will tell us where Britain stands with regard to its mergers policy. Why is the United Kingdom, together with France, delaying signing the European Community directive? If that had been signed, the European Commission could have intervened in the past week. How seriously does my right hon. and noble Friend consider the lack of reciprocity? I have yet to hear of any one from Britain or elsewhere in the European Community being successful at buying into a Swiss company.

We must have answers to these points and to the matter of the referral to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission because that has an employment aspect in Britain.

5.44 am

Mr. Michael Alison (Selby): I am obliged to my hon. Friend the Member for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway) for

[Mr. Michael Alison]

allowing me to take up some of the precious time of his Adjournment debate to speak in support of Rowntree on behalf of the many Rowntree employees who live in Selby.

I believe that it is perverse, if not inept, for the Government to advocate strongly open markets as the best means of encouraging efficiency and jobs in Britain—the Secretary of State advocated that today. The Government then recognised, however, that Swiss companies tend to be more restrictive than ours. They further recognised that Swiss companies appear to be wavering slightly on open markets—we believe that that attitude scarcely serves the Swiss economy well.

The Government have not followed the logic of their argument, however, and they have not exacted a penalty for that waywardness by closing the doors on Nestlé until the Swiss open their doors to us. Such a contradictory attitude on the part of our Government is unsatisfactory.

I fear that the restrictive Swiss, of whom we all disapprove in this context, will be the beneficiaries and the free-trading Britons will be the losers. That is the paradox. Above all, Rowntree will be the victim of the Government's error of judgment.

I hope that the Minister will take to heart the alternative route forward—for which my hon. Friend the Member for Ryedale eloquently argued—and, even at this late hour, give Rowntree a second chance.

5.46 am

Sir Giles Shaw (Pudsey): I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway) for allowing me to make a brief contribution to the debate. I must declare an interest as a past employee of 18 years' standing in Rowntree.

I cannot accept that national issues are not connected with the bid and I believe that they should be addressed. A mechanism for redress has not been used—that is, the rapid progress that has now been made in providing advice from the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Such advice is now available within three months.

There are three issues at stake. First, I find it extraordinary that a company can make a bid of 14·9 per cent. and an offer for Rowntree of £2·1 billion. That offer immediately releases the bid of 14·9 per cent. up to 30 per cent. Rowntree is unable to defend itself under stock exchange regulations because it cannot provide the bid document from Nestlé and is therefore unable to offer a full defence. That cannot be right or fair.

Secondly, I do not understand why it is believed that the European dimension has been included in the assessments made by my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State. We know nothing about it. What is the European dimension? It should be publicised and we should know how it works.

Thirdly, the public are most confused about our monopolies and mergers policy. They do not understand it. They believe that that mechanism should be used from time to time. They do not understand why it is not used in many of the operations considered by the Department of Trade and Industry. The rarity of its use is the wrong way to go about things.

We should have a clear signalling system, which would not worry capital flows, but would merely make it obvious that, from time to time, Britain has a populist, nationalist case to argue. That case should be argued in the House.

5.48 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs (Mr. Francis Maude): I understand the anxiety that is felt by my right hon. and hon. Friends. Rowntree has been a topical subject for a month or more. It was timely, in terms of dates, for my hon. Friend the Member for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway) to draw the Adjournment debate tonight, although it has not proved timely in terms of the hour of the debate. It gives us the opportunity, however, to consider some of the wider aspects connected with the bid and with the decision that my right hon. and noble Friend announced yesterday morning.

My hon. Friend the Member for Pudsey (Sir G. Shaw) raised specific questions with which I shall deal first. He mentioned stock exchange rules, which he feels have prejudiced Rowntree's position. I shall look at the point he raised and consider whether there are things to be done. He says that we ought to make clearer our policy on mergers. We have done so in a Blue Paper that we published two months ago.

My hon. Friend says that we should be more ready to use the tool of a reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Every year in the United Kingdom there are hundreds of mergers that qualify for reference under the asset test or the market share test. A tiny proportion of those mergers are referred for a full inquiry. That proportion has not become more tiny under my right hon. and noble Friend's regime. We are not slow to make a reference when there is a clear public interest in doing so, and a number of recent cases illustrate that.

I have to say to my right hon. Friend the Member for Selby (Mr. Alison) that a reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission is not to be used as a penalty against a company making a bid. It is to be used to inquire whether the public interest is adversely affected. Unless there is a possibility of an adverse public interest finding, it would be cynical for us simply to meet a populist demand. If a properly funded case is made, it has been shown that we are not slow to respond, but, in the absence of a case being fully made, it would be cynical to use a major tool of competition policy in that way.

The decision that my right hon. and noble Friend made and announced earlier does not by any means mean that the die is cast and that Nestlé will necessarily take over Rowntree nor that by his decision my right hon. and noble Friend is voicing any preference about the future ownership of Rowntree. His decision means only that there are no grounds for intervention in the proper working of the market in this case. It is now up to the Rowntree shareholders, as it has been throughout from the launching of the bid, to make their own decision whether to accept an offer in the light of future market developments. That decision is made entirely in accordance with the Government's policy on mergers, restated in the Blue Paper earlier this year.

I turn to the issue that my hon. Friend the Member for Ryedale mentioned at the outset, the Suchard bid for Rowntree. As he asserts, Sir Gordon Borrie will consider it and advise my right hon. and noble Friend. None of my

hon. Friends will expect me to give a preview either of what that advice will be—because I cannot possibly know—or of what my right hon. and noble Friend's decision will be following that. The proper statutory procedures will have to be followed and we shall have to wait and see.

There were no competition issues, and no one seriously has suggested that there are. The market shares, even after a successful bid for Rowntree by Nestlé, would not be such as to cause anxiety from that point of view. The case has rested on reciprocity, which at first glance is an appealing concept. It seems unfair to us that companies in other countries which have protected, bid-proof share structures should be able to buy shares in our companies on the open market with no form of counter-action available to UK companies. Our sense of fair play, of playing the game, of our playing cricket while others do not, is offended. It is easy to see why, but the reality is rather more complex.

Under Swiss law there are no powers for the Swiss or foreigners to block takeovers of industrial companies. So, at the level of Government intervention, there are no barriers to British firms taking over Swiss firms. Indeed, in terms of legal powers, the United Kingdom barriers are higher. As has been pointed out, Swiss companies may make themselves proof against unwelcome takeovers, whether by Swiss or foreign companies—as my hon. Friend was fair enough to point out—by restrictions on certain types of shareholding.

Equally, there is nothing in United Kingdom company law that prevents a company, with the consent of its shareholders, from making a similar arrangement. There are many British public and quoted companies having differential share structures which make it difficult for takeovers effectively to be mounted. Those are not just accidents of history. Only this month Sotheby's issued shares which represented 25 per cent. of the company's capital but only 3 per cent. of its voting rights.

Companies do not even need to go to those lengths. There are many other companies in this country which are proof against takeovers—the large mutual institutions, building societies and private companies are not quoted—and many public companies have large blocks of shares held in family hands. That also makes them, by the nature of their share structure, proof against hostile takeovers.

There are two points in particular that I wish to make. First, the issue of reciprocity has become synonymous with foreign takeovers of United Kingdom companies and the possibility, or not, of the converse. Much has been made of the foreign nature of Nestlé as a bidding company. However, we must remember that Nestlé has been manufacturing in the United Kingdom for more than 120 years. It employs more people in the United Kingdom than it does in Switzerland. Its product range includes such "foreign" products as Carnation milk and Branston pickle. The idea that Nestlé is a company charging in from outside with no knowledge of the British market is plainly absurd.

In general, in the case of Switzerland and of other countries—such as Germany, which has restrictive share structures—to think of reciprocity as something that arises only in the foreign context is to misconstrue the facts. Swiss companies are often structured to protect themselves against any form of hostile takeover, whether domestic or foreign. In other words, those arrangements are just as applicable to Swiss predators as they are to foreign ones.

Secondly, both the Swiss and United Kingdom systems of structuring companies are rooted in culture rather than in law. Both Swiss and United Kingdom company law is essentially permissive, allowing companies to structure themselves as they see fit. We have opted for an open stock market that allows for contested bids, but the Swiss culture is different. It gives greater emphasis to companies being able to protect themselves from hostile bids. However, foreign takeovers of Swiss companies do occur, but only on a friendly basis. We simply look differently at mergers.

We believe that the United Kingdom systems brings us considerable benefits. My hon. Friend pointed out that there is considerable public debate in Switzerland about whether the system which that country has followed brings the greatest benefits. The fact that the Swiss are re-examining that aspect suggests that there are doubts about it. It is for each country to pursue its internal policy. We have made a judgment that our system serves our national interest best, and I have no doubt that that judgment is fundamentally correct.

The question of the single European market in 1992 has been raised. How should we approach it? We say that the competition authorities must judge in the first instance what is the market that is applicable. Is it a local market, a regional market, a national market, or an international market? We must consider what are the market shares, what will be the ease of entry, and how that will affect the issues of competition. Those aspects were considerd in this case as in any other. We must make sure that we maintain our open markets. They have brought us great benefits and I have no doubt that they will continue to do so in the future.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at two minutes to Six o'clock on Thursday 26 May.

House of Commons

Thursday 26 May 1988

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

Royal Assent

Mr. Speaker: I have to notify the House, in accordance with the Royal Assent Act 1967, that the Queen has signified Her Royal Assent to the following Acts:

1. Employment Act 1988
2. Scottish Development Agency (Oban South Pier) Act 1988

PRIVATE BUSINESS

LONDON REGIONAL TRANSPORT BILL *(By Order)*

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question [10 December], That the Bill be now considered.

Debate further adjourned till Thursday 9 June

TEIGNMOUTH QUAY COMPANY BILL *(By Order)*

YORK CITY COUNCIL BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

CARDIFF BAY BARRAGE BILL *(By Order)*

FALMOUTH CONTAINER TERMINAL BILL *(By Order)*

NORTH KILLINGHOLME CARGO TERMINAL BILL

(By Order)

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE TOWN MOOR BILL *(Lords)*

(By Order)

Orders for Second Reading read.

To be read a Second time upon Thursday 9 June

ASSOCIATED BRITISH PORTS (NO. 2) BILL *(By Order)*

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question [11 May], That the Bill be now read a Second time.

Debate further adjourned till Thursday 9 June.

Oral Answers to Questions

NORTHERN IRELAND

Harland and Wolff

1. **Mr. Callaghan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he last met representatives of Harland and Wolff; and if he will make a statement.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Peter Viggers): My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State last met the chairman of Harland and Wolff on 30 March. I most recently met the chairman on 10 May, when we discussed progress and the company's forward plans.

Mr. Callaghan: I thank the Minister for that answer. What discussions has he had with representatives of the Harland and Wolff shipyard about the Ultimate Dream cruise liner project? What is his thinking on the matter, given its crucial significance to the future of the yard and Northern Ireland manufacturing bases?

Mr. Viggers: I accept that it is an extremely important project for Harland and Wolff and for Northern Ireland generally. It is, however, at a conceptual design stage and has not been comprehensively costed. When we receive the costings we shall give the project careful and sympathetic consideration. It is too early to say what the Government's decision will be.

Mr. Peter Robinson: Can the Minister think of any other shipbuilding nation that levels abuse and insults at its potential customers? Does the Minister have any remarks for those—sad to say, some of his colleagues are among them—who try to equate the shipowner Ravi Tikkoo with John De Lorean? Has he or his Department taken any steps to assure that shipowner that his proposal will be given a fair run?

Mr. Viggers: I am baffled by the hon. Gentleman's remarks. The relationship between the Government and Harland and Wolff is cordial. I am not aware of any comment derogatory to Mr. Tikkoo being made by the Government or any of my colleagues. From everything that I have heard, he has an outstanding business reputation.

I congratulate the hon. Gentleman on securing the opportunity to raise further issues relating to Harland and Wolff in the Adjournment debate tomorrow, and I look forward to his contribution.

Mr. Beggs: Will the Minister confirm, for those who doubt the ability of Harland and Wolff to cope with such a major order, if it is fortunate enough to obtain it, that it is willing and has the expertise and co-operation between management and work force and that redundancies have slimmed down the yard to make it one of the most efficient in the United Kingdom? Will he reiterate his Department's willingness to give such support as may be required to ensure the continuance of shipbuilding in Belfast for the benefit of Northern Ireland and many companies on the mainland, which have written to those of us who have an

interest in the matter seeking our support to ensure that their work forces are maintained in employment on the mainland?

Mr. Viggers: I welcome the recent flexibility in the work force at Harland and Wolff. While we have been left in no doubt about the project from the representations made by union leaders, politicians and others in Northern Ireland, it would be premature to comment, as we have not received the detailed costings and do not know what subsidy, if any, will be required if the ship is to proceed.

Mr. Nicholas Brown: I am sure that we all wish Harland and Wolff well in its search for work in the difficult merchant shipbuilding market. That market is not difficult only for Harland and Wolff, as I am sure the Minister appreciates. Can he assure the House that the Government will not put subsidies into Harland and Wolff in excess of what is allowable under the sixth EC directive? Will the hon. Gentleman confirm that there is no question of taking merchant yards in mainland Britain out of shipbuilding or of negotiating with our European partners for additional subsidies for Harland and Wolff?

Mr. Viggers: The hon. Gentleman has been an assiduous questioner on this subject. I reiterate that the sixth EC directive, limiting merchant shipbuilding subsidy to 28 per cent., applies to Northern Ireland, and the United Kingdom Government comply with that. On the latter part of the hon. Gentleman's question, it would not be inconsistent with Government policy to do as he says.

Mr. Jim Marshall: Does the Minister accept the perceived wisdom in the shipping industry that shipbuilding is due for an upturn in the 1990s and that Harland and Wolff is ideally placed to take advantage of it? Does the hon. Gentleman agree that Harland and Wolff must survive into the 1990s, so Government aid to the yard will continue to be necessary?

Mr. Viggers: There has been speculation and informed comment that there might be an upturn in the world shipbuilding market in the early 1990s and thereafter. There was similar comment throughout the 1980s and, in each case, there was speculation that the upturn might come in two years' time. We shall study the position carefully, but will look primarily at the costings of the ship to ascertain whether any subsidy is required of us. We do not even know whether one will be required or its size. When we have the facts we shall make a decision, based on the best interests of all the people in Northern Ireland.

Social Fund Loans

2. **Mr. Allen McKay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in the Province have been refused social fund loans since 11 April.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Richard Needham): Between 11 April 1988 and 29 April 1988—the last date for which information is available—247 applications for social fund loans were refused.

Mr. McKay: Is the Minister aware that, because of the higher cost of living and substantially higher fuel costs in Northern Ireland compared with the rest of the United Kingdom, the number and amount of single payments in Northern Ireland are almost double those in the United Kingdom? In view of those facts, will the hon. Gentleman implement the 1984 parity report and establish a fuel benefit for the poorer families in Northern Ireland?

Mr. Needham: I understand the hon. Gentleman's point. He was right to say that there is greater deprivation in Northern Ireland and, therefore, more families rely on income support, family credit and so on than in the rest of Britain. Nevertheless, there are many poor families in this country who must pay high fuel costs. The parity policy which we adopt in Northern Ireland has always proved to be beneficial. It is proving beneficial at the moment, because the new premium from income support applies favourably to those who have large families, of which there are proportionately more in Northern Ireland.

Rev. Ian Paisley: Will the Minister keep in mind the fact that the electricity tariff in Northern Ireland is set at the maximum of the levels in the rest of the United Kingdom, so Northern Ireland people are not on all fours with the rest of the United Kingdom?

Mr. Needham: We keep that point in mind, but there are swings and roundabouts. Because the premium is especially targeted towards families, particularly those with children, the new overall effect is favourable to Northern Ireland. The hon. Member should bear that in mind.

Mr. McGrady: Is the Minister aware of the devastating effect of the new social security regulations on the poorer sector of Northern Ireland? Is he aware that in South Down alone there were 788 applications for single payments in April 1987, and that in April 1988 there were 189 applications under the social fund—a reduction of 76 per cent.? Is the hon Gentleman aware that there are backlogs in some minor offices of up to 500 applications under that fund, consisting of unprocessed or unlikely to be processed applications? How does the hon. Gentleman reconcile those statistics with his statement:

"The majority of claimants are likely to have gained or not suffered losses in terms of their benefits"?

Mr. Needham: I accept that there are fewer claims under the social fund at the moment. If the hon. Gentleman compares the figures for March last year with those for March this year, for example, he will find that there were many more claims under the single payments scheme in March this year because it was the last month before the new system was introduced. One would therefore expect the position to be as it is. I am sure that once the backlog of single payments has been cleared, as it will be, the number of claims under the social fund will increase.

Rev. Martin Smyth: In a week when there has been talk about the moral high ground, will the Minister accept that perhaps some of the reaction in Northern Ireland to the social fund and social security regulations is muted because many people there believe that godliness with contentment is great gain. Nevertheless, there is an obligation on the Government as well as others to care for the widow and the fatherless in their affliction. The fact that there are needy in England does not mean that the needy in Northern Ireland should not be looked after, too.

Mr. Needham: I have accepted that deprivation and unemployment in Northern Ireland are significantly greater on average than in the rest of the United Kingdom. That does not alter the fact that because we are targeting the benefits more specifically at families in low-paid work

and families with children—*[Interruption.]* Hon. Members find the matter humorous, but we estimate that in Northern Ireland £43 million more will be spent in social security provision this year than last year. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will welcome that.

Travel Bursary Scheme

3. **Mr. Chapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is his estimate of the number of young people who will benefit from his recently announced travel bursary scheme; and what is the timetable for its implementation.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Dr. Brian Mawhinney): I anticipate that between 24 and 30 young people, selected equally from across the religious divide, will benefit from the Spirit of Enniskillen bursary scheme each year. The first applications will be considered in the autumn of 1988 with the first visits being undertaken in 1989.

Mr. Chapman: I thank my hon. Friend for that information and applaud the initiative. Will he tell the House a little more about this unique scheme? What does he hope it will achieve? I hope that it will promote the example and spirit set by Mr. Gordon Wilson in the wake of the horrific tragedy at Enniskillen last year.

Dr. Mawhinney: The purpose of the scheme is to enable Catholic and Protestant young people to travel together around the world, to learn about each other and to learn how others are living across divides. My hon. Friend mentioned Mr. Wilson. We hope that the awards will be imbued with the spirit of forgiveness that he exemplified and the spirit of coming together evident among the people of Enniskillen after that horrific event. My hon. Friend will be pleased to know that Mr. Gordon Wilson has agreed to be one of the judges in the first year of the award.

Prisoners (Release Statistics)

4. **Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people sentenced to serve prison terms at the Secretary of State's pleasure in Northern Ireland have been released, and under what terms, since February 1987.

5. **Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland under what terms prisoners serving sentences in Northern Ireland at the Secretary of State's pleasure are released; and how many have been released since February 1987.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Tom King): Fifteen such prisoners have been released since February 1987. The licence in these cases remains in force indefinitely, and may be revoked at any time if this course seems necessary in the public interest. The licence may also include specific conditions, but no such conditions were included in any of the 15 cases.

Mr. Mullin: I welcome the progress that has been made so far. Is the Secretary of State prepared to consider extending the review to people—such as Private Thain—who are over the age of 18 but pose no further threat to society?

Mr. King: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman, because in much of the discussion of this matter there has been scant recognition of the real progress that has been made or of the fact that there has been a significant reduction in the number of those being detained at the Secretary of State's pleasure by virtue of having committed crimes while under the age of 18. We seek to consider sympathetically those dragged into or implicated in terrorist crime at a very young age. That is one of the criteria that we take into account. We are also considering reviewing other sentences.

Mr. Bennett: Do the same conditions apply to people who committed offences in Northern Ireland but were convicted in England and are now serving their sentences in Northern Ireland? I refer especially to Shane Paul O'Docherty, who has now served 10 years of a sentence, and clearly comes into the category that the Secretary of State has referred to. He was drawn into terrorist activities at a very young age, but is now repentant of his activities and should be released.

Mr. King: The hon. Gentleman will understand that I do not discuss individual cases in the House. I am aware of the significant number of representations that have been made on behalf of that prisoner.

Sir John Biggs-Davison: I welcome what my right hon. Friend has said, and also what the hon. Member for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin) said about Private Thain. However, is it not the case that none of the prisoners whom my right hon. Friend has released has returned to crime, which is in contrast to such cases as two of the three people killed in Gibraltar who had—under the remission system—served sentences of imprisonment and returned to the IRA ranks? Will my right hon. Friend look at the question of remission? Will he also look with vigiliance and sympathy at those cases of persons detained at his pleasure?

Mr. King: I confirm the first part of my hon. Friend's comments. My understanding is that none of those who were detained at the Secretary of State's pleasure, and then released, have been convicted of further offences. I understand the worry about remission and the re-involvement of people in crime. It is a matter of concern to us.

Mr. William Ross: Will the Secretary of State tell us how many released prisoners and how many who remain in prison were imprisoned for crimes committed for Loyalist or Nationalist terrorist organisations? Does he agree that many people in prison—in places like the Maze —are still under the influence of those terrorist organisations? Would it not be a good idea to move those people as soon as possible to the new prison, where the influence of terrorist organisations has diminished?

Mr. King: I shall give the exact figures to the hon. Gentleman of the division between the Loyalist terrorist organisations and the Republican terrorist organisations. However, I share his anxiety about the influence of those terrorist organisations that continues within the prisons. I am aware that a number of people in prison would dearly like to break free of such influences. I am very conscious of the point that the hon. Gentleman makes.

Mr. Alton: I welcome what the Secretary of State has told the House, but will he say how many cases he is actively reviewing? Will he look again at the mixed wings

inside prisons, such as the Maze, and the incentives that are given to people to leave paramilitary wings to go into the mixed wings and be weaned away from terrorism and the terrorist organisations?

Mr. King: The House is aware that I am at this moment considering whether to conduct a further special review of prisoners who remain detained at the Secretary of State's pleasure. However, I have no comment to make on that, as no decision has been made. The hon. Gentleman is aware of our policy on moving people into mixed wings. We are anxious to promote it. We are aware that one of the tragedies of Northern Ireland is the number of people who find it difficult to escape the intimidation and the threats that the terrorist organisations impose on their members. One of the most unpleasant aspects of the present situation is the number of appallingly vicious punishment shootings and beatings that are taking place. That is clear evidence of the intimidation that is going on.

Rev. Ian Paisley: Will the right hon. Gentleman keep in mind that there is support in both sections of the community for the release scheme? Will he also keep in mind that if these prisoners had been of age and had been sentenced in the courts, many of them would have been freed long ago? It is unfair that, because they were then under-age, they are now serving long stretches of imprisonment, whereas if they had been over age, they would already have been released. What the right hon Gentleman has done is welcome, but we should like him to go further and consider the proposition that I have put to him about the length of sentences.

Mr. King: I am aware of the support from both sides of the community. As we know, the prisoners in question come from both extremes of the community. I know that that concern is widely shared.

I do not accept in full the hon. Gentleman's point, which could be widely misunderstood, because whether those prisoners receive life sentences or are detained at the Secretary of State's pleasure—both categories are reviewed—the criteria of appropriate sentencing in terms of retribution and the risk to the public of release are taken into account in similar ways.

Pupil Tests

6. **Mr. Fatchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many representations he has received opposing his proposals for the compulsory testing of pupils from *(a)* pupils, *(b)* parents and *(c)* teachers.

Dr. Mawhinney: The period for comment on the Government's proposals does not end until 10 June 1988. It would not, therefore, be appropriate or meaningful at this stage to attempt an analysis of the responses received so far.

Mr. Fatchett: I hope that the Minister will publish the analysis that he makes, unlike his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science in relation to the Education Reform Bill. Do the Government intend to publish the figures for the results of compulsory testing at the age of seven?

Dr. Mawhinney: The consultation paper offers the people of Northern Ireland the option of testing at either seven or eight. I await with interest the responses of the people of Northern Ireland on this issue.

Mr. Kilfedder: The Minister deserves congratulations for the commendable, albeit limited, moves to urge religious integration in schools in Northern Ireland. However, when he is considering criticisms of his proposals, will he bear in mind that schoolchildren also have human rights to an education which is full in every sense of the word and which includes the right of mixing, learning and playing together with children of another religion or of no religion?

Dr. Mawhinney: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his earlier comments. I entirely agree with him. One of the document's central proposals is to provide an option for parents who wish and choose voluntarily to have an education system in which their children can be educated in the same classroom as children from the other side of the community. There are a growing number of such parents and I look forward to seeing that fact reflected in the responses to the document.

Ms. Mowlam: Will the Minister please respond to a recent report of the Northern Ireland Council for Educational Research, which contains a section on compulsory testing and shows clearly that, for one in six pupils, there is a mismatch between their transfer results at age 11 and their performance at 16? Furthermore, will he tell the House what there is in his consultative document to alter that mismatch and, therefore, the future of many children in Northern Ireland?

Dr. Mawhinney: I am sure that, having read the document, the hon. Lady will remember that two options are available for assessment and testing at age 11. One offers to substitute teacher assessment, together with assessment and testing marks at age 11 in English, mathematics and science, for the present verbal reasoning 11-plus test. Again, I look forward to receiving responses on that issue.

Mr. Watts: Does my hon. Friend agree that the regular testing of children will be of considerable benefit to parents in monitoring the progress of their children in school and the performance of the schools that they attend?

Dr. Mawhinney: I agree with my hon. Friend. Not only will that be of considerable assistance to parents in determining how the education of their children is progressing, but it will enable us to determine much earlier in the life of our young people why, at present, almost one in four of those who leave our education system at the age of 16 have no recognised qualifications whatsoever.

Eastern Health and Social Services Board

8. **Mr. Sean Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he last met the chairman of the Eastern Health and Social Services Board; and if he will make a statement.

17. **Mr. Boyes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he last met the chairman of the Eastern Health and Social Services Board; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I met the chairmen of the four health and social services boards on 9 March 1988. I plan to meet the chairman of the Eastern Health and Social Services Board again shortly at the 1988 accountability review.

Mr. Hughes: Does the Minister accept that the decision by Mr. John Simpson to step down as chairman of the Eastern board is a telling reflection of the impossible task that the boards are now facing in trying to maintain services but keep within the cash limits imposed by the Government?

Mr. Needham: No, I do not. I assure the hon. Gentleman that Mr. Simpson and I are at one in our desire to have an efficient and properly funded Health Service in Northern Ireland. Mr. Simpson has been vice-chairman for two years and chairman for four at a time of considerable upheaval, change and difficulty, and I believe that it is now time to bring in a new chairman who will be able to take on the difficult management problems that still face the board.

Mr. Boyes: Does the Minister recognise that, because of financial cuts, facilities, services and maintenance are rapidly being run down? In addition, hospitals could be closed unless the Minister urgently comes up with more cash for the Eastern Health and Social Services Board. Will the hon. Gentleman assure the House that more cash will be forthcoming in the near future?

Mr. Needham: I do not accept the hon. Gentleman's premise for a moment. There is an increase in health spending in Northern Ireland this year of £62 million, adding up to a total of £873 million, which is £557 per head and a 22 per cent. real increase since 1979. In the Eastern health board area this year there are new developments of £2·135 million. We have an excellent Health Service, and it will continue to be an excellent service that is properly funded by the Government.

Mr. John D. Taylor: Having sacked the present chairman of the Eastern board, is the Minister aware of the pleasure throughout the people's Eastern board area that he has not found another yes-man from the area to act as chairman and has had to look outside it to find a chairman to act as his henchman?

Mr. Needham: That is an astonishing allegation. The next chairman of the Eastern board is the present vice-chairman, and before the right hon. Gentleman makes comments about the integrity and position of the new chairman, he should get his facts right.

Mr. Kilfedder: Is it correct to say that the outgoing chairman of the Eastern Health and Social Services Board has warned the Minister and the Department of Health and Social Services that as a result of Government cuts there will be drastic reductions in the service available to people in the board's area, and that, further, consultants, doctors, nurses and ancillary worker representatives have all protested to the Minister? When will he respond to the people's demands?

Mr. Needham: As the hon. Gentleman knows, of the amount of rationalisation and savings required of the Eastern health board this year—£7·6 million—£5·2 million has been found by the board with no reduction in services in the acute sector. Also, there are plans for £2·135 million worth of new developments. I am sure that the Eastern board will find the remaining funds it is looking for within its budget of hundreds of millions of pounds. I regret that so many hon. Members representing constituencies in Northern Ireland continue to denigrate the excellent Health Service there, which has adequate levels of funding.

Small Businesses

9. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what further steps he plans to take to encourage small businesses.

Mr. Viggers: The Government continue to encourage the development of the Provinces's small business sector through a range of financial, advisory and training measures, which is unique to Northern Ireland. Government support to the Local Enterprise Development Unit was increased by £4·25 million in the past two years and I am pleased to tell my hon. Friend that the unit has recently published its annual results, which show a record level of job promotions.

Mr. Bellingham: Does my hon. Friend agree that while some of the larger firms in Northern Ireland depend increasingly on single big orders, it is more important than ever to encourage the small firms sector, which is probably the only way of solving the unemployment problem in areas such as west Belfast and Bogside? What steps has he taken to increase international awareness of the need to encourage small firms in the Province?

Mr. Viggers: We have devoted a great deal of effort to encouraging smaller business with a wide range of programmes. I am delighted to say that the success of Northern Ireland in this sector has been recognised by the decision of the European Community to hold the first ever enterprise convention in Northern Ireland. About 300 delegates from 20 countries have expressed an interest in the conference in September-October already, and we hope that more will follow their example.

Mr. Clifford Forsythe: Is the Minister aware of the seeming inconsistency of the Local Enterprise Development Unit when it allocates grants? Some firms that seem to be good applicants are turned down, and other firms that should, perhaps, be refused grants are given not only one grant but other grants. Will the Minister please examine the matter and rectify it?

Mr. Viggers: The Local Enterprise Development Unit is independent and responsible for its own decisions. Any question relating to the acceptance or refusal of grants should initially be addressed to the chairman of LEDU, as it is called. However, if the hon. Gentleman has a particular case in mind, perhaps he will draw it to my attention.

Security

10. **Mr. Molyneaux:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the security situation.

11. **Mr. Livingstone:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the current security situation.

Mr. Tom King: Since I last answered questions in the House, one soldier has been killed and four civilians have been murdered in sectarian attacks. Three of the civilians were murdered and nine were injured in a brutal and indiscriminate gun attack in a bar close to Belfast city centre. The period has also seen a continuation of particularly vicious punishment attacks.

The efforts of the security forces are continuing to yield encouraging results. Since the beginning of the year a total of 140 people have been charged with serious offences, including five with murder and nine with attempted murder. Some 300 weapons, approximately 70,000 rounds of ammunition, and about 4,100 lb of explosives have been recovered in Northern Ireland. I understand that the Garda Siochana has recovered some 200 weapons, almost 139,000 rounds of ammunition, and 600 lb of commercial explosives.

Mr. Molyneaux: Bearing in mind the massive car bomb that was defused at the Strand road Royal Ulster Constabulary station in Londonderry, that one of the vehicles was stolen in Dublin, that another was stolen in Kerry, and that the explosives came from a source in the Irish Republic, what has happened to the promise of close security co-operation, and who is to blame for the breakdown?

Mr. King: The right hon. Gentleman knows the importance that we attach to improving cross-border security co-operation. The incident that he described precisely underlines why it is so important that we develop and progressively make cross-border security co-operation more effective. The right hon. Gentleman referred to one massive car bomb. There was another bomb, of which the right hon. Member will be aware, in Armagh. It was also defused. There is no doubt that at present we face what I warned the House is a serious threat. The right hon. Gentleman would wish to pay tribute to the vigilance of the security forces that ensured that both bombs were successfully defused.

Rev. William McCrea: Bearing in mind the recent murder of a young UDR member in my constituency and another brutal attack on the RUC in Cookstown the other evening, does the Secretary of State agree that it is essential to have an aggressive security policy to defeat terrorism? Will he tell the House of the new measures that he is considering to bring the terrorist campaign to its conclusion?

Mr. King: Of course I am aware of both incidents. The attack at Cookstown could have been most serious. The hon. Gentleman will know something of the steps that we have recently taken to improve the effectiveness of the security forces. From his knowledge of the subject, the hon. Gentleman will equally well understand why I am not able in the House to go into the full detail of some of the measures that we are taking to seek to ensure the full availability of the resources that we deploy and that they are used as effectively as possible.

Mr. Mallon: The Secretary of State may be aware of speculation that the Royal Irish Rangers may be deployed in the North of Ireland. Does he agree that the deployment of a Northern Irish regiment would add further tensions and friction to an already volatile situation? Will he take the opportunity to assure the House that Northern Irish regiments will not be deployed in Northern Ireland in the foreseeable future?

Mr. King: Obviously, I am not able to comment. It is a matter for the Ministry of Defence to make any announcements about deployments. The hon. Gentleman will know that, if they were to be deployed, the Royal Irish Rangers would not be the first Northern Irish regiment to be deployed since the start of the troubles. The British Army has a high reputation throughout the Province for the way in which it seeks to discharge its responsibilities, regardless of where its members are recruited. I have no doubt that, were the Royal Irish Rangers to serve in Northern Ireland, they would continue to maintain that high reputation.

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson: Is my right hon. Friend satisfied that the security forces have adequate helicopter coverage? In particular, does he think that the RUC should have a helicopter flight of its own?

Mr. King: As my hon. Friend will know, we have made and are making additional helicopter resources available. I have no proposition before me for the RUC to have a helicopter flight of its own, but the co-operation between the Army, the RAF and the RUC is excellent, and the RUC is extremely grateful for the service that it gets.

Ms. Mowlam: Does the Secretary of State accept that the recent events in Gibraltar have had a negative impact on security in Northern Ireland, and that many of the major issues that are causing public disquiet cannot be answered by an inquest? If so, will he support the call for an inquiry after the inquest?

Mr. King: There would have been a much more disquieting impact on everybody if the terrorist attack in Gibraltar had been successful, because it could have led to the most horrific suffering and tragedy of any terrorist attack in our experience of the IRA campaign. The process that now has to be pursued will lead to an inquest in Gibraltar, and it would help if people would support the due process of that inquiry and not seek to stir up concern in the way that many have sought to do.

United Kingdom-Eire Government Discussions

12. **Mr. Canavan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what subjects were discussed at the last meeting between representatives of Her Majesty's Government and the representatives of the Government of the Republic of Ireland.

Mr. Tom King: I hope to meet Irish Ministers shortly, at a meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference. The final agenda is not yet fixed, but security co-operation will certainly be one of the subjects and, as announced after the last meeting, the problems of west Belfast and other disadvantaged areas will be discussed together with a number of other matters. The joint statement issued after the last meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference on 4 May sets out the matters discussed. A copy has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Canavan: In view of the previous concern expressed by the Irish Government, and, indeed, by many people in Britain, about the RUC's shoot-to-kill policy in Northern

Ireland, what assessment has been made of the effect upon British-Irish relations of the political orders given to the SAS to extend the shoot-to-kill policy to Gibraltar?

Mr. King: That thoroughly pernicious question that the hon. Gentleman chose to ask starts from a fundamental distortion of the facts. Whatever views and comments may have been expressed about certain aspects of Mr. Stalker's report and inquiry, the hon. Gentleman might do the House the courtesy of recognising that Mr. Stalker made it clear that he was satisfied that there was no shoot-to-kill policy.

Mr. Tim Smith: Will my right hon. Friend discuss with representatives of the Government of the Republic the performance of the respective economies of the two parts of Ireland, and will he draw to their attention the beneficial effects that the Government's economic policies are now having in the Province, in particular the recent fall in unemployment?

Mr. King: It is true that there is a great contrast between the performances of the two economies, and that leads to certain difficulties when we have lower taxation and lower indirect taxes. It raises considerable problems for us in smuggling across the border, which is now becoming substantial and which we are seeking to tackle. I recognise that the successful economic growth in the United Kingdom has been slowly, but now more progressively, reflected in Northern Ireland. My hon. Friend is right to draw attention to the welcome fall in unemployment.

Mr. McCusker: Why does the Secretary of State not come to the House following such meetings and make a statement in accordance with the normal conventions of the House following such meetings with a foreign Government? Is is simply because he has nothing of any significance to report, or is it just that he is still contemptuous of the elected representatives of the people of Northern Ireland?

Mr. King: The hon Gentleman knows that I have been scrupulous on every occasion when there has been a meeting of the Conference in immediately placing a full report of that in the Library. Moreover, I have extended an invitation to every elected Member in Northern Ireland to meet me before and after the meeting—*[Interruption.]* If the hon. Gentleman and his colleagues would like a personal report from me after the next Conference meeting, I shall be more than happy to provide it.

Mr. Baldry: Is my right hon. Friend able to confirm that the Government's proposals for equality of employment in Northern Ireland are both fair and firm, proceeding by way of a code of practice? Do they not ensure maximum flexibility in creating a climate of co-operation with employers, while at the same time establishing a framework of enforcement by the High Court if need be?

Mr. King: My hon Friend is absolutely right to make those points. It is essential for Northern Ireland that it is seen to be a place where there is fairness and equality of opportunity in employment. I believe that more and more fair-minded people in the Province recognise that.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. O'Brien:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 26 May.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House I shall be having further meetings later today.

Mr. O'Brien: On the way to the Barbican yesterday, did the Prime Minister observe the new wealth and riches of the City of London? Did she at the same time see the new poverty and homelessness in the same area? For which of those two features does the Prime Minister hold herself responsible?

The Prime Minister: The City of London is earning more than £7 billion in foreign exchange for the whole of Britain. The enormous contribution that it makes to our balance of payments is greater than that of North sea oil at its peak, so it does no one any good to run it down. That is part of the process of creating wealth that will enable us to enjoy a higher standard of living. Yes, there is a problem —as the hon. Gentleman is aware—in building extra houses in the south-east, whether in the larger south-east or in filling the areas we have developed. A great deal of that is already happening, especially in the urban development corporations, which is excellent.

Mr. Dickens: Does my right hon. Friend take heart from the very good news from America today that its economy is once more on the move?

The Prime Minister: Yes, of course, because the state of the American economy affects the whole world. But, with due respect, the American economy has been growing at a very considerable rate for many years, and America has reduced unemployment because private business has been creating jobs very fast.

Mr. Kinnock: Is the Prime Minister aware that yesterday her right hon. and hon. Friends described the decision to allow bids for Rowntree to proceed without impediment as "regional assassination", welcoming the gazumpers, deeply disappointing and "a dangerous signal" to predators? I and my hon. and right hon. Friends agree with them, and 60 of the right hon. Lady's hon. Friends also agree. Why does the Prime Minister not agree with them?

The Prime Minister: The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry made his decision. He explained the full reasons for it. My right hon. and learned Friend announced it in this House. The future of Rowntree is now in the hands of the shareholders. The decision of my noble Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry was not to intervene, and he made it on the advice of Sir Gordon Borrie of the Office of Fair Trading. That should be absolutely clear.

Mr. Kinnock: Does the Prime Minister realise that with this decision about Rowntree she has given the all-clear to foreign takeover predators in any industry? Does she not realise that, with this decision, she has put a "For Sale" notice on Britain?

The Prime Minister: No. Each bid s dealt with on competition grounds, and also with a residual public interest. I might point out to the right hon. Gentleman that, according to the latest 1987 figures, the United Kingdom has £94 billion worth of investnent in overseas countries, and the world has £55 billion inBritain. The fact is that this country has done extremely vell by having an open economy, being able to stand up to competition, and having got rid of exchange controls. Tha is why we have this standard of living. It is only if a country cannot stand up to competition that it must go back to the closed economy of which the right hon. Gentleman is such an ardent exponent, and which was such a calamity for Britain.

Mr. Kinnock: The Prime Minister is talking rubbish. Could she explain to us, as she preaches the virtues of competition, how competition is enhanced by the takeover of one of the major confectionery firms in Europe?

The Prime Minister: Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will read both the statements of my—*[Interruption.]* We are dealing with competition against a European background. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman is not prepared to have companies here strong enough to stand up to it. I notice that his home constituency, Islwyn, has an advertisement in the magazine "Airport" which reads:

"If your business is expanding"—*[Interruption.]*—"what does Islwyn mean to you?"

The advertisement urges people to come to invest in Islwyn —which is excellent. But not from abroad—that is not what the right hon. Gentleman wants.

Q2. **Sir Fergus Montgomery:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 26 May.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Sir Fergus Montgomery: Does my right hon. Friend welcome the summit between Reagan and Gorbachev in Moscow this weekend, which is taking place only because of the maintenance of sound defence by the West? Does she not agree that it would not be happening if Western Governments had unilaterally thrown away their nuclear weapons, as the leader of the Labour party would have us do?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I believe that the summit is taking place only because of the background of strong and sure defence by this country, as well as by the United States, and because we are able to rely on the whole of NATO and on its nuclear arms, which the Labour party could not do. That party's decision not to decide for some particular time means that it is not behind NATO having nuclear weapons as part of its fundamental nuclear deterrent.

Mr. Faulds: In view of the Prime Minister's nauseating pretence about moral concern at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland—which makes her offence the worse—will she contemplate today what has fired her policies the more during her nine years of power: the careful computation of costs and profits that she learnt at her father's knee, or Christian concern, which she signally failed to learn?

The Prime Minister: As I made perfectly clear in that address—*[Interruption.]* May I just quote?

"None of this . . . tells us exactly what kind of political and social institutions we should have. On this point, Christians will very often genuinely disagree, though it is a mark of Christian manners that they will do so with courtesy and mutual respect."

That seems to be lacking in the hon. Gentleman.

Q3. **Mr. Couchman:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 26 May.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Couchman: Will my right hon. Friend join me in welcoming the decision of the Trades Union Congress yesterday not to sabotage the new employment training scheme, in stark contrast to the advice from some Labour Members? Will she now lead a new initiative between state and industry and commerce to ensure that no one in future is unemployed for lack of a suitable training or retraining opportunity?

The Prime Minister: Yes, we very much welcome the decision of the TUC to support the training programme. I hope that the Labour party will now follow the TUC, as it usually does, and do the same. The programme is meant to provide training for some 600,000 unemployed people and to give them a skill. There are jobs which require skills and which employers cannot fill. It is hoped, therefore, that the programme will be very progressive in reducing unemployment. As my hon. Friend knows, for the younger age group—those between 16 and 18—the youth training scheme guarantees them training very shortly after leaving school for up to two years. Therefore, we are taking great steps to ensure that people who have been unable to get jobs will receive training to help them to do so.

Mr. Darling: Will the Prime Minister reflect on the fact that her policy of transferring wealth from poor people to rich people and then urging rich people to give it back to poor people by way of charity is complete nonsense? Will she also reflect on the words of St. Luke, chapter 18, verses 10-14, before she goes to bed tonight?

The Prime Minister: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will realise that wealth must be created before it can be distributed. Under this Government, far more wealth has been created and has been far more widely distributed. Figures published recently show that the poorer parts of the population have had greater increases than the average population.

Q4. **Mr. Ashby:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 26 May.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Ashby: Has my right hon. Friend seen that the figure for the long-term unemployed has dropped by more than 20 per cent.? Is that not good news? Has my right hon. Friend seen that our record for dealing with unemployment is far better than that of Europe, and that it is the best in Europe? Is not the reason for that the fact that companies such as Rolls-Royce, which has just achieved an order in America worth more than £1 billion, are now able to compete free from trade union misrule and in a buoyant economy?

The Prime Minister: The answer to both parts of my hon. Friend's question is yes. The unemployment rate in

the United Kingdom has fallen faster in the past year than in any other major industrialised country. United Kingdom unemployment is now lower than the EC average and the news about long-term unemployment also falling fast in percentage terms and in absolute numbers is very good.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Rolls-Royce on the excellent order it has won. It brings great cheer not only to the work force there, but to those of us on the Conservative Benches. Because it was gained against great competition, it is a great boost for the confidence of Britain that Rolls-Royce once again is at the top.

Q5. **Mr. Bradley:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 26 May.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Bradley: Will the Prime Minister explain to my constituents in Withington how her health care policies, presumably based on her interpretation of Christian morality, have led to a financial crisis in the south Manchester health authority? Will she personally intervene to stop further cuts in health care which next month will mean the closure of psychiatric beds at Withington hospital and the appalling closure of wards for the elderly at Burton house, Withington?

The Prime Minister: A few months ago the Labour party was asking for an increase of £2 billion in health care expenditure this year. There has been just about that £2 billion increase in health expenditure, and within that the biggest every pay increases for doctors and nurses, to raise morale. It is now reasonable to expect that that extra money will go into extra patient care and be used fully and properly because, of course, it is taxpayers' money.

Q6. **Mr. Roger King:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 26 May.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. King: Is my right hon. Friend aware that the Rover group in my constituency has announced another 1,500 new jobs, that last week Land Rover had its best production figures in over 15 years, and that every week there are record numbers of job vacancies advertised in the local newspaper? Is that not evidence that in social and economic terms we are creating loads of new jobs through loads of investment, which produces loads of wealth, loads of care and loads of help for our community?

The Prime Minister: Yes, Sir. I congratulate my hon. Friend and Rover on being able to take on so many people. That happened because its products are good, because it is able to compete with others and because it is taking the opportunity to thrive under the Government. It is particularly good news that industry is receiving orders for the aeroengines and for cars, because they were areas where we were not excelling before the Government returned to power.

Q7. **Mr. Bill Michie:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 26 May.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Michie: I note that the Prime Minister appears to have seen the light and moved to the high moral ground. Is that a temporary aberration while she spends time rewriting the Bible, the Koran and purging the Church freethinkers—*[Interruption.]*

The Prime Minister: I was invited——

Mr. Cryer: Not next year.

The Prime Minister: I was invited, for which I was very grateful, by the Scottish Assembly to give an address. I gave an account of my personal beliefs. The hon. Gentleman may have it if he wishes. The Assembly received it extremely well and I was grateful for that. It issued a statement later saying that the account that appeared in the newspapers yesterday was totally unrepresentative—*[Interruption.]* Perhaps I might just say that an official statement yesterday said:

"It is a gross misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the decision of the General Assembly to represent yesterday's decision as being in any way a snub to the Prime Minister.

The Reverend James Weatherhead, Principal Clerk of the Assembly added, 'I cannot believe that anyone who was present in the General Assembly and faithfully and honourably reported its proceedings could have been so grievously and irresponsibly mistaken.'"

Business of the House

3.31 pm

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): Will the Leader of the House tell us the business for next week?

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham): Yes, Sir. The business for the first week after the spring adjournment will be as follows:

TUESDAY 7 JUNE—Progress on remaining stages of the Criminal Justice Bill [Lords]

WEDNESDAY 8 JUNE—Opposition day (13th Allotted Day). Until about seven o'clock, there will be a debate entitled "The Failure to refer the Nestlé bid for Rowntree to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission". Afterwards there will be a debate entitled "The British Aerospace bid for Rover". Both debates will arise on Opposition motions.

Motion to take note of EC document on spray suppression and sideguards. Details will be given in the *Official Report*.

THURSDAY 9 JUNE—Progress on remaining stages of the Housing Bill.

FRIDAY 10 JUNE—There will be a debate on women's health on a motion for the Adjournment of the House.

[Debate on Wednesday 8 June 1988:
Relevant European Community document: 8284/87, Heavier road vehicles: spray suppression and sideguards. Relevant Reports of European Legislation Committee: HC 43-v (1987-88) para 14 HC 43-xx (1987-88) para 3.]

Mr. Dobson: I am grateful to the Leader of the House for his statement.

First, will the right hon. Gentleman confirm that the first day of the Criminal Justice Bill when we return will be devoted to a debate on capital punishment? Secondly, when can we expect the long-awaited debate on foreign affairs? Thirdly, will the Government provide an early opportunity for a debate on the White Paper on fair employment in Northern Ireland, which has just been published? Can we expect a statement after the Whitsun recess on the rather remarkable refusal by DHSS Ministers to answer questions on the social fund?

Will the right hon. Gentleman inquire into the remarkable events today when the police in Downing Street refused to allow some right hon. and hon. Members to accompany their colleagues to present a petition to No. 10 Downing street? Has he yet had an opportunity to make arrrangements for a demonstration of the lighting that may or may not be necessary for the televising of the House?

Mr. Wakeham: The hon. Gentleman asked me six questions about the business for the first week after the recess. First, he asked me about the Criminal Justice Bill, which is set down for debate on the first day back. The selection of amendments is a matter for you, Mr. Speaker. However, if any new clauses relating to capital punishment are selected, it would be my intention that they should be debated first on 7 June.

I know of the hon. Gentleman's concern to have a debate on foreign affairs. He is quite right to press me on this matter. I shall arrange it as soon as possible, but I have no further news.

We have had some exchanges about the fair employment White Paper from Northern Ireland. I cannot offer a debate on this immediately, but I shall refer the matter to my right hon. Friend to see whether a debate would be possible.

The Government are well aware of the interest of hon. Members in the operation of the social fund, and because of that are seeking to be helpful, by providing information about individual local offices automatically, on a monthly basis, in the Libraries of both Houses.

The collation of data from 500 offices is a lengthy process, but the information will be made available at the first opportunity. There is of course no question of withholding from the House information which it is reasonably within our power to provide.

The hon. Gentleman asked me about some difficulties in Downing street. I have no information to give him at the moment, but I shall certainly make inquiries into that.

The hon. Gentleman asked me about a lighting demonstration in the House. I am arranging for a letter from the chief political adviser of the BBC to the Clerk of the Select Committee on televising of proceedings of the House to be placed in the Library. The letter gives details of the arrangements that have been made for the BBC and ITN to hold a lighting demonstration in the Chamber at 10.30 am on Tuesday 14 June. All right hon. and hon. Members are invited to attend. Access for visitors to the line of route will therefore be restricted on that day. Details will be given on the *All-party Whip* this week.

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): As it is now five months since the Treasury published its paper showing that the average family in Britain has to pay £11 a week extra for food as a direct consequence of the common agricultural policy, could the Leader of the House say exactly when we might discuss this important issue, which affects the living costs of the average family, and also our international competitiveness?

Mr. Wakeham: I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman, with his customary ingenuity, might manage to get in order a speech on that subject this afternoon.

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): When are the two items of business originally set down for this week emanating from the Procedure Committee, concerning short speeches and public petitions, liable to come back for discussion?

With regard to the business that replaced it—the remaining stages of the Firearms (Amendment) Bill—we accept that one reason why the House sat so late yesterday was that the Northern Ireland provisions were added very late. That underlines the unsatisfactory way in which Northern Ireland business is conducted. Has the Leader of the House any proposals to set up a Northern Ireland Committee under Standing Order No. 99, as pressed upon him by my right hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton)?

Mr. Wakeham: I regret that the business originally set down was not proceeded with as I had intended, and I shall arrange for it to be set down again as soon as possible. I agree with the hon. Gentleman this far, that there is quite a lot of disquiet about the way in which Northern Ireland business is dealt with in the House. I recognise that hon. Members would like much of it dealt with otherwise, but I have no proposals to make in that connection.

The lateness of the hour to which the House sat last night was due much more to the antics of certain Left-wing Labour Members of Parliament, who sought to prolong the debate to an unreasonable hour and who must be a greater embarrassment—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Let us have an end to this pointing.

Sir John Biggs-Davison (Epping Forest): As we approach this pagan and profane holiday and parliamentary recess, may I ask my right hon. Friend to consider the early-day motion entitled "Public Holidays", standing in my name and that of some of my hon. Friends?

[This this House, while desiring that public holidays should be reasonably spread through the year, considers that they should enable the people to commemorate traditional religious and national occasions; feels shame that the forthcoming Spring Bank Holiday should have been fixed not on, but close to, Whit Monday, long kept, in like manner to Easter Monday, to mark the joy of a great Christian festival; deplores the policy of successive governments in this matter which has advanced the secularisation of a country where a Christian church is by law established and where, according to surveys of public opinion, the vast majority of Her Majesty's subjects acknowledge themselves to be in some measure Christian; further regrets the confusion caused to the public about the Christian calendar; and calls upon Her Majesty's Government to invite the co-operation of Her Majesty's Opposition and others in revising the list of public holidays in the United Kingdom.]

Will my right hon. Friend enable the House to give some consideration to this matter? Is it not a scandal that we should hold in contempt the Christian festival of Pentecost?

Mr. Wakeham: I have some sympathy with my hon. Friend, but I am not sure that, because he and I might agree on this matter, it would necessarily be thought for the general convenience of the House. I will bear in mind what my hon. Friend says, and if there were an opportunity for a debate, I would obviously welcome it.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Will the Leader of the House reflect upon what he has just said about last night's events and take into account the fact that the Government introduced a Bill that was attacked furiously by many of his own hon. Friends; that it had added to it a Northern Ireland dimension halfway through, which prevented some Northern Ireland Members from taking part in the proceedings before the guillotine; that as a result every minority party in the House took part, as is their right, in a campaign to obstruct the Government at all times; and that during the course of that it was decided by Mr. Deputy Speaker——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The question is about business the week after next, not this week.

Mr. Skinner: You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that the Leader of the House took the opportunity to refer to last night's proceedings, and I think that it is in order for somebody to answer that. Will the right hon. Gentleman, during the course of the full business of the week after next, retract those statements, bearing in mind that it is the job of every Opposition Member to harry and obstruct this Government, especially when the Government introduce a measure that changes out of all recognition during the course of its passage through the House, and taking into account the fact that Standing Order 39 should not have been invoked with those Members present?

Mr. Wakeham: The question of invoking Standing Order 39 is a question for the Chair, not for me. The hon. Gentleman's view of the conduct of an Opposition is very interesting. In his view, its role should be to obstruct the business to which members of his own Front Bench give a welcome and which is to be passed into law. Not only that, but his own Front Bench spokesmen complain about the lack of progress on the Bill. I believe that the hon. Gentleman is much more of an embarrassment to his right hon. and hon. Friends that he is to me.

Sir Anthony Grant (Cambridgeshire, South-West): When will there be an opportunity to debate the length of speeches, a debate that disappeared as a result of the change of business? Will my right hon. Friend bear in mind the fact that this is of extreme importance and relevance to the televising of Parliament?

Mr. Wakeham: I absolutely recognise the importance of that subject, and the connotation that my hon. Friend puts on it. As I have said, it is one of the casualties of this week, but I hope to reinstate it as soon as possible.

Mr. Keith Vaz (Leicester, East): Will the Leader of the House make time available in the near future for a debate on the guidelines and criteria used by the Home Secretary to determine the allocation of police officers to the various police constabularies? Is he aware that, of the 450 officers available to be allocated this year, not one was allocated to Leicester constabulary, and that, despite the excellent work of the chief constable, assisted by the constabulary, they have not been assisted by the Government with extra resources? Bearing in mind the fact that there is one crime every 10 minutes in Leicestershire, when can we have a debate on this important matter?

Mr. Wakeham: I agree that it is an important matter and I would welcome the opportunity to have a debate on it, but I cannot promise the hon. Gentleman a debate in the near future. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I hope that the club below the Gangway will listen. We are dealing with business for the week after next.

Mr. Michael Latham (Rutland and Melton): Following the question by the hon. Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Vaz), will my right hon. Friend please think about this again? Is he aware that we need an early debate on those criteria for the decision of the Home Secretary, because it is absolutely ludicrous that Leicestershire has been given no more police, and that Leicestershire Members will be pursuing the Home Secretary very persistently in Question Time until that decision is changed?

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise the force of what my hon. Friend says; I shall certainly refer the matter to my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Will the Leader of the House ask the Prime Minister to make a statement on why Mr. Giles Hopkinson, a senior Department of the Environment official, wrote a letter to the Private Secretary to the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment saying that the Secretary of State for the Environment and the Prime Minister wanted Richmond

[Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours]

yard to be valued by a private-sector valuer? It is clear that they were involved. May we have a statement on the nature of that involvement?

Mr. Wakeham: No, I do not think that a statement is required. I have looked at the written answer given by my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary to the hon. Member for Warrington, North (Mr. Hoyle). I accept that there may have been a misunderstanding, but I do not believe that my hon. Friend sought to mislead the House. To avoid any continuing misunderstanding, my hon. Friend will write to the hon. Member for Warrington, North today to set out the position and put a copy of the letter in the Library.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): May we have an early statement on the unprecedented position in my constituency at Hanway road, which is in a council estate? Royal mail deliveries have been suspended for the second time in three months because of attacks by dogs on postmen, which Ealing council has not brought under control. As pensioners, some of whom are very elderly, are having to walk two or three miles to collect their post, will the House consider the matter with a view to getting action taken to restore the post?

Mr. Wakeham: Last week, my hon. Friend raised the question of flooding in his constituency. Ealing council is empowered to assist with the incidents of that kind. I believe that the incident that he has raised, which must be very distressing, is a matter for the council rather than for me. I shall do anything that I can to assist my hon. Friend.

Mr. Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan): The Leader of the House may be aware that the consultative period for the Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive proposals for nuclear dumping expires next Wednesday. Would it not be appropriate to have an early debate in Government time so that hon. Members representing Scottish constituencies—Scotland is emerging as the key target area for Nirex and nuclear dumping—can record the strength of public opposition in Scotland to the proposals and warn the Government that, if they proceed with nuclear dumping in Scotland, they will be reduced from the third to the fourth party in Scotland?

Mr. Wakeham: I do not think that the hon. Gentleman was in his place yesterday when this matter was raised. I told the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy) that I did not think it appropriate to have a debate at the present time, but that it was right and proper for any hon. Member to put his views and those of his constituents to Nirex. I believe that that is the way forward; the time for a debate is later.

Mr. James Kilfedder (North Down): In a country that prides itself on being a parliamentary democracy, is it not a disgrace that the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland still slides out of his responsibility to tell right hon. and hon. Members what he is saying and doing in their names at the Anglo-Eire conference? Is it not time he was brought to account and a debate arranged to discuss the matter?

Mr. Wakeham: I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman was present in the House earlier—I think he was—when my right hon. Friend was answering questions. I thought that he gave a very good account of himself, and the invitation that he gave the hon. Gentleman is one that he should take up.

Rev. Martin Smyth (Belfast, South): Will the Leader of the House recognise that, over the past year, there has been a growing interest in the affairs of Northern Ireland among hon. Members? Northern Ireland Members having a private tête-à-tête with the Secretary of State would not give the exposure that is needed. I am aware of the understanding and knowledge of the Leader of the House. Will he say whether there will be a legislative programme in the weeks after the recess affecting Northern Ireland? Last night's protests were made primarily by Ulster Unionists who could not take part in earlier debates and had only one alternative to show their opposition—to divide the House.

Mr. Wakeham: I cannot anticipate any debate that we may have in the weeks after the recess, but I have taken note of the hon. Gentleman's comments in the wider context. I recognise that the interest in Northern Ireland affairs is greater than that of just the Official Unionist party and the other parties that directly represent Northern Ireland. I still believe that my right hon. Friend's offer to have talks is a valuable part of the process which many hon. Members seek to take up in dealing with the matters of concern to them. I see no reason why Northern Ireland Members should not participate.

Mr. Andrew Mitchell (Gedling): In view of the concern and considerable number of questions about European competition policy and the large number of policy aspects that are affected in the run-up to the single European market, will my right hon. Friend consider making time available for a wide debate on the implications of 1992?

Mr. Wakeham: There is a lot of pressure on time at the moment, but I agree with my hon. Friend—completion of a single European market by 1992 will have an enormous effect on all British business. It is an opportunity and a challenge. We have no plans at present for a debate specifically on this matter, but all the individual measures in the single market programme are considered by the Scrutiny Committee and can be debated when that Committee makes its recommendations. With a little ingenuity by hon. Members, today's debate offers another opportunity.

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): May we have a debate on the disgraceful and shocking refusal of the Home Secretary to comply with the request of the chief constable of Leicester for more police, especially in view of the letter I have received from Chief Superintendent Adams who describes this decision as "creating extreme concern" among senior police officers and as showing that the Home Secretary has ignored the efforts of the police to contain the ever-increasing tide of crime, hooliganism, violence and vandalism? Surely the Home Secretary should, at the very least, make a statement about why crime in some parts of Leicestershire has doubled since the Conservative party came to power, while the police force is to be kept exactly the same?

Mr. Wakeham: I cannot for one moment accept the criticisms of my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary that are implied in the hon. and learned Gentleman's question. I recognise the anxiety of the hon. and learned Gentleman

and his hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Vaz) and my hon. Friend the Member for Rutland and Melton (Mr. Latham). As I said, I shall refer the matter to my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): Why do DHSS Ministers refuse to answer parliamentary questions on the operation of the social fund while, at Northern Ireland questions today, a Northern Ireland Minister could give the information that DHSS Ministers refuse to give to Members from other parts of the United Kingdom? Will the Leader of the House understand that it is wholly unacceptable for the DHSS to refuse to answer parliamentary questions on the social fund and to dump enormous amounts of information in the Library during the recess, clearly to suppress and conceal that information from the public, the media and Members of Parliament? Will the right hon. Gentleman press the Secretary of State for Social Services to make a statement when we return after the recess, making it clear that he has changed his policy and intends to answer parliamentary questions on the operation of the social fund?

Mr. Wakeham: It seems a strange way of withholding information from Members of Parliament to put it in the Library. I cannot add anything to what I said to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson). There is no question of withholding information from the House that it is reasonably within our power to provide.

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): Does my right hon. Friend agree that the official Opposition felt so strongly about the alleged deficiencies to which the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) referred last night in the debate on the Firearms (Amendment) Bill that hardly any of them bothered to turn up, and those who did bother to do so did not stay throughout the night, that there was no official representative on the Opposition Front Bench throughout the night and that all the running was made——

Mr. Speaker: Order. We are discussing the week after next's business, not last night's.

Mr. Lawrence: It follows from that question that, if there had been any members of the public in the Gallery, they would have been appalled at——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Yes, but there are other opportunities to discuss what went on last night. We are dealing now with the business for the week after next.

Mr. Lawrence: If we had an early debate on the absurd procedure that we have accepted for ourselves in this matter, it would do a great deal to improve the standing of the House in the country.

Mr. Wakeham: I have considerable sympathy with my hon. and learned Friend, but I would certainly not promise him a further debate on that subject in the near future, although I think that it would have been better if Opposition Members had known what they were voting about.

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): Will the Leader of the House take time to have a word with his right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and ask him to make an early statement about the operation of development and investment grants, particularly in the north-west—especially those emanating from the Manchester office? A company in my constituency which had struggled for survival was awarded a loan of £600,000, but has still not received it a year later. Such incidents lead to the failure of companies rather than their development and improvement. That is a matter of considerable concern not only in my constituency but in many others.

Mr. Wakeham: If the hon. Gentleman has any particular difficulties, no doubt he will take them up direct with my right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. If I can assist in the matter I shall do so, but I cannot promise an early debate.

Mr. John Stokes (Halesowen and Stourbridge): In view of the plan announced yesterday by the Law Commission to allow much easier divorce, may I ask for an early debate on this most important subject, as increasing divorce threatens the social fabric of the nation?

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise the strength of my hon. Friend's remarks, but a pause for reflection on receiving the report would probably be in the best interests of us all.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): Has the Leader of the House reflected on the issues involving propriety at the heart of Government, encapsulated in early-day motion No. 1142?

[That this House notes that the Guardian of Friday 20th May carried an article entitled 'Thatcher's boy in a cleft stick', which stated that according to Foreign Office sources 'Mr. Charles Powell wants Washington or Paris nothing less, but he's not going to get either of them', and that Mr. Powell had been offered and turned down the post of Ambassador in Stockholm, and that the article added 'Powell has another string to his bow: he knows where the bodies are buried in the Westland Affair. He escaped appearing before a Select Committee, but not their sharpest criticism for his orchestrating rôle in the leaking of a letter from the then Solicitor General, which ultimately resulted in the then Secretary of State for Defence's resignation'; expresses its concern that knowledge of wrong-doing by the Prime Minister is alleged to put Mr. Powell in a position to obtain an Embassy more senior than his status warrants; asserts that this is not in keeping with the high moral ground claimed by the Prime Minister; and calls on Her Majesty's Government to make a statement.]

Could he pass comment on the press statement——

Mr. Speaker: Order. We are dealing with the business for when we come back after the recess.

Mr. Dalyell: Will he make a statement——

Mr. Speaker: Order. It is not in order for the Government to comment on press statements today. Will the hon. Gentleman please ask about the business for the week after next?

Mr. Dalyell: Will the right hon. Gentleman make a statement the week after next on the press assertion that the Prime Minister's private secretary is holding out for an embassy in Washington or Paris, has turned down Stockholm—*[Interruption.]* Yes, exactly. It is rather well known. There is an assertion and an issue——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman must relate his question to the business for the week after next; otherwise we shall take time from the subsequent debate

[Mr. Speaker]

and prevent those who legitimately wish to take part from doing so, and would the hon. Gentleman refrain from engaging in repartee with the club below the Gangway.

Mr. Dalyell: It is also asserted that an additional string to his bow is that he knows
"where the bodies are buried"
in the Westland affair. As the Lord President of the Council also knows a great deal about the matter, he knows the exact importance of what I am saying. This matter cannot go without a reply when we come back.

Mr. Wakeham: I should have thought that by now the hon. Gentleman would have realised that he ought not to believe everything that he reads in the newspapers—even *The Guardian*. I am afraid that his own lively imagination together with the speculation and gossip that some newspapers contain make for a very unreliable recipe. Facts may make for a more boring diet, but it is one that I recommend to the hon. Gentleman nevertheless.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): I accept the great pressures placed upon my right hon. Friend, but does he accept in considering the business for the week after next that if Government—I do not mean this Government alone—did not introduce ill-considered legislation such as the Bill before the House last night, the House could find time to debate very important issues affecting people throughout the country? Not least, we could debate matters related to pre-1973 war widows, the unemployment and loss of exports that could well result if the furniture fire safety regulations are implemented without amendment, and many other issues. Will he not seriously consider the real issues that affect this nation, rather than the ill-considered legislation introduced by the Government when over-reacting to situations that develop in this country?

Mr. Wakeham: When my hon. Friend started his question, I thought that I would agree with him in wanting less legislation. I assure him that, as a business manager, I try to keep the amount of legislation to the minimum. However, towards the end of his question, I thought that he was encouraging me to find more legislation.

With regard to the business which was dispatched yesterday, the Bill before the House received an unopposed Second Reading and the bulk of the amendments were the result of listening to representations of hon. Members on all sides of the House in an attempt to meet their wishes. I believe that my hon. Friend would be the first to complain if the Government did not listen to the views of Back Benchers.

Mr. Doug Hoyle (Warrington, North): Will the Leader of the House explain why the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment took 19 days to answer my question? Will he also say why, if he received several drafts, he did not use them? Was it because they did not fit his preconceived views? Was that why he decided on an evasion of the facts? Will the Leader of the House reconsider the position and ask his hon. Friend to do the honourable thing and make a statement to the House?

Mr. Wakeham: I have to say to the hon. Gentleman, who is reasonably fair in these matters, that my hon. Friend has written a letter to him explaining what he thinks is the basis of the misunderstanding. The hon. Gentleman would be well advised to receive that letter; then, if he wishes to comment on it, we shall look at the best way to proceed.

Mr. Henry Bellingham (Norfolk, North-West): Is the Leader of the House aware that a recent Channel 4 poll of young people showed that 80 per cent. were in favour of the return of the death penalty? Does that not reveal that the vast majority of people in this country want the return of the death penalty? Will he confirm that on Tuesday week there will be a well structured debate in prime time that will run for a lengthy period?

Mr. Wakeham: The statistics and the arguments on the question of capital punishment have been well rehearsed in the many debates that we have had in the House. No doubt they will be well rehearsed again should we have a debate on Tuesday 7 June. As I said to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson), the question of the selection of amendments is for you, Mr. Speaker, and not for me. However, if any new clauses relating to capital punishment are selected, it would be my intention that they should be debated first on 7 June.

Mr. David Alton (Liverpool, Mossley Hill): Given the reply that the Leader of the House has just given about the importance of a free vote on capital punishment, does he not also agree that the other great issue of consicence—the life-and-death issue of the 1960s—concerning abortion should be similarly voted upon? Will he say whether he would be in favour of such an amendment being selected and the House being given the chance to vote on it?

Mr. Wakeham: The selection of amendments is a matter for you, Mr. Speaker, and not for me. It would be improper for me to comment on the selection of any amendments. It is a hypothetical question. I know how strongly the hon. Gentleman feels, but I cannot add anything to what I have already said.

Mr. Patrick Thompson (Norwich, North): Returning to the earlier question about the lighting demonstration for the possible future televising of the House and further debate on that issue, does my right hon. Friend accept that it might be a good idea to invite organisations other than the BBC and ITV to give demonstrations? Worthy though those organisations are, there may be expertise elsewhere which could be used to good effect.

Mr. Wakeham: Whom the Select Committee decides to invite to give evidence is a matter for it. It has been asked to prepare a report to the House and that is what it is doing. It seemed to the Select Committee that, as it was going to invite the BBC and the ITN to give a lighting demonstration, it would be helpful to the House that as many hon. Members as possible could see that demonstration. That is how it has been arranged. If the Committee decides to ask other organisations to give a demonstration—I am not saying that it will—we shall have to look at what arrangements can be made.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Reverting to the question of my hon. Friend the Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson), does the Leader of the House agree that it is unacceptable that Members of Parliament, carrying out their duties, should not be able to go into Downing street, except six at a time? Who gave those instructions to the police? The Leader of the House accepts

that he has responsibility for all Members of the House, so will he recognise that, if we are carrying out our duties and wish to present letters or petitions to No. 10, there should be no restrictions whatsoever? Will he make a statement as early as possible after our return from the recess informing us that those restrictions will no longer be in place?

Mr. Wakeham: I cannot possibly give an undertaking of that sort. I said to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras that I would look into the matter, but I was not aware of the details. Since then, I have been answering questions from other hon. Members and have had no chance to acquaint myself with the position. I shall do so when I leave the Chamber.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): Will my right hon. Friend reconsider the answer that he gave on having an early debate on the Nirex report on nuclear dumping prepared by the Scottish National party? It is essential that we have an early debate to expose the lies which have been put out about, for example, the dumping of nuclear waste in my constituency at Schehallion. Anyone reading about nuclear dumping will know that most of the suitable areas are in constituencies held by Scottish nationalists.

Mr. Wakeham: I know that my hon. Friend will recognise that I have some experience of these matters. I understand the passions and the fears—often misguided—that they arouse. Of course, I shall be happy for there to be a debate on the subject, but I do not believe that this is the right time.

Mr. Chris Mullin (Sunderland, South): Is the Leader of the House aware that early-day motion 463, expressing concern about the Government's policy in relation to Kampuchea, has now attracted the signatures of about 200 hon. Members from all parties?

[That this House calls on the Government to review urgently its policy towards Kampuchea; congratulates OXFAM for its continued aid to that country; notes that Kampuchea is the only Third World country which has no United Nations development programme; believes that the country's diplomatic isolation due to the impasse at the United Nations concerning representation of Kampuchea must be ended; urges the Government to re-convene the 1954 Geneva Conference on Indo-China, which was co-chaired by the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union, and actively to promote a negotiated settlement which would isolate Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge; and stresses that as a matter of the greatest urgency Her Majesty's Government should provide reconstruction and development aid to Kampuchea forthwith.]

Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that hon. Members are especially concerned that the Government support the genocidal regime of Pol Pot? Should we not have an opportunity to debate this matter?

Mr. Wakeham: I have told the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras that I am hoping to arrange a general debate on foreign affairs. I imagine that the hon. Gentleman's contribution would be in order on that occasion.

On the question of the early-day motion, as my hon. Friend the Minister of State explained in answer to questions on 23 November, it is our long-held wish to see the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces and the freedom for the Kampuchean people to determine their own future.

Mr. Barry Field (Isle of Wight): Will my right hon. Friend consider in the forthcoming business of the House the way in which the rule of the House, colloquially known as the mayor of Sligo rule, prevents hon. Members from questioning Ministers on the number of representations that they have received from hon. Members on a particular subject? Does my right hon. Friend not agree that this rule is the very antithesis of open government? Should it not be referred to the Procedure Committee? Is it not time that we pensioned off the mayor of Sligo and his wretched little rule? Is it not typical of the hypocrisy that sometimes occurs in the House that we continually hear calls for the repeal of section 2 of the Official Secrets Act 1911, but we are not prepared to put our own house in order?

Mr. Wakeham: I am not sure that I agree with my hon. Friend, but I thank him for giving me notice of his question. I did not know about the mayor of Sligo rule until he told me about it. My hon. Friend will be aware that the rule of order to which he refers dates back to 1896, when the Speaker ruled that questions referring to communications between an individual Member and a Minister should not be allowed on the Notice Paper. My hon. Friend's question is therefore a matter for you, Mr. Speaker, and not for me.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): May we have a statement when the House returns on the extraordinary evidence given by Mr. Peter Levene to the Select Committee on Defence that Ferranti and British Aerospace refused to provide information about the prices of spare parts to the Ministry of Defence? In a business that is worth over £2 billion of taxpayers' money, should we not bring pressure to bear on those two companies? As British Aerospace seems to get such and excellent deal out of the Government, could we not ask the right hon. Member of Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) to use his pressure on British Aerospace to stop that company ripping off the taxpayer? Could we not ask Tory MEP Basil de Ferranti to do the same for Ferranti, or is ripping off the taxpayer part of the enterprise culture?

Mr. Wakeham: The hon. Gentleman, who is a stickler for constitutional propriety in this House when it suits him, would be better advised not to make such remarks but to behave in the proper fashion. The Select Committee on Defence is taking evidence and will no doubt issue a report. When that report is received, the Government will no doubt respond to it, and that is the time to consider a debate. One-sided, biased and unsubstantiated remarks of the sort that the hon. Gentleman has made are not helpful for the good conduct of public affairs.

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): In view of the forthcoming celebration of the tercentenary of the Bill of Rights and the glorious revolution, will my right hon. Friend arrange an early debate on the composition of the other place and the voting rights of hereditary peers?

Mr. Wakeham: I was hoping to celebrate that by getting through the Government's business in good time, in good order and with the business unamended as far as possible. Fascinating though the subject is to many of us, this is not the right time for such a discussion.

Mr. Harold McCusker (Upper Bann): Will the Leader of the House stop misrepresenting what happened last night? May I assure him, without fear of contradiction,

[Mr. Harold McCusker]

that the House was kept here until 5.30 am at the insistence of the Ulster Unionists, who were using the only device available to them——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have already said that we must deal with the business for next week.

Mr. McCusker: My point is linked to that.

—to protest at the means by which the Government apply legislation to Northern Ireland. Is the Leader of the House aware that Ulster Unionists have been informed only today that once again another important piece of legislation, the Criminal Justice Bill, will have sections that apply to Northern Ireland added on Report? Is that an adequate way of dealing with what has perhaps now become just an adjunct or attachment to the rest of the United Kingdom? Is it not time that Northern Ireland was governed like the rest of the country?

Mr. Wakeham: I do not want to go over yesterday's debates or to comment on debates to come, because that is not strictly relevant to my function here. Hon. Members of all parties should look at the substance of the issues before us rather than seeking to carp at every point at which they feel disgruntled when they are not taking the opportunities that are already available to them to consult and discuss with the Government.

Miss Ann Widdecombe (Maidstone): May I refer my right hon. Friend to the answer that he gave to the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) a few moments ago and, by way of a change, direct his attention again to the Criminal Justice Bill? My right hon. Friend has clearly stated that if you, Mr. Speaker, see fit to select an amendment on capital punishment, there is a particular day on which it is to be debated, which seems a fair indication that we are expecting just that. Can my right hon. Friend give any similar assurance either as to the day on which it is to be debated or whether he is hopeful about its selection in respect of the amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill that has been tabled by the hon. Member for Mossley Hill and my right hon. Friend the Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine)?

Mr. Wakeham: I cannot add anything to what I have said, except that my statement about the hypothetical situation with regard to new clauses on capital punishment, should you select them, Mr. Speaker, repeats the undertaking that I gave many months ago.

Mr. Ray Powell (Ogmore): Will the Leader of the House consider, after the recess, the possibility of presenting to the House proposals for child care reform? I should like to draw his attention to the fact that my early-day motion No. 792 has been signed by over 300 hon. Members of all parties.

[That this House deplores the increasing frequency of grandparents being deprived the right of access to, care, fostering or adoption of their grandchildren; notes with alarm the attitude of some social services employees; and calls on Her Majesty's Government to introduce early legislation to give legal rights to grandparents providing immediate right of access before children are taken into care and the right to be present or legally represented at any official hearing or inquiry regarding future access to, care, fostering and adoption of their grandchild or grandchildren.]

There is a demand for grandparents to have access to their grandchildren and a need for grandparents to have the right to be represented at court proceedings. As the White Paper was published in 1987, is it not time that the Government started to put their own house in order and tried to reform the law relating to child care?

Mr. Wakeham: I know the hon. Gentleman's long and deep concern about many of those issues. I also know that he intends to raise the matter in the House tomorrow when a Minister will reply to him. That is the best way to proceed from here.

Mr. Alan Meale (Mansfield): Is the Leader of the House aware that the Department of Energy has recently issued to limited sources a consultative document on coal-mining subsidence damage compensation? Is he also aware that district councils throughout Nottinghamshire and south Yorkshire have already undertaken a large-scale survey at huge cost, but that date for the final receipt of evidence for the consultative paper is as early as 29 July? Will the right hon. Gentleman use the usual channels to ensure the extension of that consultative period so that all the evidence can rightly be given to the Department of Energy for full consideration during that consultative period?

Mr. Wakeham: If the hon. Gentleman is correct that a great deal of work has already been done which would form the basis of the evidence, there does not appear to me to be a problem with the end date. However, I shall certainly refer the matter to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy because it is obviously right that my consultation process should receive all the advice that anybody can give.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): Is the Leader of the House aware that many people in London are facing increasing misery living in bed-and-breakfast hotels; or are sleeping on the streets of London because of the homelessness crisis or facing ever-increasing rents in both the council and private sector; that in the Health Service in London, many hospitals are under threat because of hospital closure programmes due to Health Service amalgamations; that traffic and transport chaos is rife throughout the capital and that there are many growing social problems, partly as a result of the abolition of the Greater London council, but also because of the general underfunding of all aspects of London's social infrastructure? Will the Leader of the House repeat his earlier assurance that there will be an early, full and urgent debate on the plight of London and Londoners, and on the need for central Government funding to be restored to the level of 1979, before this Government took office?

Mr. Wakeham: I do not accept much of what the hon. Gentleman has said, but I will defend to the end his right to say it. I wish that he would be a bit more balanced in his approach and talk about some of the extravagent Left-wing councils, and the council houses that are left untenanted when there are people who want to move into them. I have told the hon. Gentleman that I am looking for time for a debate on London, and I am still looking for time. I repeat today the assurances that I have given him that I will do my best to find time for a debate.

Mr. Harry Cohen (Leyton): May I press the Leader of the House further on that ? Will he ensure that there is an early debate in Government time about the problems of

London, because, as unemployment has increased by 150 per cent. in the capital since 1979, with poor housing, above-average health cuts, low incomes and low benefits, but high costs to many individuals, many Londoners feel that they have been hammered by the Government and that they are living in unrecognised poverty? May we have an early debate on London?

Mr. Wakeham: I do not want to be seen to be discriminating between the hon. Gentleman and his hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn), so I hope that he will take my previous answer as adequate for him as well.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Jim Marshall, at long last.

Mr. Jim Marshall (Leicester, South): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I repeat the request by the hon. Member for Rutland and Melton (Mr. Latham), my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Vaz) and my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner) for an early debate on the police, and specifically, on the Leicestershire constabulary? I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman knows this, but great steps have been made in increasing the number of civilians in the police force in Leicestershire and in putting more police on the beat there. But still more policemen and women are required to combat rising crime in Leicester.

In view of this background, it is incomprehensible to all hon. Members representing Leicestershire, irrespective of their political parties, that the chief constable's reasonable request for a small increase in establishment should have been refused. In the light of that, will the Leader of the House reconsider his decision not to arrange an early debate?

Mr. Wakeham: I have already told hon. Members that I shall refer the matter to the Home Secretary, and that is what I shall do. I cannot add any more. I hope that the fact that the hon. Gentleman was rather late in the batting order today does not mean the the *Leicester Mercury* will leave him out of the report.

Ms. Marjorie Mowlam (Redcar): Has the Leader of the House taken note of early-day motion 1163, which concerns the arrest and detention without trial of the general secretary of the Trade Union Federation of the West bank, Mr. Shaeer Saed?

[That this House condemns the arrest and detention without trial of Shaeer Saed, the General Secretary of the Trade Union Federation of the West Bank; believes that this is a further example of the Israeli Government's obstruction of the democratic organisation of Palestinian people within the Occupied Territories; notes that he has met senior representatives of both parties in the House; fears that his arrest may be intended to obstruct contacts between Palestinians and parliamentary representatives of other countries; and calls on the Government to protest, in the strongest terms, to the Israeli Government.]

Will he ask his right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary to make a statement to the House as soon as possible about this regrettable situation? We are particularly concerned because Mr. Saed showed a number of hon. Members from both sides of the House around Palestine, and his arrest may be related in some way to his having shown democratically elected Members of Parliaments of other countries around.

Mr. Wakham: The Government deplore the Israeli practice of holding Palestinians in detention without trial. We have asked the Israelis for details of Mr. Saed's case.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Anthony Banks.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am deeply grateful for having been able to catch your eye on this occasion.

May we have an early debate on the outbreak of legionnaire's disease at Broadcasting house in London? The Leader of the House may be aware that I have been asking his right hon. and hon. Friends in the DHSS for a public inquiry, but it has been refused so far. It is clear that the BBC has not fully made available all the facts surrounding the outbreak of the disease, and by delaying giving the information to Londoners it has undoubtedly exposed many hundreds of thousands of them to the disease. In order to restore some confidence in London, may we have an early debate on this issue?

Mr. Wakeham: I cannot promise an early debate, but I recognise that the hon. Gentleman raises a point of concern. I shall refer the matter to my right hon. Friend and see whether any statement should be made.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): May I seek your advice, Mr. Speaker, on a point of order? You will have heard the exchanges earlier, and the Leader of the House may well report back to us that the problem that we complained about will continue. Can you help in any way? It is understandable that from time to time we should go to 10 Downing street in the course of our parliamentary duties, but I see no reason why scenes such as this morning's should be repeated——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think I can help the hon. Gentleman. I am not responsible for what goes on outside the precincts of the Palace of Westminster. I called the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) last because I thought he might ask this question. It is a matter for the Leader of the House, who is looking into it, and not for me.

Mr. Winnick: Could you use your influence in any way, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: I use my influence in all kinds of ways, but not on the ballot for notices of motion—the business to which we must now move on.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I ask you for a general response about a general issue of privilege? May I have an assurance that when you decide on these matters you always call for all the necessary documents to enable you to make a reasonable judgment about them?

Mr. Speaker: I can assure the hon. Member that if any hon. Member raises a matter of privilege with me I go into it in the greatest detail and with the most careful consideration. The hon. Gentleman may have that absolute assurance.

BALLOT FOR NOTICES OF MOTION FOR 13 JUNE

The following Members were successful in the Ballot:

Mr. Alan Meale
Mr. Geoffrey Dickens
Sir Peter Hordern

St. Christopher and Nevis (Gift)

4.26 pm

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham): I beg to move,

That Sir William Clark and Mr. Bernie Grant have leave of absence to present on behalf of this House a gift of a Speaker's Chair and Desk to the National Assembly of St. Christopher and Nevis.

The House will recall that on 18 January it approved the presentation of a Speaker's Chair and Desk to the National Assembly of St. Christopher and Nevis. The gift was exhibited in the Upper Waiting Hall in the week beginning 7 March. The purpose of this motion, which is moved in accordance with the normal precedents on occasions of this sort, gives leave of absence to my hon. Friend the Member for Croydon, South (Sir W. Clark) and the hon. Member for Tottenham (Mr. Grant) to present the gift formally on the House's behalf. They will be accompanied by Mr. Charles Winnifrith, clerk of Select Committees.

Question put and agreed to.

European Community

Mr. Speaker: I have to announce to the House that I have not selected the amendment on the Order Paper, but these matters may be canvassed in the debate.

4.27 pm

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mrs. Lynda Chalker): I beg to move,

That this House takes note of the White Paper on developments in the European Community, July-December 1987 (Cm. 336).

These debates are an important part of the role of the House in monitoring developments within the Community. The fact that they are seldom well attended is, in part, a reflection of the extent to which our membership of the Community is now taken for granted. But it is also a reflection of the pattern of debate in the past.

The White Paper that we are debating covers the period up to the European Council in Copenhagen last year. It describes the aims of the United Kingdom in the negotiations, which were still under way at the end of 1987. Our continuous central aim has been the lasting reform of the common agricultural policy. In the words of the White Paper our prime requirement was

"to achieve effective and proper control of agricultural spending, the key to which was a strict framework of budget discipline for all Community expenditure backed by mechanisms called 'stabilisers' to control the cost to the Community of support for each agricultural commodity".

That is now being achieved.

The CAP has often been debated in the House. In the proposals on the future financing of the Community brought forward by the Commission at the beginning of 1987, reform of the CAP played a central role. The Commission recognised the case that we had made for strict budget discipline to control agricultural expenditure and for a firmer link between that budget discipline and the individual regulations controlling agricultural expenditure.

In the summer of last year, the Commission put forward proposals for agricultural stabilisers—that is, binding limits on the support mechanisms for individual agricultural commodities, firmly linked to an overall guideline for agricultural expenditure. It was the achievement of those stabilisers and that linkage at Brussels earlier this year which marked the successful culmination of our efforts.

As a result of this agreement, we now have a legally binding ceiling on agricultural expenditure which will reduce its real growth from 10 per cent. a year over the past three years to less than 2 per cent. by 1990.

We have a crucial agreement under which, if a threshold of production is passed, guaranteed price cuts will be triggered. For cereals, they will amount to over 12 per cent. over four years on a cumulative basis, and around 8 per cent. a year for the next three years for oilseeds.

The combined effect of those changes means that, if production continues to rise, there will be double digit price cuts in the arable sector over the next three years. The cereals package alone will save £120 million this year, and up to £900 million in 1991. The savings on the costs of the oilseeds regime will save up to £400 million in 1990.

The House will agree that they are significant changes —large in themselves, and enormous in the psychological and political change that they represent within the

Community. The time for vigilance on CAP spending will never by over, but the era of open-ended support has been brought to an end.

It is on the basis of such policies that, last week, one newspaper was able to carry the headline "Butter mountain melts". The surplus of unsold butter, since the start of milk quotas 18 months ago, has been cut from 1·5 millon tonnes to half a million tonnes. That is still too much. It gives the lie, however, to those who claim that the butter mountain could only go one way—that is, upwards.

In addition, we have tightened up the control of agricultural expenditure in other ways. Before the Brussels agreement, agricultural expenditure was at the mercy of changes in the dollar-ecu exchange rate. If the ecu costs of agricultural expenditure went up, it was automatically reflected in the budget. If they went down the saving was not reflected in the budget. Now savings will feed through into the budget, and extra costs will be incurred only above a threshold and up to a fixed limit.

We have also secured other significant reforms in the management of the Community's budget and in the overall control of expenditure. In particular, hon. Members are rightly anxious that control of agricultural spending should not allow uncontrolled growth of non-agricultural spending. They will welcome the specific decision of the Brussels European Council in February to reaffirm the treaty provisions governing the control of non-obligatory spending for those programmes that are not clearly agreed priorities.

Mr. Geraint Howells (Ceredigion and Pembroke, North): I am sure that the right hon. Lady will agree that it is difficult to assess whether British farmers have the same opportunity as their European counterparts to compete on equal terms. Will she urge her Government to hold an inquiry to determine whether British farmers are competing on equal terms with their European counterparts? It would restore confidence, which is at its lowest ebb since the war ended.

Mrs. Chalker: I understand what the hon. Gentleman said. In a recent debate, my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food sought to outline his views on that subject. I shall look again at what is available and come back to the hon. Gentleman.

The European Council also agreed to have, within the overall own resources decision annual sub-ceilings on Community revenue, to ensure that overall budget discipline is secured. In all of this the United Kingdom has preserved the benefits of the Fontainebleau abatement mechanism. There were some who said that we should sacrifice some of the abatement to secure agricultural reform. We believed that we could have both, and I am glad to say that the Government were proved right.

The abatement is not a favour to the United Kingdom which we should bargain away in negotiations. The abatement was the recognition by the Community that the United Kingdom was paying more than its fair share to the Community budget. Our argument has always been that we are willing to pay our share of the cost of Community policies, but it has to be a fair share. We shall ensure that it continues to be a fair share.

Mr. George Robertson (Hamilton): I do not wish to raise the excitement level of the debate too quickly, but will the right hon. Lady tell the House who suggested that we should give up some of our abatement to deal with the agricultural crisis? I have no recollection of anybody saying that.

Mrs. Chalker: I shall check on the matter. At this moment, I cannot recall the person who said it, but I have heard it said during our many years of debating these subjects. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will allow me to advise him later.

Sir Anthony Meyer (Clwyd, North-West): If it is of any help to my right hon. Friend, I was the person who said it, and I have said it on repeated occasions. We are frustrating our long-term objectives by concentrating too much on our short-term objectives.

Mrs. Chalker: On a moment's further reflection and with some help from my hon. Friend the Member for Clwyd, North-West (Sir A. Meyer), the hon. Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson) will find that, on one occasion, the European Affairs Committee of the House of Lords referred to both matters being possible. However, we did not agree, and the outcome of the long negotiations has proved the Government to be absolutely right.

In 1984, the Leader of the Opposition told the press:

"The Prime Minister had better enjoy the sunshine at Fontainebleau because I do not think she is going to enjoy a hell of a lot else. She is not coming away with £475 million".

The right hon. Gentleman was right—in a way. We have come away not with £475 million, but with £3,000 million. That is a much more satisfactory solution for this country.

We were confident that, once the case for the abatement had been accepted, it would become enshrined in the policies of the Community. That confidence has been borne out by events.

The key question for the next few years is what sort of Community we create and how we maximise our benefits from it. The Opposition are still coy about giving us their vision of the Community. I understand that. I sympathise with the problem that they face. When Opposition Members were advocating withdrawal from the Community, the British people said no. Now that the Labour leadership is in favour of the Community, the bulk of the Labour party may say no. One of these days, the Labour party may manage to synchronise its policies with the wishes of the British people, but it has not happened yet, and I suspect that it will not happen for a long time.

The Opposition have chosen a somewhat unlikely champion of their new policy that we now hear about. Faced with the impossibility of having a coherent policy here at Westminster, they have left it all to Labour MEPs at the European Parliament. They have just published a new Labour vision for Europe. It is based on the old ideas of the corporate state that have been comprehensively rejected, not just in this country, but in all other member states of the Community. The Labour party's view of Europe is of a Europe firmly governed from the centre. It is a Europe of directive, regulation and bureaucracy, workers' co-operatives and social engineering. It is as though the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) were to be made President of the Commission.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): That is a good idea.

Mrs. Chalker: We can see where the hon. Gentleman's instincts lie. It is an interesting revelation. The Labour party's conception of the Community—be it in Strasbourg or in the House—is wrong.

The Government favour common action in the Community to solve our common problems. The Government favour concerted action to deal with unemployment. The most significant initiative to tackle unemployment, with an agreement on 40 specific proposals for action by the Community and member states, was taken under the British presidency in 1986.

We favour, too, concerted, sensible action to deal with the problems of the environment. It was under this Government that provision for concerted action on the environment was written into the treaty of Rome. That was one of the major elements of the Single European Act. The hon. Members whose party now puts itself forward as the champion of the environment, kept the House night after night opposing the Single European Act. Yet action on the environment was one of its benefits.

The Community has a role to play in setting standards for equality of opportunity. But none of that can be an end in itself. It may create a kind of equality, but it certainly does not create opportunity, and it is opportunity that we need to create.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): In the debate on 17 May when I made a fairly long speech about Ispra, the Under-Secretary of State for Consumer Affairs courteously replied:

"The hon. Member for Linlithgow asked what we wished to see by way of new emphases within those facilities. In my opening remarks I said we felt it regrettable that, for example, the environmental programmes were running at about 14 per cent. Hence, much work remains to be done there."—[*Official Report*, 17 May 1988; Vol. 133, c. 916.]

Can the Minister put flesh on that? Her colleague has said that there is a great deal of work to be done, especially in relation to the joint research centre. Can she be specific about what is to be done?

Mrs. Chalker: I shall not be specific now or I shall take up the time of the House unreasonably. I shall try to give the hon. Gentleman a quick reply if I have the leave of the House to answer at the end of the debate.

In the preface to the pamphlet produced by the British Labour group of the European Parliament, the Leader of the Opposition described the aims of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister in Europe as

"the removal of many of the protections for consumers, citizens and workers which have been built up by national Parliaments over decades and which are seen as rigidities impeding market operations".

Anyone would think that the single market was the sole creation of the United Kingdom, foist in some undemocratic way on our unwilling partners. What nonsense that is. No one would think that the Community's single market agenda for this year had been agreed by all 12 Heads of Government, and that that agenda comprises the liberalisation of capital movements, the opening up of financial services, the liberalisation of transport, the mutual recognition of qualifications and the opening up of public procurement. The White Paper that we are discussing records a notable success in our efforts to liberalise air transport within the Community last year and that should be recognised by the House.

We had an example only this week of what could be achieved once the Community's finances were put on a sound basis. We were able to agree in the Foreign Affairs Council on Tuesday to a new programme of Community expenditure on youth exchanges. I know that a number of hon. Members were concerned that the introduction of such a scheme should not damage our existing youth exchange programmes. Under the agreement that we have reached, our youth exchange centre will be the designated co-ordinating body for Community youth exchanges in this country. The total United Kingdom Government money devoted to youth exchanges in Europe will increase substantially.

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire): My right hon. Friend referred some moments ago to the Opposition's over-bureaucratic approach to the Community, but is she happy about the extent to which the Community seeks to regulate activities within its boundaries? I draw her attention to comparisons that are frequently made between the economic success of the United States over the past 10 to 15 years and that of Europe. I take as one indicator the creation of jobs, which is significantly different. The United States has created many more jobs than the Community. Does my right hon. Friend have any proposals to make to the Community to try to reduce regulations and bureaucracy, to set the economy free and to allow the economy naturally to generate more jobs in the way that the United States has?

Mrs. Chalker: My hon. Friend is well aware that it is almost impossible to make a direct comparison between the United States of America and the EC, for the simple reason that there are vastly different tax systems in the United States, even between states, and in the member countries of the EC.

However, I have some sympathy with my hon. Friend's remarks about regulations. I was a member of the Secretary of State for Employment's committee on breaking down barriers. We have fought consistently, and we shall go on doing so within the EC, to get rid of unnecessary regulations and barriers. But in saying that, let me reassure my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) that if a regulation or a barrier is necessary for security or safety, we shall maintain that in the best interests of Britain and the Community. One must apply common sense to regulations and barriers. There are many more to be dismantled and they will be dismantled, but there may be some which, for our own safety and security, we shall have to retain.

Let me return to what I was saying about the way in which we are making progress—steadily, not dramatically, perhaps sometimes for the hon. Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson) rather boringly, but sound work is often not headline material of newspapers, as he well knows. There is sometimes a tendency to go for the headlines and not do the work. I should prefer to see the work done, whatever the headlines contain.

We have gained agreement from the Commission that the Community should add its weight to that of the United States and other countries in contributing to the International Fund for Ireland which has so effectively supported the economic reconstruction of Northern Ireland and the Republic. That has been the result of a joint initiative by the British and Irish Governments. It is another example of the practical way in which the Community makes its contribution to economic and political development.

I know that to many hon. Members our European agenda is familiar. It is also familiar to those who have witnessed Britain's economic success over the last few years. Our partners, in Europe and beyond, now look to Britain and see not the failed policies of the 1970s, but the success of policies of the 1980s. Fortunately, they do not suffer from political myopia. Conservative or Socialist, they judge Britain by the results that we are achieving and by our successful economic policies. They see the fastest drop in unemployment of any country in the Community. They see the fastest growth. They realise that what has worked at the national level can work at the Community level as well. That is the true measure of the success of our European policies over the last few years. Not only have we achieved essential reforms, but we have, by the success of our financial policies, established a new pattern of policy-making throughout the Community.

Mr. Eric S. Heffer (Liverpool, Walton): How can the right hon. Lady talk about Britain's great economic success when my constituency—in the area that we both represent—has an unemployment level of 27 per cent.? Although the Government argue that unemployment has gone down in the area, the drop is only minimal. No wonder the right hon. Lady only managed to secure her seat at the general election with a majority of 200.

Mrs. Chalker: The hon. Gentleman is wrong in blaming the Government for unemployment in his constituency and in mine. Secondly, he is wrong about my majority, although it was perhaps smaller than I would have wished.

Let me explain the sea change that must take place. Britain cannot continue with a policy of economic regeneration which was out of date before the previous Labour Government left office. It was a policy which, sad to say, laid the basis for the rot in so many companies that did not change their method of working and has produced the unemployment that far too many people suffered in the early 1980s. That level is coming down. Unemployment in my area is coming down.

Whatever may be happening in the hon. Gentleman's area, I shall be doing everything that I can through the Community to ensure that unemployment comes down throughout the country. One of the ways that will happen is by the wider opportunities available to British industry that will result from the single market. That is why we are directing a massive campaign of information and publicity to business and the public, to ensure that they are aware of the opportunities offered by the single market and are able to exploit them in the same way that every other country in the Community is doing.

We have reduced unemployment faster than any other European country because we have created more new jobs than any other European country. We have attracted to this country—and to my part of the world—new investment, which would not have come our way but for the economic policies pursued by the Government. We have done that by creating efficient manufacturing and service industries.

Jobs and prosperity will not be created by directives that dictate to companies the structure of their boards or the detailed organisation of the workplace. Jobs will come from expansion into Europe and, through collaborative ventures, expansion beyond Europe. We have achieved many other aims in the period covered by the White Paper and since then. However, it is more important to look forward, to establish what people want and to define what our combined efforts within the Community can help bring about for the betterment of our citizens.

We want easier and cheaper transport. We want better product standards for consumers. We want the freedom to buy and sell insurance, mortgages and banking services throughout the Community. That is exactly what the single market means. They all touch the lives of ordinary people. Anyone who thinks otherwise is out of touch with today's public, who are buying shares and their own houses. They are out of touch also with those who are unable to own their own homes but are benefiting from improved job opportunities and increased expenditure on health and education, which are the fruits of economic success.

We are now living on the money that British people are earning, and not on the money that the previous Labour Government had to borrow. That is why Britain is enjoying continuing success after seven successive years of growth and with a level of job creation that no other European country is enjoying, and which is envied by our partners.

Our objective has been to achieve all that within a sensible legislative framework. On occasions, the collective action that we take is bound to impose constraints. However, the Community must ensure that such constraints are more than outweighed by the opportunities. If we set the agenda for the Community on the basis outlined by the Labour party in the European Parliament, it would be an agenda of directives and regulations, imposing constraints but not creating opportunities. That is exactly the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth). The Government wish to see the minimum number of regulations and the maximum number of opportunities.

When I was much younger, but still very interested in politics, I took to my heart a remark made by President Kennedy in his inaugural address which I believe remains true today:

"Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country."

Too often, the question is asked, particularly by the Labour party, "What has the Community done for us?", when the proper question to ask is, "What can we do for ourselves within the Community?" Our trade deficit is not a consequence of Community membership; it is a measure of our own failure to take advantage of the opportunities that membership of the Community offers. We will ensure that every company in Britain has the opportunity and the know-how to exploit the opportunities offered by the single market.

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): My right hon. Friend has stated that she wishes to get rid of silly regulations and actions. Last week, the Commission put forward a plan to treble the levy on—of all things—budgie seed. That will increase the retail price of budgie seed by 300 per cent., which will affect 4 million people—many of them pensioners. What could be sillier than that? Will my right hon. Friend put a stop to that silliness—which is but one of many examples—and help pensioners make a saving?

Mrs. Chalker: My hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East has not only waged a significant campaign to establish Miracle Bus in the Community but, from his reading of *The Star*, he will know of the problems which

[Mrs. Chalker]

some correspondents like to make the meat of the European Community. I assure my hon. Friend that he need not worry about budgie seed—we shall make sure that it is available at a competitive price through competition within the European Community.

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

Mrs. Chalker: I have already given way once to every hon. Member who wished to intervene. I believe that I should now draw my remarks to a conclusion.

It is fair to say that when Britain joined the Community, the European playing field was uneven. The rules were written for a game that we were not accustomed to playing. We have changed that. We have reformed the inequities and have brought the rule book up to date. I have made clear the way in which we have set the agenda for the 1990s. The six-monthly White Paper before the House records progress made along that route. I commend it to the House. The next White Paper will record the signal achievements of the past six months. They represent a major landmark in the pursuit of this country's interests and those of the Community as a whole.

4.56 pm

Mr. George Robertson (Hamilton): This debate marks the usual ludicrously belated tour around the European Community and review of matters which occurred nearly a year ago. To be considering a six-month period in the European Community almost 11 months to the day after the commencement of the relevant period makes a mockery of parliamentary scrutiny of this important subject and exposes the all-pervasive influence of the Community. I have protested from this Dispatch Box before about the delay in considering six-monthly reports. I do so again, but I am pessimistic enough to believe that in six or nine months' time, I shall be making precisely the same complaint. That situation is not good enough when so much of what occurs in the Community affects so many people—ranging from the levy on budgie seed to food prices. To be debating such an out-of-date period off events is ludicrous.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: Will the hon. Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson) give me an assurance that Labour MEPs will vote against the directive to treble the levy on budgie seed?

Mr. Robertson: If Labour MEPs thought that I was in any position to give assurances on their behalf, it would send a shudder of apprehension right up their collective spine. However, I am certain that my colleagues in the European Parliament will work to protect the consumer even more than any Government Member has done in the past or is likely to do in the future.

Since the period covered by the report came and went, and as the Minister has bravely reminded the House, there has been held the European summit, which the Prime Minister attended with so many inflexible demands, absolute preconditions and sticking points in mind relating to the key issues which were put before those attending that summit. She returned holding scraps of paper bearing the words, "legally binding guarantees" relating to financial discipline and curbing agricultural spending. The Minister's apologia for that agreement was as limp as anything in the propaganda she has presented today.

Last Thursday's debate on the Community's finances was to the contrary and told the sobering truth about the promise from Brussels. The chairman of the Conservative party, who moonlights as the Paymaster General and is now lying back on the green Government Front Bench, crept in last Thursday night to inform the House that nearly £1 billion extra would have to be coughed up to cover the immediate, euphemistically titled "problems" of the Community. I intend to return to that in a moment.

We said that the Prime Minister had been conned in Brussels. Now there is visible evidence, in the humbling of Her Majesty's Treasury before the Treasury Select Committee and, last Thursday, before the House. The package that the right hon. Lady was sold in February, which she brought back with such embarrassed bravado to the House that Monday afternoon, is now well and truly falling apart. Our much-vaunted rebate is once more in question, pursued by all those in the Community who ignore their own economic miracles so as to pay as little as possible to the Community budget.

The rigid limits on the common agricultural policy which were to rein it in and reduce its impact—we have heard all about them again from the Minister this afternoon—must be seen in the light of the 19·6 per cent. increase in the cost of the CAP in 1988 over that of 1987. That is the real measure of the restraint that the Minister is dangling before us, in the shape of jam tomorrow. Jam today, in the past 12 months, has meant an almost 20 per cent. increase in the cost of the CAP to the consumers of Europe.

The two outcomes of the Brussels summit were not a guaranteed rebate for Britain, or the legally binding controls on agricultural spending of which we were told and have been told again today. Instead, we have learnt a whole new vocabulary of European creative accounting. Added to the euphemism mountain are two new expressions. We now have "financial engineering", which has appeared suddenly on the scene—and the Great Mechanic of the Conservative party is here to articulate it for us. We also have an "inter-institutional agreement" —an IIA to go alongside the IGA or inter-governmental agreement, the reimbursable advances, the non-reimbursable advances and all the other euphemisms for debt, crisis and financial liability. It is almost like that section in *Reader's Digest* called "increase your word power". There is a competition in the European Community to invent new words and expressions simply to cover up the fact that more cash is required.

The period that we are discussing covers the period of sabotage of the framework research programme by the British Government, who delayed and delayed its commencement, setting back valuable work right across the Community. They then jumped in and rejoined on almost exactly the terms that they initially rejected. It also covers the period when the Government decided to pull out of the European Space Agency project, and then tried to get in again on the cheapest available terms.

Thus the tangible areas of non-Europeanism were displayed to our friends and allies at a time when the Prime Minister was trying, with a notable lack of success, to impose her conditions—conditions to which we subscribe and on which we supported her—on the uncontrolled budget of the European Community. This Prime Minister

is one of the least communitarian of all Prime Ministers since the war. She despises her fellow Heads of Government, treating them like mere Conservative Cabinet Ministers. She suspects their intelligence and openly displays her contempt for their judgment. She pays, and as a consequence everyone in this country pays, a rich price for the domineering, abrasive way in which she goes about her European business.

I mentioned before the humiliating spectacle of the Paymaster General—the Conservative party chairman—coming back to the House last week to tell us that he was about to bail out the Common Market to the tune of almost £1 billion, which is almost equivalent to our total net contribution last year, and simultaneously introduce primary legislation to agree to a new own-resources formula for the European budget. All that is in advance of the so-called legally binding commitments on future spending. None of it is written down; none of it is agreed; nothing is actually on paper. Yet we in the British Parliament are being told to endorse the new arrangements.

Apart from being procedurally breathtaking, the gambit displays how bad the crisis really is. This time it is wholly appropriate to shoot the messenger, as the messenger is part of the process. The root of the Community's crisis remains in the CAP as it always has, and events in the past week show only too well that the Hanover summit in a few weeks' time may well be dominated like so many before it by a cash crisis caused by agricultural overspending.

Stabilisers—the great new wheeze invented for Brussels: the limits on production beyond which price cuts will be made—were set far too high, far higher than the Prime Minister knew was required, so no real progress can even be foreseen for at least a year. In her speech, the Minister—cleverly, I concede—disguised the fact that any savings as a result of stabilisers will certainly not come in the near future, if indeed in the distant future. Still the waste goes on, with the Community's wealth squandered on storing and destroying food that no one wants.

Opposition Members are often accused of being biased and prejudiced on the issue, and of giving the Government an unfair time. But a recent escapee from the British Civil Service has blown a valuable and well-informed whistle on the whole matter of the CAP. Sir Michael Franklin, who has just retired as permanent secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, has written an excellent and highly readable book published by the Royal Institute of International Affairs and entitled, appropriately, "Rich Man's Farming: The Crisis in Agriculture". He paints a dismal picture. It comes from the pen of someone who really knows what he is talking about, and what has gone on in the Community.

Sir Michael tells us that over the past decade agricultural expenditure rose by 7 per cent. per annum, when the wealth of the European Community, measured in gross domestic product at constant prices, grew by only 2 per cent. By 1985, real farm incomes were back at 1974 levels, and in the next three years they dropped in real terms by 3 per cent.—and this at a time when the standard of living in the rest of the Community was rising. Meanwhile the numbers employed in agriculture dropped by 24 per cent. between 1973 and 1983, and continue to drop.

It is a failure of a policy in every one of the respects for which it was designed, designed as it was to protect farm communities and incomes and to ensure balanced food supplies for the people of Europe. Still the 12 nations of the European Community conspire, either deliberately or through intimidation, to maintain a policy of waste, expense and high food prices which constantly bankrupts the Community of all promise.

Let me deal briefly with the important subject of the Government's accountability to this Parliament for European Community affairs. It is now some considerable time since the Single European Act—carried through the mechanism of the European Communities (Amendment) Act 1986—came into force, with all the new powers conceded to European Community institutions. I congratulate the Minister on managing, after about a year of the operation of the new amended treaty, to get a published document on to the streets of Britain so that we know what we are up against. That at least shows some efficiency, a year being a commendably short time for the Government to bring those important documents out into the open.

The Single European Act meant more majority voting, with automatic implementation of Community law in this country. It meant more powers for the European Parliament and for European measures. More competence is covered, including European political co-operation—that is, the co-ordination of foreign policy. All that stems from the European Single Act, yet the House has not changed its procedures one jot in recognition of the increasing pervasiveness of European legislation—whether we regard that pervasiveness as good or bad—and the institutions within it.

Looking at the recent European Parliament report, snappily entitled "Bodies Specialising in European Community Affairs Within National Parliaments", I do not wish to make a partisan point, but I was struck by how poorly our Parliament supervises the European dimension.

The House of Commons Select Committee on European Legislation has staff but few powers to do more than recommend matters for usually delayed debates in the House. My hon. Friend the Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) chairs that Committee and is recognised for his great skill and industry. It is sad that he cannot be in his usual place today, but he also chairs the Select Committee on the Lyndhurst bypass and is paying a long-arranged visit to the New forest to see where the bypass is to be located. However, I know that he would concede that the staff and the powers of the Select Committee are wholly inadequate to deal with the post-European Single Act era.

The House of Lords Select Committee, which the right hon. Lady chose to mention in her speech, is an admirable institution which does an excellent job monitoring the details and the broad issues involved in the European Community, but it is surely perverse and indefensible that that scrutiny function should exist only in the non-elected Upper House.

The sheer magnitude of the issues which will hit this country, sometimes foreseen but often unpredicted, are not debated regularly and are never voted upon by Parliament, will soon become a scandal unless we create our own institutions to deal with them. It is one thing—and, of course, it is a controversial thing—to concede elements of sovereignty to European institutions, but it is quite another thing—and much more worrying—to

[Mr. Robertson]

concede the right to monitoring, supervising and even discussing what is being decided in our name outside this place.

Therefore, I ask the Minister to give the House an assurance that action will be taken to get an immediate review of the way in which the House of Commons considers European Community business, perhaps through the vehicle of the Procedure Committee, so that we can ensure the elementary consideration of the very important issues that can affect so many people in this country so often and in so many ways.

I now turn to the completion of the internal European market and its great target date of 1992. Lord Young, who never has to answer critics from both sides of this House, is already spending something like £5 million on yet another media extravaganza that warns, cajoles, hectors and boasts about 1992, its pitfalls and its opportunities. The House and the country would be wise to remain sober about what this business men's Euro-hype is all about.

First, there is already a single market in Europe, albeit incomplete, and Britain has not done very well as a consequence of it. Membership has already seen a flood of European goods drowning many United Kingdom industries. Secondly, the abolition of all remaining restrictions to trade—if such an event were possible—without major changes in attitude by British industry would lead to an even more calamitous devastation of British industry at the hands of our Community competitors.

The disciples of free European trade—the doomed Commissioner Lord Cockfield being in their front rank—see multiplying benefits from removing non-tariff barriers. The Cecchini report entitled "European Challenge", inititated by the European Commission and published this month, is lyrical in its exposition of the remarkable improvements to competition, efficiency and employment that will result from completing the internal market. It claims a 5 per cent. increase in Community, GNP, and a dazzling 1·8 million jobs to be created and to be set against Communitywide unemployment totalling 16 million.

It ill becomes the right hon. Lady, who has a good reputation for being frank and honest, to boast that we have the biggest reduction in unemployment in the Community when we had one of the largest rates of unemployment in the Community—and most of that was created by her Government during the nine years they have been in power.

The unemployment rate in this country in the last 12 months before the 1979 election went down every month. It shot up to ludicrous and shameful levels under this Administration. Therefore, for the right hon. Lady to take credit for managing to achieve marginal reductions is breathtaking in its cheek.

Mrs. Chalker: I remind the hon. Gentleman that it was once said—and he will remember by whom—that inflation is the mother and father of unemployment. That is what happened under the Labour Government. Inflation put in train unemployment. The high levels of inflation, the failure of the Labour Government to control inflation in the late 1970s and their propensity to go on borrowing caused the unemployment at the beginning of the 1980s.

Mr. Robertson: The right hon. Lady's memory is probably faulty after nine years of struggling to justify the policies of the Government.

In the 12 months before the 1979 election, inflation and unemployment were going down every month. Within months of the 1979 election—if we really need to relive that period—VAT was almost doubled by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, now the right hon. Lady's boss in the Foreign Office, and unemployment climbed to a historically high level which beat that of our European competitors by a mile. That is what the right hon. Lady finds it so difficult to defend.

The new rose-coloured studies that are being produced mask a complex and wholly unrealistic set of assumptions which have been criticised in detail by reputable research institutes such as the Centre for Economic Relations and DRI Europe. DRI suggests that the increase in GNP will be closer to 0·5 per cent. than to 5 per cent. and that a mere 300,000 jobs will be created.

Those studies, whether they are optimistic or pessimistic, add little to the understanding of what is being contemplated for 1992. Their lack of realism and the sheer hypotheses of their assumptions mean that they should be dismissed as crystal gazing. In fact, I would suggest that the right hon. Lady would be wiser to consult Mrs. Nancy Reagan's astrologer.

Much of what is intended in completing the single internal market is good, sensible and, indeed, overdue. The harmonisation of technical and product standards will make it easier to sell and buy across the Community, as long as the British Government have the same single-minded determination as the French, the Italians and the Germans in making sure that we get a fair share of the technical standards adopted by the Community as part of that harmonisation process, and that we are not left hanging around with continental standards being adopted for everything.

The harmonisation of qualifications will at last make possible the real free movement of labour. The elimination or reduction of wasteful bureacratic border procedures will help industry and trade and those who are involved in it. But the tragedy, or the sinister element behind this great £5 million advertising hype is the vision of a Thatcher-Cockfield package that is being sold to our fellow Europeans in the same way as it is being peddled to the British public.

The Government see 1992 as a vision of Euro-Thatcherism with unrestrained competition, liberated and uncontrolled market forces, wholesale deregulation with no protection for the vulnerable industries, companies, regions and communities around us. This week we heard evidence of that attitude in the words of Mr. David Williamson. The report we are considering notes with some pride that Mr. David Williamson

"formerly a senior Cabinet Office official, was appointed Secretary-General of the Commission on 1 October."

I am sure that what he said in London this week about the single market has been drawn to the Minister's attention. He said:

"In the UK there is rather a heavy concentration on the internal market as a cash register operation."

That is out of the mouth of somebody who has been through the indoctrination process of the Foreign Office

and the Cabinet Office. He can now tell the truth because he has been liberated from the coat tails of the lady in No. 10. He went on:

"The community must also decide accompanying economic, social and structural policy measures if it was to achieve the full benefits of a unified market."

If the Minister can liberate herself from the lady in No. 10, perhaps she will tell us whether she agrees with the Cockfield view of the internal market or with the Williamson interpretation. I am sure that we would all like to know.

There is no question in the Government's mind of seeing intervention as a mechanism for easing transition or to facilitate change. After 1992 there is to be no drive to create alternative employment when jobs are lost, no harmonisation of workers' rights from country to country and no equalisation of anything other than the lowest possible level of health and safety standards, despite the fact that article 118A of the Single European Act, about which the Minister spoke lyrically, provides specific powers for that to be an accompanying measure for any movement towards a completed market. A free market does not make a fairer market and, as Mr. Williamson says, an unfair market will simply not produce the rewards that are envisaged by the programme.

I agree that the single European market will provide opportunities but it will also provide dangers for British industry. It will open the doors to our exporters but it will open doors wide to imports from the Community. It could lead to a considerable new trade for British firms but, without adequate safeguards, it could see our small and medium-sized businesses die in the fight against European mega-firms. The events of this week in watching the Rowntree takeover only too amply illustrate the dangers that there may be.

In its editorial today, the *Financial Times* says:

"There is a risk that in the rush to prepare for 1992, too many European industries will be concentrated in the hands of a few giant concerns which will be tempted to collude rather than compete."

It goes on to say:

"Nevertheless, it would be quite wrong to get carried away with the idea that big is best or that what businessmen think is in their own interests is always good for the consumer."

That is a danger in the single European market that exists for all of us.

Mr. David Curry (Skipton and Ripon): Did the hon. Gentleman note that the same editorial in the *Financial Times* approved the Government's decision not to refer the Rowntree bid to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission?

Mr. Robertson: I am not in the least surprised at that attitude from the house magazine for the British capital market. However, it is appropriate that it should warn the Government and the country of the dangers that are in our way if 1992 is simply seen, as Lord Cockfield, the Prime Minister, Lord Young and others see it, as a paradise for big business and trouble for everybody else in the country.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): Would my hon. Friend care to comment on the fact that the advertisements that have been chosen by the Department of Trade and Industry to advertise the benefits of the single market have selected two very big and ugly business men, which seems rather strange to us?

Mr. Robertson: I would not go on the aesthetic merits of Mr. Alan Sugar or any of the others. However, they are big business men and that should worry a lot of people in the country, who, at the moment, have not yet taken on the challenges and risks involved in European trade. Such people would be wise to look carefully at what has happened to Rowntree. The business was built on hard graft, good sense, initiative and enterprise and it is now to be swallowed up simply as a mechanism for giving Nestlé or other competitors a bigger slice of the market in Europe. In spite of that, we do not hear a squeak on the advertisements about a stronger competition policy for the Community or any policy on mergers and acquisitions that might give encouragement to companies to believe that they would be protected.

We know that the Government are not concerned with that because they do not have the slightest clue about what the impact of 1992 will be on most British industry. We have repeatedly asked—it has been repeatedly denied—for a sector-by-sector, industry-by-industry study showing the potential impact of 1992. Only in that way can we fully appreciate the risks to British industry and the opportunities that might be opened up. A £5 million television advertising campaign on behalf of British big business is no substitute for that. The Prime Minister clearly sees it as being an unbalanced, uninformed, ill-prepared and doctrinaire plunge into the unknown. Those in this country whose livelihoods are tied in with that future would be well advised to worry about it.

I should like to conclude on a positive note. I would have liked to have started on a positive note but the manifest failures of the Government demand to be exposed for the wasted opportunities that they represent. The Community has promise. There are challenges that it can meet and dominate, given the political will of the leadership in the 12 countries concerned. European political co-operation has seen the development of co-ordinated policies to the outside world and their deployment to the benefit of everyone. The fact that it has pushed the Government into being more radical, sensible and practical than they want to be is all to the good.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: Give us an example.

Mr. Robertson: The impending protocol linking the European Community and COMECON, both East and West in Europe, overcoming years of mutual distrust, is a significant step forward for us all. The call on Tuesday by European Foreign Ministers, following the meeting with Foreign Minister Peres of Israel, for more progress on the middle east is an excellent example of the Community using its influence where it can in order to move events forward. In central America, South Africa and Turkey, European political co-operation has meant that a unified European voice has influenced world events that will affect all our nations in time.

That is a process we welcome and we hope that it will be deepened. The opportunities for European co-operation are considerable. In mobilising the momentum of ESPRIT, EUREKA and RACE to face the technological challenge of Japan, in seeing environmental protection as a Europewide problem to be met at a European level, in the idea of a community, not of a free-for-all market, working together on common problems in a small world, we have considerable hope to offer all the people of Europe.

Parliament for the research, development, application, demonstration and monitoring of clean renewable sources of energy together with ways and means of proving and improving techniques of energy efficiency and fostering their positive adoption: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 8 July and to be printed. [Bill 174.]

Orders of the Day

Criminal Justice Bill *[Lords]*

As amended (in the Standing Committee), considered.

Mr. Speaker: We now come to the Report stage of the Criminal Justice Bill. Before we proceed, it might be of assistance to the House if I say a word about new clause 17, entitled "Modification of criminal law relating to abortion" in the name of the right hon. Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine) and other hon. Members.

It is a long-standing rule of the House, referred to on page 522 of "Erskine May", that a Bill may not be proceeded with if a Bill containing similar provisions has already been given a Second Reading in the same Session. As the Abortion (Amendment) Bill has been read a Second time and is still before the House, it would not be in order to import provisions similar to the terms of that Bill into the Criminal Justice Bill. The new clause is therefore out of order and was not available for me to select.

As to other new clauses that have not been selected, I shall not depart from the standard practice of not giving reasons for my selection.

Sir Bernard Braine (Castle Point): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Not for one moment would I challenge your decision on the matter. I am familiar with the passage on page 522 of "Erskine May". You will remember, however, that, a little further on on that page, "Erskine May" states that, if the first Bill were to be withdrawn, a new clause such as the one put down in my name and those of other hon. Members, if selected, would certainly be in order for inclusion in the second Bill, in this instance the Criminal Justice Bill.

I trust that you will be aware, Mr. Speaker, of the immense dissatisfaction—indeed, anger—felt in many parts of the country and here at the way in which the Abortion (Amendment) Bill, which not only had a Second Reading, to which you have alluded, but a Committee stage and debate on Report, with a majority thoughout its stages, was frustrated by procedural devices, if I may put it in the kindliest way. You will know too that the Government have offered no facilities for providing the time in which the vital votes on that Bill, which would have taken only a matter of minutes, could be taken. Therefore, I ask for your guidance as to whether, in the event of the Bill being withdrawn, it would be in order for new clause 17 to be selected for debate at a later stage in the consideration of the Criminal Justice Bill.

Mr. Speaker: That is a hypothetical matter. If the right hon. Gentleman considers that that is an action that he should take, the new clause would undoubtedly become available for selection.

Mr. David Alton (Liverpool, Mossley Hill): Further to the point of order raised by the right hon. Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine), Mr. Speaker. I put it to you that there will be considerable consternation, bewilderment and, indeed, a little cynicism that the House will today be able to provide so much time to debate the restoration of the death penalty, whereas we shall find no time to debate the further passage of a measure that has achieved considerable support in the House and would actually save life. Given that, in 1967, 25 hours of

Government time were provided for the 1967 legislation to make progress, would it be proper for you to have discussions with the Government to find ways in which the House could reach a resolution of the matter? If that were not to be done, would it not continue to bring the House and its institutions into disrepute?

Mr. Speaker: It is not a matter for me to have discussions on matters of that kind. As the whole House knows, I am bound by the rules laid down under the Standing Orders. If the House wishes to change them, it is a matter for the Procedure Committee.

New Clause 1

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

'The maximum sentence available to the Courts upon a conviction for murder shall be death in the manner authorised by law.

The jury shall have the power, upon reaching a verdict of guilt of murder, to recommend that such a sentence be passed. —*[Mr. Gale.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

4.56 pm

Mr. Roger Gale (Thanet, North): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take the following: amendment (b) to the new clause, after first "murder" to add—

'in the course of an act of terrorism'.

New clause 11—*Death penalty for murder*—

'The maximum penalty for murder shall be death.'.

New clause 15—*Sentences for murder*—

'The penalty for murder shall be life imprisonment, but the trial judge shall have the power to impose the death penalty where the circumstances of the murder reflect particular premeditation, brutality or callousness; or to recommend the imposition of a minimum sentence where public protection requires it.'.

Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop (Tiverton): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. May we know your intentions as to which of these new clauses you will permit Divisions to be taken upon?

Mr. Speaker: After new clause 1 has been divided upon —if it succeeds—there will be a Division on amendment (b).

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. As new clause 11 is being debated with this, will a Division on it follow the Division on new clause 1?

Mr. Speaker: New clause 11 would fall for Division, if it falls at all, in its proper place on Report. Its fate depends upon the decision taken on new clause 1.

Mr. Gale: I am aware that a long list of names has been submitted to you, Mr. Speaker, by colleagues on both sides of the House who wish to speak on an important subject. For that reason, I shall endeavour to keep my remarks as brief as possible. I hope that the House will therefore understand if, within the normal courtesies, I give way to intervention as little as possible. Naturally, if a particular point is raised, I shall endeavour to accommodate it.

On many occasions since abolition, the House has voted on the restoration of capital punishment. On each and every occasion, the House has consistently rejected restoration. On each occasion, it was absolutely apparent that public opinion was in favour of restoration. Therefore, no hon. Member would fail to concede that the House has flown in the face of public opinion. *[Interruption.]* Please hear me. I think that it should be a matter of public record that I particularly, as the hon. Member who has moved the new clause, accept entirely that the House and its Members are not mandated, and never should be.

I accept the deep moral and religious convictions of those of my hon. Friends, and personal friends on both sides of the House, who take the opposing view to mine. I believe that we, as Members of Parliament, have a duty to listen to public opinion, but a greater duty to exercise our judgment individually. For that reason in part, I have also never subscribed to the view that we should govern the country by referendum. While I have no doubt, having seen opinion polls, that a referendum on this subject would suit my purpose, once down that road we would have to question where we would stop and how we would govern the country in future. I hope and believe, therefore, that every hon. Member will exercise his own judgment when we vote tonight, without heed to official or unofficial party Whips or any other matters of which you, of course, have no knowledge, Mr. Speaker.

New clause 1 seeks to reintroduce capital punishment as the maximum available sentence for the crime of murder, and does so without stipulating any categories. It therefore also seeks to give a jury power to recommend a sentence to the judge. What it does not do—I wish to refer to this later—is seek to give the jury power to sentence. That power would remain, as hitherto, with the courts.

The new clause and amendments have been the subject of much public debate in recent weeks, and therefore of much criticism. I have endeavoured to respond to the comments and queries raised by my hon. Friends on both sides of the House, and I should like to cover some of them publicly today. First, eyebrows have been raised over the proposal to introduce a maximum available sentence, rather than the mandatory sentence for the crime of murder that has been on the statute book in the past. Sir Ian Percival, when he was my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Southport, informed the House in our last debate on this subject that he beleved that only a mandatory sentence would act as a true deterrent. While I supported the general thrust of his learned argument, I differed with him on that point. I believe that the reverse is true, and that the mere possibility that a criminal might face the capital consequences of his act would constitute a deterrent. I wish to pursue the deterrent argument again a little later.

Some have questioned the fact that the new clause contains no category of murder. Should we reintroduce capital punishment for terrorism, for the murder of police officers or officers of the Crown while on duty and in uniform, for the murder of children or for premeditated murder? The new clause seeks to reintroduce capital punishment as a maximum available sentence for all crimes of murder, because no two crimes are the same. It seeks to take into account the particular circumstances surrounding any one crime.

Perhaps most controversial has been the suggestion that the jury should have the power to recommend a sentence to the court. But it is the jury, is it not, who hear the evidence, see the demeanour of the accused and see each and every witness to the trial? The jury must therefore

[Mr. Gale]

be in a particular and privileged position to determine not only whether the alleged perpetrator of a crime is indeed guilty, but whether the crime is so heinous and so vile as to warrant the maximum sentence.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): Will my hon. Friend give way on that point?

Mr. Gale: I have said that, within the courtesies of the House, I do not wish to give way——

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: My hon. Friend said that he might.

Mr. Gale: —because I want as many hon. Members as possible on both sides of the House to have the opportunity to make a full contribution.

It has been suggested to me that a jury in such circumstances might feel intimidated, and would be less likely to return a guilty verdict knowing that they would then have to make some recommendation on what should happen after the verdict had been returned.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: They used to recommend mercy. This is the obverse of that.

Mr. Gale: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. I am coming to that point. There is good precedent for such a recommendation. Juries in the past, and indeed today, not uncommonly recommend that clemency or, alternatively, stringency be exercised in the sentence following the verdict that they have delivered. There is no suggestion that juries were intimidated in the past when they not only had the opportunity to recommend a sentence, but knew for certain that if they passed a guilty verdict in certain circumstances they would be condemning a human being to death. Juries in the past have carried out that task, I do not say with pleasure, but certainly as an act of duty, and I have no doubt that a modern jury is just as capable of performing the same task.

It has been suggested that in some way the jury will be given the power to pass sentence. This element of the new clause has been widely represented in the media. The right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) drew that salient fact to my attention this morning. It would not be possible for the jury to pass sentence, for only the judge and then the court, following the determination of guilt, have access to all the other factors —to a record of previous crimes or to previous sentences.

For that reason, I believe that it is absolutely correct that the jury should return its verdict and then, on the evidence that it has heard in the trial, make a recommendation. It will then properly be left to the judge and the court, in the knowledge of all the other factors, to decide whether to adopt the jury's recommendation or to ignore it; or, where a jury does not recommend, perhaps —in the light of a previous record—to impose the maximum sentence nevertheless. It will, as always in the past, be open to the defence to appeal against sentence. Under the new Criminal Justice Act which the Bill will become, it will also be open to the prosecution in the light of a jury recommendation overlooked by the judge to seek the right to appeal against sentence.

I have, of course, had to take into account the circumstances currently prevailing in Northern Ireland, where there are at present no juries. In those circumstances, as with any other case that is currently tried in Northern Ireland, the judge alone will have to reach his decision. I fervently hope that the day will soon come when it will be possible to return to jury trial in Northern Ireland, but until that day I believe that we have courageous judges in Northern Ireland who are capable of carrying out that duty. Once again, if a judge decides not to impose the maximum sentence, the prosecution, under the new Act, will have the right to appeal.

This is a moral issue and as such the subject, I hope, of a completely free vote. This is the time and the place for each hon. Member to exercise his or her judgment and to take into account deeply personal views. I should like to take just a few moments to place mine on record. I have never been an advocate of the reintroduction of hanging. I have said consistently that I believe the ritual of hanging to be medieval and barbaric. Notwithstanding a *Daily Telegraph* article titled by a sub-editor:

"Why I believe in hanging",

I do not believe that there is any nice way to take the life of another human being but there are available more humane ways, if it is necessary, than simply stringing somebody up.

Mr. Robert G. Hughes (Harrow, West) *rose*——

Mr. Gale: I said that I did not wish to give way. I hope that my hon. Friend will make his own contribution later.

I have also had to address myself, particularly in the light of the questions that have been put to me personally and publicly in recent days, to the possibility of error. I have to accept, as any hon. Member must, that human justice is fallible. So I have to accept that the possibility of error, and therefore of wrongful execution, exists. But since abolition, more than 50 murderers have been released from prison to kill again. I do not wish to suggest to the House that had this amendment been on the statute book all those victims would be alive today, because that would be nonsense, but at least some of them would be alive. If this amendment were to save one life, that would make worth while the risk that I and my hon. Friends accept.

I have been asked why I am introducing the amendment. I do not seek vengeance or punishment; I seek solely a deterrent. Prior to the abolition of capital punishment, the overall trend in homicide was down. In the year immediately before abolition there was a slight rise, but the overall trend was down when the overall trend in every other crime was up. Immediately following abolition there was a dramatic increase not only in homicide, but, perhaps more significantly, in armed and violent crime.

It is an absolute and substantiated fact that prior to abolition the professional criminal as a general rule did not carry weapons. Not only did he not carry weapons but he would search his colleagues before going out on a job to ensure that nobody was carrying a weapon. Hon. Members on both sides will no doubt remember the "George Davis is innocent" campaign. At that time, I, as a professional reporter, met a number of large and sinister gentlemen from the east end of London. I was informed that they used not to carry weapons and that they regarded those who did as amateurs but that since abolition it had become commonplace for the professional criminal to go out armed.

We voted on this subject only a few months ago, so why am I introducing it again now? Of course, it is a new

Parliament and there are new Members who have not had the opportunity to voice their opinion on the subject. I hope and believe that hon. Members on both sides of the House will agree that new Members should have that opportunity, but for me there is a much more serious reason which lies in clause 42 of the Bill.

Under clause 42, the penalty for carrying a gun in the perpetration of a crime will be the same as the penalty for using a gun and the penalty for murder—life imprisonment. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, for whom I have the highest regard, has told the House that he believes that life imprisonment should mean life. His opposition to my new clause is well known. Therefore, when he addresses the House I have to ask him to tell me and others what reason the criminal will have, when cornered, not to pull the trigger.

The police, security guards and the public-spirited will no longer be able to face with safety the duty which they wish to carry out unless we have capital punishment on the statute book as the ultimate deterrent. Tonight the House will vote not just for the death penalty but either for the reintroduction of capital punishment or by implication for the introduction within a short time of a fully armed police force. I do not like either option, but I prefer the former to the latter.

This is an emotive subject. It is a matter of life and death. It is not only a matter of the life and death of the convicted criminal; it is a matter of the life and death of small children, of rape victims, of the elderly, and of the men and women of the police force whom we require to implement our law. I hope and believe that, having heard all the arguments, the House will vote for the new clause tonight.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I think that I can help the hon. Gentleman. I should clarify what I said earlier to him. What we are voting upon today on new clause 1 is the principle of capital punishment. If it is carried, there will be a Division on amendment (b). I have not selected for Division new clauses 11 and 15.

5.15 pm

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hurd): My hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, North (Mr. Gale) has moved his new clause with force and clarity, as we would expect, and he has done more. I agree with him that it is natural and right that the House should wish to discuss the matter fairly early in the life of this Parliament. His initiative has given us an apt opportunity to do so.

I think it would be right to follow today a convention which has grown up over the years—that the holder of my office should first set out some of the factual and statistical background, then offer some analysis of the proposal before the House, and finally, and in this case briefly, add his personal views.

So we start with the statistics. As my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan) said during the debate in 1983, we cannot avoid doing so, but it would be a mistake if we expected the figures to give us an unequivocal answer. I do not think that anyone is likely to base his or her vote tonight on statistics alone, but here they are for what they are worth.

The number of offences initially recorded as homicide in England and Wales last year was 689. That figure has increased, with some fluctuations, since the late 1950s. In the decade from 1956 to 1965, the average number of recorded homicides each year was 294; in the following decade, from 1966 to 1975, it was 450; from 1976 to 1985, it averaged 580. We need to qualify those figures in a number of ways. In the first place many homicides turn out to have been manslaughter rather than murder. The number of convictions for murder has also been rising, although it is substantially lower. In recent years there have been between 150 and 170 convictions for murder each year.

Secondly, the rise in the number of homicides has been markedly slower than the rise in other violent crime. The number of recorded homicides in the 20 years from 1966 to 1985 was 60 per cent. higher than in the preceding 20 years, from 1946 to 1965. But the number of serious violent offences was 160 per cent. higher, and the total of recorded crime of all kinds—20 years against 20 years—was 220 per cent. higher.

Perhaps it would be useful to take a longer historical view. The highest levels of homicide, as a proportion of population, were recorded in the latter part of the last century. The peak was 1·96 homicides per 100,000 population in 1865, compared with 1·38 last year. The period between the wars and immediately after the last war was one in which homicide was running at a substantially lower rate. Since the sixties, it has climbed back to roughly where it was in the late 1880s, but not to the level of the 1860s.

If we are considering the figures, we must look also at the circumstances in which those offences are committed. It is fairly well known that about half of all homicides result from a quarrel, revenge or loss of temper. In about another 15 per cent., the suspect commits suicide or is mentally disturbed. Almost three quarters of homicides involve victims and suspects who are acquainted with each other, often within a family.

So the statistics can and no doubt will be used both ways in the argument about deterrence. I have tried not to steer them in either direction. On the one hand, it is true that there has been a steady increase in homicide since the death penalty was abolished. On the other hand, that increase has not matched the general increase in crime; it is possible to trace it back to the period before abolition; and homicide was proportionately at its highest in the middle of the last century, when the death penalty was routinely imposed. As I said in the debate last year—I shall not repeat the figures—in the days of capital punishment, when the number of executions went up or down substantially from year to year, there was not a clear relationship between the number of executions in any year and the number of homicides in the immediately following period.

As others have done, I have looked at the research in other countries to see if it would add to the picture. The two leading American studies point in opposite directions and give rise to much academic dispute, but give no clear conclusion. The only conclusion that one can draw from the American experience is that, both in states where they have capital punishment and in the others where they have not, their murder rates are consistently and substantially higher than ours.

If the only consideration—the one my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, North spent, understandably, some

[Mr. Douglas Hurd]

time on—were to secure the public from even the smallest risk that a convicted murderer would kill again, then of course putting him to death provides that assurance. Offences of homicide committed by those who have previously been convicted of murder are rare. We know of only nine cases—I state this because other figures have been put—in which someone convicted of murder after the abolition of capital punishment in 1965 has later killed again. On the information available to us, we judge that at least six of those nine, and perhaps more, would not have been treated as capital murders under the Homicide Act 1957 had those offences occurred before abolition. In short, in only a handful of cases—at the most three—is it likely that a life would have been saved by the execution of a murderer in the period since abolition.

Nevertheless, whatever the right figure—I would argue that it is a small one—no one can deny that the death penalty is a sure means, although imperfectly targeted, of preventing reoffending. Perhaps at this point I should remind the House that those most likely to suffer the death penalty were it to be reintroduced—the perpetrators of the most heinous murders—would as a result of the policy introduced in 1983 by my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Richmond, Yorks, which I am continuing, normally expect to serve at least 20 years in prison and in some cases still longer. In a number of cases that will mean imprisonment until the end of the prisoner's life. There is no question of vicious murderers being let out after a few years of imprisonment.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: Where does my right hon. Friend get the figure of nine for the number of murderers who have killed again? That is not the understanding of many hon. Members on this side of the House.

Mr. Hurd: People use homicide as if it were the same as murder. The other is that, even in the case of murderers, of course, one has to ask whether in the days when there was capital punishment, or if in future we entered into one of the schemes proposed before the House, all murderers would or will be executed. We have to take both those matters into account in working out the figures. The result is then the result that I have given to the House.

In reply to the specific questions raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, North, I would say that the deterrent to the offender whom he postulated pulling the trigger is that he would be more likely to receive the maximum of life imprisonment if he did so, since we are talking about maximum penalties and not mandatory ones. Judges are generally imposing longer sentences for violent offences and the actual time served for punishment by life sentence prisoners—often called the tariff—will take account of that. Each case has to be considered by the Home Office on its merits, but I can tell the House that there will be an increase in the time thus served.

I now come to the specific new clause and the amendments associated with it.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: Before my right hon. Friend moves on to the new clause, will he tell the House two things? First, where a convicted person is already serving the maximum sentence, what is the disincentive to him murdering warders to effect an escape or murdering policemen who try to re-arrest him?

Mr. Hurd: That is one question. The convicted murderer will have to assess the likelihood, which will vary according to circumstances, that he will spend all his natural life inside prison. Before he commits that further offence, he must weigh against that the chance of being let out to spend part of his natural life outside, which he will prejudice and sacrifice. That is the calculation that he will have to make.

The big debate about capital punishment in the late 1940s and 1950s arose partly from a campaign for abolition as a matter of principle. However, it also arose from a dissatisfaction about the blanket nature of the penalty. For example, as the House has often recalled, there were the cases of Derek Bentley and Ruth Ellis which mustered the anxiety of many people. The view which gained ground in the early 1950s was that, even though the system was softened because the Home Secretary could recommend the exercise of the royal prerogative of mercy, it was unduly harsh for death to be the automatic penalty in all cases of murder.

So the Homicide Act 1957 attempted to define degrees of murder, and gave a statutory definition of the murders which would in future attract the capital penalty. However, that ran into trouble. There were inconsistencies and anomalies that incurred a further sense of dissatisfaction which went beyond the principle of capital punishment. That is why my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, North and my other hon. Friends are trying to get around that problem in a slightly different way.

My hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, North would specify the death penalty as the maximum for murder, and would also give the jury an opportunity to recommend to the judge that he use the discretion in any particular case. My hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, North (Mr. Bendall) and others would simply specify death as the maximum penalty for murder, thus leaving the matter entirely to the sentencing judge, with no role for the jury. My right hon. Friend the Member for Brent, North (Sir R. Boyson), and those who have signed his amendment, would put the judge in a slightly different position, with a power to recommend to the Home Secretary that a penalty should be imposed where the murder has involved premeditation, brutality or callousness.

All three approaches would confer on the sentencing judge a discretion which neither he nor the Home Secretary had in the days before the abolition of capital punishment. In those days, a judge had no choice but to impose the death penalty. Even the Home Secretary—although he had an unenviable job—was charged only with deciding whether the law should take its course, not whether the sentence in some cases should be death and in others a period of imprisonment.

5.30 pm

That was precisely the point which the Royal Commission on capital punishment, under Sir Ernest Gowers, reported on in 1953. The commission considered—and rejected—the idea that the sentencing judge might have discretion over the use of the death penalty. It feared that it would lead to inconsistent practice and that it would put an intolerable burden on the judge. A short extract from the commission's report states:

"the responsibility of deciding whether a person convicted of murder should be sentenced to death or to a lesser punishment is too heavy a burden to impose on any single individual. The sentence of death differs absolutely, not in degree, from any

other sentence; and it would be wholly inconsistent with our traditional approach to such issues to lay on the shoulders of the Judge a responsibility so grave and so invidious."

That was the judgment of the Gowers commission on that point.

After I had seen the new clause tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, North, I thought it sensible to ask the Lord Chief Justice to express a view, not on the merits of capital punishment, but on the possibility that the judiciary might have a role in deciding which murders should be punished by death. With Lord Lane's permission, I can tell the House that he would be strongly opposed to my hon. Friend's proposal. It should, in his view, be for Parliament, not the judges, to decide which types of murder should be met with death and which should not. Some individual variations in lengths of sentences of imprisonment are, the Lord Chief Justice believes, inevitable and acceptable, but individual variations in decisions of life and death would be inevitable and unacceptable. Quite apart from the wider question of whether capital punishment for murder should be restored, a matter on which I asked for no view from Lord Lane and on which he expressed no view, he regards my hon. Friend's proposal as unworkable.

Lord Lane's point about consistency of outcome——

Mr. David Ashby (Leicestershire, North-West): Does not the view of the present Lord Chief Justice accord almost precisely with the view of Lord Chief Justice Parker who was also quite against the 1957 Act because of its arbitrary nature and because it was unworkable?

Mr. Hurd: My history does not go back as far as that of my hon. Friend, but I will take his word for it if he tells me that that is so.

Lord Lane's point about consistency is particularly important for the new clause tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, North, because of the way in which it brings the jury into the picture. I am not sure how that would work in practice. A jury is the right body to determine the question of guilt or innocence on a serious charge, but under our system a jury are never left without guidance. They are directed as to the principles of law which they should apply. The proposed new clause does not give an inkling as to how the jury should exercise the new discretion. It does not state or suggest the way in which the trial judge should direct them, nor even whether it would be right for him to attempt to do so. It does not state whether the jury should be unanimous—a crucial consideration, since conviction can be by a qualified majority.

Although I could list other gaps in the proposal, those points are questions of principle and not of mere drafting detail. It is reasonable to put them to my hon. Friend because, after all, we are not discussing a general proposition or a motion; we are discussing a new clause which, if accepted, will become the law of the land, if it passes in another place.

My hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, North addressed the point about a right of appeal. As he said, making the penalty a maximum would mean that there would be a right of appeal, and I imagine that that would be exercised in almost every case. My hon. Friend did not shirk the consequences of that. However, as a result of another proposal in the Bill, it would be logical for the Attorney-General to be able to refer to the Court of Appeal an unduly lenient sentence under the provisions in this Bill, with a view to a more severe sentence—presumably including death—being substituted. My hon. Friend made it clear that that is part of his proposal.

Therefore, we would have the situation in which an offender had been convicted and sentenced, presumably to imprisonment, by the court in a perfectly regular way and my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General would be expected and would be able, if he wished, to go to the Court of Appeal and ask that the person serving that sentence of imprisonment should be taken out and put to death if the Court of Appeal so agreed. If we look at that prospect, we can, to put it mildly, see its difficulties.

I fully understand the way in which the minds of my hon. Friend and his colleagues have worked in moving forward from proposals which have not found favour in the past. However, I do not honestly believe that my hon. Friend's proposal represents a completely satisfactory alternative to the blanket mandatory penalty which, for different reasons, proved unsatisfactory in the years after the war.

If one is looking for a deterrent or at the theory of deterrence—which, for reasons that I have given, I do not accept, although my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, North does—one comes to the conclusion that the point of a deterrent is that it should be reasonably certain and that the potential murderer should be reasonably sure—[HON. MEMBERS: "No."]—that he will suffer the worst punishment if caught and convicted. However, that would not be the effect of the new clause, which takes a broad-brush view of the question of life and death and which would ensure a good deal of inconsistency and uncertainty in the imposition of capital punishment.

My hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, North also addressed the question of Northern Ireland, on which two points arise. The first is whether the imposition of the death penalty would, looked at coolly and objectively, help or hinder the struggle against terrorism. An amendment tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, North-West (Mr. Stern) bears on that point. The second point is not in the form in which my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, North put it. It is not really a question whether the judges in the Province are courageous or not; it is a question whether it would ever be right to impose the death penalty on someone who had not been convicted by the verdict of a jury. That is a substantial difficulty. However, it is hard to imagine how two terrorist actions taking place, perhaps simultaneously, in Liverpool and Belfast could be punished by the death penalty on one side of the water but not on the other.

In that context I thought it right—as I did last time—to consult my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and he in turn, as he has done in the past, consulted Sir John Hermon, the Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary. My right hon. Friend's view is that the death penalty would not represent any significant deterrent to the terrorists. The Chief Constable's view is that the restoration of the death penalty for terrorist murders would increase the difficulties faced by the RUC, a view which is shared by his senior colleagues. These are conclusions which, from my own still fairly recent experience in the Province, I strongly endorse.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Apart from making martyrs of those who are undoubtedly engaged in evil—and terrorism is evil—is it not the case that capital punishment would hardly act as a deterrent to the IRA or

[Mr. David Winnick]

other terrorists in the Province, bearing in mind that in 1981 the hunger strikers continued their strike until they died? If they were willing to take that action and to starve themselves to death, how could the death penalty be any kind of deterrent?

Mr. Hurd: The hon. Gentleman will be able to develop that argument if he catches your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Looking to the future, we are now drafting a new Prevention of Terrorism Bill and we shall be——

Rev. Ian Paisley (Antrim, North) *rose*——

Mr. Hurd: I shall give way to the hon. Gentleman in a minute if I can just finish my point.

We shall seek, with the approval of Parliament, to strengthen our defences against terrorism, in particular by making it easier to get at the funds on which terrorists depend. It would be bizarre if, at the same time, we took a step which would, in my view, be likely to increase the flow of money, and therefore guns, into terrorist hands.

Rev. Ian Paisley: When the right hon. Gentleman made inquiries in Northern Ireland of his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, was the Police Federation for Northern Ireland consulted? After all, the Chief Constable is not in the front line in Northern Ireland. It is the ordinary man who does his duty in difficult circumstances, so surely his voice should be heard.

Mr. Hurd: I do not doubt that the hon. Gentleman may well be right in his analysis of the view held by the Police Federation on that side of the water. I was simply recording the clear opinions, derived from experience, of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, and of the Chief Constable and his senior colleagues and those who are in charge of the campaign against terrorism in the Province.

Mr. Tony Favell (Stockport): While on the subject of terrorism, will my right hon. Friend deal with two points? The first is that a terrorist expects, eventually, to win his argument. Therefore, a prison sentence is no real deterrent because he expects to be released eventually under political amnesty, whereas capital punishment deters because no amnesty will help. Secondly, what about further atrocities committed by colleagues of the terrorist to secure his release if he is not to have the ultimate punishment?

Mr. Hurd: The second case would apply with even greater force and ferocity while the prisoner was awaiting execution if he had been condemned to death. I do not go along with my hon. Friend's analysis on his first point.

I shall conclude with three short points. The first is about the nature of this debate. Every hon. Member and anyone in tune with the worries of this country is deeply concerned about violent crime, but if capital punishment were restored it would be applied only to some murderers. Yet we are all familiar with the argument which starts with anecdotes about broken windows or hooliganism—a minor disorder—and leads straight to the argument that capital punishment should be restored. Murder is the foulest of crimes, but it is one tenth of 1 per cent. of violent crimes and less than one hundreth of 1 per cent. of all recorded crime. It is right that we should discuss this proposal, but it may deflect our attention and energies from the real issues of how to check and reverse the general rise in violent crime which has continued since the mid-1950s.

I shall not labour my personal views, because they are the views of one Member of Parliament. I agree with my hon. Friend that we must listen to the views of our constituents and each form his or her judgment on this matter and vote accordingly. Like many others, I am swayed by the prospect that if capital punishment were reintroduced, from time to time we would execute innocent people, and I am swayed by the point about terrorism. Two further short points which are not often developed seem to go to the heart of the matter.

Mr. Henry Bellingham (Norfolk, North-West): Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Hurd: I am coming to the end, so if I may I shall conclude and my hon. Friend can make his speech later.

After a brutal murder, there can be few people who do not have the immediate reaction that the perpetrator is too wicked to live. It is natural that that should most often be the view of the family and friends of the victim, although after Eniskillen we saw moving exceptions to that. Fierce, honourable anger immediately after the event is one thing; it is another to institute slow, cold processes of justice with months filled by the argument of lawyers and the hearing of appeals, at the end of which the judges or the Home Secretary may decide, long after the event, that the offender should cease to exist. An execution in this way, whether by hanging or by other means, can surely give only fleeting satisfaction, if any, to the public or those who knew the victim.

There is another effect. In earlier centuries, executions were public, but these were abolished in 1868 and we had nearly a century of private executions in prison. Since capital punishment was abolished, we have seen an explosion in the pervasiveness of the media and in the power of the searchlight which they turn on dramatic events. If we restored capital punishment, we would restore, not private, but public executions. It would not be a matter, as in past days, of a date recorded in an alcove in the Home Secretary's office in Whitehall or later of some discreet notice posted on the prison gate to be read by a handful of watchers.

Whatever the regulations and precautions, in practice in the weeks before execution a searchlight of publicity would beat upon the condemned man long after his victim had been forgotten. He and his family would become famous, and friends and family would be persuaded to record their story and emotions. I do not know what effect all that would have on the proposed deterrent power of capital punishment, but it might be the opposite of what was intended. Whatever the rules and efforts of Governments, such a circus would be created, as it has been elsewhere, and it would be greatly to the discredit of our society, which would soon sicken of it.

The arguments surge to and fro on this subject, and I have tried to do justice to them. Each of us is left to make a fundamental and instinctive judgment, and mine is certainly that this is a form of punishment to which we should not return.

5.45 pm

Mr. Roy Hattersley (Birmingham, Sparkbrook): Most hon. Members know how they will vote at the end of

today's debate and knew before the hon. Member for Thanet, North (Mr. Gale) moved his new clause. Most of us knew of our intentions before the Leader of the House announced the date on which this long-heralded and much-publicised debate was to be held. On both sides of the argument, opinions on capital punishment are held with passions too deep and convictions too strong to be changed by one afternoon's debate. Those passions and convictions are based on two different sorts of argument and attitude. One is instinctive—the argument in principle —and the other pragmatic—the chief point made by the hon. Gentleman: that in some way the reintroduction of capital punishment would improve the safety and quality of life in our society.

I shall spend the first of my few moments dealing with the instinctive call for the return of capital punishment —the feeling that it should be part of our society and penal practice. I well recall the Prime Minister on television during the 1983 general election campaign simply asserting that some murderers are so evil and some murders so hideous that capital punishment is instinctively the only appropriate punishment. That is not a judgment, but a statement of gut feeling.

The notion that it is, in the common phrase, "only right" that murderers should die cannot be subject to logical examination. The insistence that the bestiality of one violent and unnecessary death should be paralleled by another act of similar violence sanctioned and carried out with the grotesque formality of the state cannot be justified in logic. It is at best the doctrine of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth—a moral judgment which was later qualified out of existence by impeccable authority. The bald assertion that murderers "deserve to die" can be justified only by the belief that retribution and revenge are implicit and important ingredients of the criminal code. I do not believe that the House of Commons should or will write such a primitive instinct into our laws.

The instinctive call for the return of the death penalty is typified by the opinion that some murderers have—I use the Prime Minister's phrase—

"forfeited the right to live."

The Home Secretary, criticising that view, offered his alternative: the feeling that some murderers are "too wicked to live". I do not believe that any individual or institution is entitled to make that judgment about a human being.

Those of us who are opposed to capital punishment accept that our opposition is similar to the sort of support that I have just described—it is in part emotional. I confess that I cannot imagine circumstances in which I would vote for the return of hanging or any other form of execution for any offence. A reversion to such a practice would debase and literally demoralise us all, certainly if, as the Home Secretary fears—and I have no doubt that his fears are justified—in this modern era capital punishment were accompanied by all the horrors of media attention. *[Interruption.]* Even were I to believe that capital punishment was a deterrent to murder or violent crime, I would not vote for its reintroduction. It is wrong in itself, for it undermines the principle of the sanctity of human life on which all our laws are based.

Having established my position in principle, I want mostly to turn to the argument that capital punishment is a deterrent, because that was the point that the hon. Gentleman made and that will inevitably take up a great deal of this debate.

When I say that I wholly reject the argument that capital punishment is a deterrent, I am quoting from virtually every authority that has made a judgment on the subject. That argument seems not only wrong but diametrically wrong. Murder and crimes of violence are, at least in part, related to the general mores of society—the acceptance or the rejection of the idea that violence can, in itself, solve some of society's problems. A violent society breeds violent crimes. To reintroduce the death penalty would be to institutionalise the most extreme form of violence. It would be an expression of Parliament's opinion that some lives are so cheap that they can be taken as a punishment. It is no good asking, as the Prime Minister has often done, the rhetorical question about whether murderers have such considerations in mind when they commit their horrible crimes. I expect the House of Commons to behave differently from them. I expect the House of Commons to have a different standard of values. We are supposed to act differently from such people, and we are supposed to respect the sanctity of human life.

The Home Secretary was right to say that to concentrate upon the reintroduction of capital punishment as if it were the certain way of reducing murder and violent crime is to divert attention from the remedies that are potentially more successful. Immense damage has been done to the serious consideration, and therefore reduction, of crime in this country by the weak-minded insistence that flogging and hanging will solve all our problems and reduce violence. That attitude has diverted us from the real deterrent, which is the certainty of arrest, the certainty of prosecution and the certainty of conviction if guilty.

With regard to the efficacy of capital punishment as a deterrent, it is right to say that every authority that has made a judgment—save for a group of New Liberal economists in the United States who examined death in the language of supply and demand—has concluded that the evidence on death as a deterrent proves absolutely nothing. In the 1983 debate, the then Home Secretary said of statistics:

"we should be making a great mistake if we expected them to give us an unequivocal answer."—[*Official Report*, 13 July 1983; Vol. 45, c. 886.]

As one might expect, in the previous debate his predecessor, Lord Whitelaw, was far more robust and categoric. Talking about the evidence on deterrence, he said:

"the only sensible conclusion to reach is that their evidence is inconclusive."—[*Official Report*, 19 July 1979; Vol. 970, c. 2047.]

That was also the judgment of the Royal Commission of 1953.

That judgment is reinforced by a comparison of murder statistics in those American states that have abolished the death penalty with those that have not. That is the conclusion to be drawn from the Canadian experience, where the murder rate fell after abolition. If we are so minded to interpret British experience, that is the evidence from this country. Although the murder rate has increased since abolition, it has increased at a much slower pace than other crimes of violence.

The truth of the matter is that one cannot say with anything resembling certainty whether capital punishment is a deterrent. That one is unable to say that should not surprise us. Sixty per cent. of murders are committed by men and women whose mental condition would allow them successfully to plead diminished responsibility; 75 per cent. of murders are committed within the family or in

[Mr. Roy Hattersley]

a close circle of acquaintance, often as a result of sudden impulse or uncontrollable passion. Only an extremely small proportion of murderers pause to consider—even less, coldly, to premeditate upon—the consequences of their actions. If they do not think about that before they commit the murder, it is literally impossible for any penalty, no matter how severe, no matter how terrible, to influence their actions and prevent that murder from taking place. If there is a deterrent effect—I repeat that there is no evidence that can lead us to that firm conclusion—it can only possibly apply to one murder in five.

Some hon. Members—traditionally the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths) and today the hon. Member for Thanet, North—argue that the death penalty for murder deters other crimes of violence. The hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds always quoted the hypothetical burglar who, before the days of abolition, would not allow his confederate to carry a gun. He claimed the knock-on effect which, by the expedient of hanging one or two murderers, prevented other crimes of violence from taking place. The hon. Gentleman's theory, true or false, demonstrates to me the great dilemma of the theory of deterrence or, at least, the deterrent of the death penalty. I am not at all sure that it is morally right to hang one man to deter another. I am sure that it cannot possibly be right to hang one man to prevent another from committing a violent crime that is less than murder itself, especially as we have no hard evidence to prove that that deterrent would work.

If, once or twice a year, we are to hang one of our fellow citizens by the neck until he is dead—or if we are to gas him, poison him, electrocute him or shoot him—we need to justify the horrors that are involved by more than suspicions, vague impressions, hunches and venerable anecdotes. Among the horrors is the absolute bestiality of the process of execution, a subject about which the supporters of capital punishment naturally prefer not to speak. The hon. Member for Thanet, North almost broke a rule by confessing that the alternatives were "not nice". I believe that anyone who read the Gower report—the supplementary report on alternative methods of capital punishment—would agree with the hon. Gentleman at least about that.

Mr. Peter Archer (Warley, West): Does my right hon. Friend agree that, once it is established that the statistics leave the matter open, that does not leave the argument neutral? If capital punishment were a deterrent, that, in view of the manifest research which has been carried out, would have been clearly established by now.

Mr. Hattersley: I understand the statistical and logical argument that my right hon. and learned Friend makes. If the position is neutral, it is impossible to argue other than the likelihood that capital punishment has little or no effect. Were it a deterrent, that would be shown by curves, movements and trends.

Let us consider the alternative methods of execution. There is no hope—supporters of a return to capital punishment should not hide behind the comforting pretence—that we can find an alternative method of execution that is any less barbarous than hanging. The Gower report on alternative forms of execution was absolutely explicit. It said that the alternatives to hanging were equally macabre, debasing to those who took part and corrosive of a civilised society.

Mrs. Elizabeth Peacock (Batley and Spen): Will the right hon. Gentleman tell the House and the country what is nice about the murder of small, innocent children? How can he reconcile that with what he is saying about the punishment of the perpetrators of such crimes?

Mr. Hattersley: I believe that such questions debase the entire argument. There is a clear implication in the question of the hon. Member that those of us who are opposed to capital punishment have some sympathy for the people she describes. We hold an opposite view. First, we do not believe that the return to capital punishment would deter the enormities that she has outlined; secondly, we believe that by being complacent about additional violence sanctified by society, by accepting the institutionalisation of such violence, we may encourage violent actions among our citizens.

The hon. Member for Batley and Spen (Mrs. Peacock) does her cause no good by implying that those of us who want to take a rational view on this matter want to take a soft and weak view. I repeat that one of the reasons crime has increased in this country is that too many people like her have adopted the weak-minded alternative of thinking that flogging and hanging will solve the problems. They will not. We need a far more rational attitude to crime than she has been able to offer us.

Rev. William McCrea (Mid-Ulster): Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman would settle his mind on the situation in Northern Ireland at the time when we were told that if the Prime Minister and the Government did not yield to the hunger strikers there would be untold trouble. A few more people volunteered to go on hunger strike, but those who volunteered after that came off the hunger strike because they were afraid of death.

6 pm

Mr. Hattersley: I shall deal explicitly with Northern Ireland and hunger strikers in a moment. If the hon. Gentleman does not believe that the creation of martyrs is more likely to continue the conflict in Northern Ireland, he is ignoring the troubled history of that Province over the last 300 years.

I should like to continue the point that I was making before the interruption by the hon. Member for Batley and Spen (Mrs. Peacock). I was talking about the consequential horrors of capital punishment. Some people, including the hon. Member for Thanet, North, speak about the risk, but many people, myself included, would argue that the greatest horror of all is the certainty that if we return to capital punishment an innocent man or woman will sooner or later be hanged.

The hon. and learned Member for Blackpool, North (Mr. Miscampbell) sent to virtually every hon. Member the names of 10 men who in our recent history were wrongfully convicted, then pardoned. *[Interruption.]* It is a terrifying thought that decisions about capital punishment, the life or death of human beings, should be in some part taken by people whose emotional level is of the sort that we have seen in this debate. Of the 10 people on the hon. and learned Gentleman's list, one was executed and nine were eventually released. There is no doubt at all

that if the present proposal were in operation, five or six of those nine men would have been hanged. I cannot begin to justify a proposal that makes risk a possibility.

The hon. Member for Thanet, North said that by hanging an innocent man we might save the lives of a dozen potential victims. That idea seems to be taking marginal utility to unreasonable extremes. The idea that we might sacrifice one innocent life and save 10 others is wholly unacceptable by any moral canon that it is possible to construct. I hope that on reflection no hon. Member will vote for the notion that hanging somebody by mistake is the price that we have to pay to create the order in society that we propose and want to see.

The hon. Member for Thanet, North has attempted, as his predecessors have attempted, to win some support by saying that while he wants a return to the death penalty he does not want to return to it for all offences. By proposing a partial return of the death penalty he is offering the House judicial confusion and moral nonsense. The idea of hanging some murderers in the circumstances and in the way that the hon. Gentleman has described is barely less absurd than the notion of exceptional wickedness which supporters of capital punishment tried to write into law in the last debate.

With respect, the weakness of the hon. Gentleman's case was demonstrated by his speech, because his proposal raises many hard questions and he attempted to answer none of them. He suggested that we should reintroduce hanging for some sorts of murder but he was not prepared to describe the categories. As he continued his speech he gave a few examples. To reintroduce hanging for premeditated murder, for murder in the furtherance of theft, for the murder of policemen and for murder by terrorists raises many questions which the hon. Gentleman did not attempt to answer.

Let us assume that the murder of a policeman might come into this category. That is what the hon. Gentleman implied towards the end of his speech. He must tell us why it is morally worse or deserving of a more severe punishment to kill a policeman rather than a civilian. How are we to determine in law what is meant by premeditated? Who judges the true meaning of premeditated?

Mr. Gale *rose*——

Mr. Hattersley: I have a list of questions for the hon. Gentleman; I shall ask them all and he can answer them.

The proposed new clause sidesteps other great questions. There is the question whether the decision to hang should be made by a combination of judge and jury or a jury's recommendation and a judge's final decision. Will criteria to guide the jury be laid down or does a jury go into such matters with a totally open mind? Do jury members make their own subjective and instinctive judgments as they go along? I do not think that a judge and jury would be prepared to accept such a responsibility. How could a judge or jury possibly make a decision without being told the lines along which the decision is to be made? We must assume that they start by obeying the dictates of their consciences.

Does the juror, or for that matter the judge, weigh expediency against morality in a case where a horrible crime has been committed and to execute the murderer may well result in a holocaust of reprisals? Are pragmatic questions to be put out of their minds? Does the jury or the judge call for a psychiatric report before making a decision? Are we to get uniformity in sentencing? Are there to be hanging juries and hanging judges, and will some murderers be lucky enough to appear before lenient judges and jurors? Will hanging be a matter for majority decision? Could there be two men on the jury who think that the sentenced man is innocent but 10 who decide that he should die? Does the jury's decision on the death penalty have to be unanimous?

All those questions are central to the hon. Gentleman's proposal, and since he seemed anxious a moment ago to answer some or all of them, I shall now give way to him.

Mr. Gale: I was reluctant to intervene, having denied other hon. Members the opportunity to do so. The right hon. Gentleman has sought so greatly to misrepresent my speech that I can only conclude that he did not hear it. I specifically said that I was not seeking to define any category of murder, and that the maximum sentence would be available for any and every murder at the decision of the court and the recommendation of the jury. That is because each and every case is different.

There is no point in the right hon. Gentleman sitting with a smug grin on his face suggesting that that is incorrect. The whole House heard what I said. I have deliberately sought not to lay down criteria, because I do not see how it is possible to lay down criteria for individual cases. The new clause seeks to allow the court and especially the jury who have heard the evidence to make a recommendation in each and every individual case.

The right hon. Gentleman spoke about psychiatric reports. I specifically answered that point by saying that the jury would recommend but that it would be the judge, with the additional information before him, who would be required to make the final decision.

The right hon. Gentleman asked whether there would be uniformity. The answer to that is no, because, as I have said, there is no uniformity in crime. Each case is individual and must be judged as an individual case. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary and the right hon. Gentleman asked about majority decisions. It is quite clear that I have not made any recommendation about that, because the country already accepts the principle of majority decision.

Mr. Hattersley: I am reluctant to ridicule the hon. Gentleman, because his proposal seems too terrible to ridicule. However, since it is intrinsically ridiculous, if he is really saying that there is to be no recommendation and no uniformity, has he ever considered the pattern of sentencing for other offences throughout the United Kingdom? Does he not know that what happens in Bournemouth does not necessarily happen in Barnsley and that sentences in Southport are different from those in Stockton? Is he really contemplating a situation in which a murderer might know that he would be let off, at least from the death penalty, in one part of the country but hanged in another? The proposal is so intrinsically ridiculous that I cannot believe that anyone will vote for it this evening.

Mr. Ashby: Has the right hon. Gentleman considered that normally the prosecutor does not descend into the realms of sentencing? Are we now to have the prosecutor demanding the death penalty, as in some continental systems?

Mr. Hattersley: My reply to the hon. Gentleman is, do not ask me. As the House has begun to discover, I regard the proposals of the hon. Member for Thanet, North as wrong in principle and unworkable in practice and wholly ridiculous the moment one begins to examine the details.

Dr. John G. Blackburn (Dudley, West): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hattersley: I must get on, as I had taken more time than I intended before giving way to perhaps too many interventions.

I want to ask the hon. Member for Thanet, North at least one rhetorical question. It concerns the best example of why distinguishing between one form of murder and another would be wrong in principle and unworkable in practice. It can be demonstrated most clearly as it is a hard case to argue. This is the case of terrorism in Northern Ireland—or anywhere, but taking Northern Ireland as an example enables us to give it a terrifying clarity.

From time to time we are told—no doubt we shall be told this afternoon—that terrorist offences ought to be subject to the death penalty. Are we really saying that if on some future occasion a post office in Northern Ireland is robbed and the postmaster is shot dead and the murderer is captured and convicted he is to hang if the money is intended for the IRA but not if it is intended to pay off a gambling debt? That is simultaneously terrible and ridiculous. It is also wholly wrong within the context of Northern Ireland, for two reasons.

First, for almost 20 years to my certain knowledge, the IRA in Northern Ireland has tried to argue that its murderers are not common murderers and that its crimes are different from ordinary crimes. In the House, we have always insisted persistently that we are not prepared to designate terrorist crimes in any different way from the way in which we describe and categorise other crimes. To give a special category status to terrorist murder is to play absolutely into the hands of those who say, "We are doing something different." The resulting execution of IRA members would be to play into its hands in an even more dramatic form.

I am shocked that the hon. Gentleman would even contemplate the death penalty being passed on a man who had been convicted through the Northern Ireland emergency—and, God willing, temporary—system. If a man should die, surely it should be the result of a jury trial with the extra fairness that that implies. But that is only half the problem. The other half is the way in which the IRA would respond to the death of members of their active service units.

The hon. Member for Mid-Ulster (Rev. William McCrea) referred to the hunger strike. I remember the hunger strike very well and I remember the IRA's attitude towards it. Not only did one man die, but, as the hon. Gentleman will confirm, members of the IRA tried to intimidate some of the hunger strikers—their own comrades—by saying that they would take horrible reprisals against their families unless the hunger strike went on until death.

The idea that people who could do anything as bestial as that would not glory in the death of their comrades and encourage their comrades to die to achieve the status of martyrs is a wholly misunderstood view of the situation in Northern Ireland. I regard it as pragmatically wrong in terms of the peace and security of Northern Ireland to provide the IRA and other terrorists with that recruiting sergeant, which is what the death penalty would be.

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

6.15 pm

Mr. Hattersley: I must conclude. These are my final words.

The more we consider the implications, the consequences and the results of capital punishment, the clearer it becomes that the restoration and the so-called practical benefits of restoration do not stand up to a moment's analysis. Ultimately, the call for the return to hanging is an emotional spasm, several of which we have witnessed in the House this afternoon. Were it to result in the change in the law, it would mean that society and the law had adapted to and was adopting the murderer's moral standards and the murderer's view of the sanctity of human life. For that reason, I shall certainly oppose the clause this evening, and it is with great pride that I believe that all my right hon. and hon. Friends will do the same.

Mr. Norman Miscampbell (Blackpool, North): I shall speak only briefly as many of my hon. Friends wish to take part in the debate. Perhaps it is no bad thing to look back for one moment at the history of this affair.

There has not been a majority in the House for retaining hanging since 1945. The House has consistently repudiated hanging when given the opportunity. The Labour party sought to bring in a categorised Bill in the late 1940s and it was laughed out of court by a famous speech by Winston Churchill. The Conservative party introduced a Criminal Justice Bill in 1957 which undermined the whole concept of hanging because of its illogicality. Never mind free votes, it is worth noticing that that Bill was taken through the House on a three-line Whip by the then Government. Subsequently, since the Silverman Bill of the mid 1960s, there have been 18 attempts to change the law back to what it was. At least the last two occasions have got away from the concept of categorising murder because it is manifestly ridiculous. Indeed, as we have heard from both Front-Bench speakers, it is simply not possible for the House to lay down guidelines for the courts to decide before cases come to trial.

On the last two occasions, recognising the impossibility of that, there have been two attempts. One imported the idea of wickedness, which in my view was legal illiteracy and was thrown out. We now have this proposal. I want to address it very shortly to see where it would take us and whether it is any better than previous attempts.

The death penalty is to be available to the courts. I suspect that it is inevitable for hon. Members to say things that have been said before, but it is worth repeating that it is to be available to the courts. In my view, only one amendment is worth the paper on which it is printed—and I would vote against it—and that is to say that the punishment for murder shall be death and that thereafter there shall be a proper retrieve system. I would oppose that amendment as vehemently as I oppose the one under discussion, but at least it would leave us in a logical position with a straight result at the end of the trial. Everyone would know what was to happen and the case would be examined when all the facts were known.

If we leave it to the judges, what are we asking them to do? I do not know whether I am absolutely right, but I do not think that a single High Court judge is in favour of a return to hanging or capital punishment. I may be wrong on that, but I am not wrong in saying that the overwhelming majority of them are so opposed. That does not mean that they would not do their duty if they had to, but, inevitably, they would take different views. Justice would be as long as the judge's foot. The consequence of that would be that the most important duty for a solicitor would be to see which judge was coming, to look at his record and try to ensure that his client did not did not go into that court. We should not have any illusions that that would not be done.

What is the wretched judge to do? It is said that he should pronounce sentence when he knows all the facts. As every lawyer knows, the judge does not know all the facts. If someone has pleaded not guilty, the judge cannot then have psychiatric reports done to decide what will happen if he is found guilty. He cannot ask for co-operation in that way. At the end of a trial a judge simply does not know. He could not make up his mind until he had seen such reports.

The judge is then left with the unenviable task of reminding the jury before it considers its verdict that it has the right to make a recommendation. The moment a judge makes that remark, the jury will start to think that the judge has it in mind to hang the man. That will not help to obtain convictions. Let us have no illusions about that. The great British public is said to be baying for justice and talks about it in pubs, but when people are sitting in a jury box it is different. At the Old Bailey, 48 per cent. of defendants are acquitted and I would guess that about 1 per cent. are innocent. That is the problem that faces the judge. He would have to give some direction as to what considerations the jury should look at.

I do not know how it is conceivable in judicial terms to give any such direction. Would the judge draw attention to particular bestialities that occurred in the case? Would he draw attention to the fact that the court may be deciding on what had become a more prevalent form of murder? Would he draw attention to the issue of public policy and would he look at what would happen if racial issues were involved? It would be a nightmare.

However, it would not be much better for the jury. It would consider its verdict with nothing. It would go out having sat for perhaps 10 days opposite a stranger and having listened to a case presented to it of which, inevitably, it will have heard only half the story because the mitigating elements cannot possibly be put before it. Those jurors—train drivers, secretaries and housewives—would then have to make up their minds. Are they to say that a rope will be put round that person's neck? There will be plenty of murderers walking our streets after such trials. We will not achieve a conviction rate.

The new clause is an attempt to avoid the crucial questions that cannot be answered by categories. It is an attempt to get round that issue for the second time. If anything, it is even worse than categories. We all know —we have the figures before us—that in the past we have buried our mistakes with the murderers who were convicted. The issue of whether it is a deterrent may be questionable, but we have evidence showing what has happened subsequently. It is no use my hon. Friends saying that people have been released. They were released after a decision that there had been a miscarriage of justice. In this country, if one is released after a miscarriage of justice, in my book one is innocent and that should be made clear to everyone. Ten people are walking the streets today and one person was posthumously pardoned because of the ability to look back and examine the position. Bearing that in mind as well as the uncertainty of capital punishment being a deterrent and all the problems we would have if we passed the new clause, I believe that we would do well to stick for the 18th time to the decision that the House has made so consistently.

Mr. Menzies Campbell (Fife, North-East): We shall have a free vote in party terms, but I wonder whether it will truly be a free vote. I doubt whether many of us have changed our views since being elected and I doubt even more whether anyone will change his or her view during the debate. We are all hemmed in by our instinctive reactions to this topic. It comes down to a question of belief as to whether the state is entitled to take the life of a person who takes the life of another. I believe that it is not. I suspect that my belief will obtain whatever the evidence and however passionately such evidence may be marshalled during the debate. I also suspect that those who support the new clause will support it however compelling the evidence marshalled on the other side of the argument.

I accept that my view is neither a popular nor populist one. However, I, like other hon. Members, come here as a representative and not as a delegate. It is my duty and the duty of others to take into account public opinion, but it would be a sad and sorry day for the House if we were but the reflection of that and the mouthpieces of the most vocal groups within our constituencies.

As someone who has recently been elected to this honourable House, the debate has brought home to me in a sharp way the power that we wield and the responsibility that is incumbent upon us. I suspect, like others, that I recoiled somewhat to hear an hon. Member from a sedentary position suggest that hanging should be in public and should be accompanied by television coverage. I suspect that that remark was made as a result of his passion and emotion about the topic. I cite it only to underline the fact that there is a great responsibility upon us and that in the decision we take on this topic we exercise the power of life and death.

I believe that I come to this debate with an informed view, although not an exclusively informed view. I have prosecuted successfully and defended unsuccessfully people who, with hanging, would undoubtedly have been hanged. That will not be unique in the House, but nothing in my experience as crime counsel or defence counsel has persuaded me to change my belief that capital punishment is something I could not support. A generation of lawyers has grown up with no experience of capital punishment and the way in which it would have to be administered through the legal system. In Scotland I believe that there is no judge still sitting on the bench who has pronounced the death sentence. The last such judge retired two or three years ago.

The reintroduction of capital punishment into the legal system would impose an intolerable burden on lawyers, judges and juries. The issue of intimidation must surely be in the minds of all of us arising out of the events of last week. What would be the scope for intimidation if a jury had the power to recommend life or death? It would also be an intolerable burden on witnesses. If a witness is not

[Mr. Menzies Campbell]

quite sure as to precisely what he saw at the material moment in the commission of a crime, what pressure would there be on him to give evidence in one direction or another, having regard to the fact that the consequence of that evidence might be the recommendation of a jury that the man or woman in the dock should be hanged? That would be a substantial price. We must ask whether we should be prepared to pay that price. The moral inconvenience of lawyers and the pressure on juries or witnesses might be a price that it would be justifiable to pay if it could be shown that the possible benefits outweighed the calculated horror of reimposition.

6.30 pm

The new clause is put fairly and squarely on the basis of deterrence. I do not wish to add to what was most eloquently said by the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley), but one is entitled to say, echoing the old but existing Scots verdict, "The case is not proven." If the case is not proven, it is not open to us to change the status quo unless we are presented with compelling evidence that justifies the reintroduction of capital punishment.

It has already been said that the majority of homicides are domestic, and arise out of passion, emotion, rage and, frequently, drink. I find it hard to believe that those homicides would be deterred by the retrospective knowledge that capital punishment might be imposed.

The issue of terrorism has been mentioned. We know that in many cases terrorists prefer martyrdom to life. Without passing judgment on the events in Gibraltar, may I say that any terrorist recalling those events must know that to be a terrorist on active service undoubtedly puts him at risk of his life.

What about the position of police and prison officers? Shall we endure the calculated horror of the reimposition of capital punishment to protect them? What about security guards, public officials or those who run post offices in remote areas? Why should their lives be counted on a different scale? The truth is that whenever categorisation is introduced there are inherent illogicalities, and unjustifiable preferences inevitably arise. That was the experience following the Homicide Act 1957. These proposals would introduce into our law random categorisation—categorisation not so much at a whim but based on the attitude struck, first, by a jury and, secondly, by a judge. The Home Secretary referred to the comments of the Lord Chief Justice, which only serve to underline the nature of that random categorisation and the dangers that it would necessarily involve.

The issue of capital punishment is for us to determine; it is not to be passed off to juries or judges. If the House believes that capital punishment should be available for murder, it should pass provision for it into law. It should not seek to hide behind the skirts of juries or judges.

Dr. Blackburn: The hon. and learned Gentleman eloquently raised the question of categorisation of offences. Does he agree that a police officer, prison warder or public servant deserves extra protection because society asks them to do a specific task?

Mr. Campbell: It is clear that the hon. Gentleman takes a particular view about the value of the responsibilities discharged by prison and police officers. How do they fall to be distinguished from the categories of other public servants? Why should they be distinguished from those who might find themslves running post offices in rural areas? Categorisation leads to an inevitable need for value judgments and that comes close to a system in which justice is random and not uniform.

Reference has been made to retribution. I understand the motive of retribution. I understand people's horror, alarm, concern and fright that someone close to them has been killed. I also understand the view that it is open to society or the state to exercise retribution. If human life is sacred, the murderer's act is immoral. The act of the state is equally immoral if one substitutes the institution for the individual. Clothing the proceedings with legality makes the taking of life by capital punishment no less immoral than the taking of life that prompted the conviction of the murderer.

Fundamental to the debate—this matter should appeal to all the lawyers in the House—is the risk that capital punishment necessarily entails. I am pleased to observe the hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross (Mr. Fairbairn) in his place. He defended Patrick Meehan, and in his autobiography, which was published recently, he writes movingly about the nature of the trial, the burdens that were placed on him, the result of the trial and the ultimate fight to have Patrick Meehan's pardon granted by the Crown. If Patrick Meehan had been convicted in a time of capital punishment, I have no doubt that, given the revulsion at the nature of the crime of which he was wrongly convicted, he would have been hanged. That is but one example. I shall not enter the argument about whether one can stand the loss of one innocent man for the protection of others because the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook dealt with it compellingly and comprehensively. The inherent weakness of capital punishment is that miscarriages of justice cannot be corrected.

I return to the question of belief. No hon. Member is entitled to be more highly regarded on this issue than any other. We each have one judgment and one vote. I shall certainly cast my vote against the new clause.

Mr. Nicholas Fairbairn (Perth and Kinross): I am grateful to be called to speak in the debate. I believe that I have a special and unique experience to share with the House, especially with its newer and younger Members. I believe that I am the only serving Member who has appeared in a capital trial of any kind. I have appeared in nine capital murder trials and defended eight men for capital treason. During those cases, affecting 17 lives, my conduct was a principal determinant of whether my client lived or died. Of all the questions that I asked, the judgments that I made and the views that the jury previously had of me—Scotland is a family, in which people in public life are known by reputation or otherwise—one question may have been enough to sway the jury one way or another.

The first capital trial in which I appeared for the defence was that of Walter Scott Ellis, who, surprisingly, was acquitted of capital murder by nine votes to six. In Scotland we have a jury of 15 and three verdicts. Nine votes were for not proven, and six were for guilty. In another case—that of Smith—he was acquitted by eight votes to seven—eight for not proven and seven for guilty, which is one strand away from execution. I defended Boyle for capital murder on two occasions.

Before I leave the capital murder cases in which I appeared, let me deal with the deterrent question. Having been acquitted unexpectedly, Walter Scott Ellis went on almost immediately to a course of armed robbery of which he was convicted and sentenced to 24 years' imprisonment. If I am not mistaken, he is presently serving a further period of 10 years' imprisonment for armed robbery. So he was not deterred.

Boyle was not deterred, for he went on to be convicted of non-capital murder when I was appearing for his co-accused who was acquitted, and he, now released, has not offended again. If we are looking for deterrents, why did the deterrent not deter Manuel, who was convicted of six murders, or Ruth Ellis, or Bentley, or Heath, or Ruxton, or Haig? What was it about them for whom death had no fear?

I have also appeared for scores of others, indeed hundreds, charged with non-capital murder. The hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Campbell) referred to one who was wrongly convicted—Patrick Meehan—and pardoned, not released—and John Preece, who also, after seven years, had his conviction quashed by the High Court in Edinburgh.

There is no question but that both those clients would have been hanged, Meehan certainly. There was resistance to the pardon over seven years despite the fact that those who had committed the murder brazenly confessed to it in detail which could only have been known to them, and that they were in fact named in the special defence of incrimination at the trial.

There is no question but that Meehan and Preece would have been wrongly murdered, and who would have murdered them? I shall deal only with Meehan. Would it have been the police who falsified the identification parade in order to justify his detention? Would it have been the Crown agent who issued a statement saying that with his detention and the death of his co-accused they were not looking for anybody else; in other words, that he was guilty? Would it have been the court which refused his request to be examined under the truth drug by investigating officers? Would it have been the detectives who, when they discovered that they had no evidence but the false identification parade, planted the paper evidence on his deceased co-accused? Would it have been the Solicitor-General who, when prosecuting, with the sanction of the presiding judge, broke so many of the rules of evidence? Would it have been the presiding judge who removed the special defence of incrimination of those who actually did it? Would it have been the appeal court which refused to hear the evidence of all those wrongs? Or would it have been the evidence of the officer in charge of the case, who suppressed the evidence of the presence of the actual culprit, McGuinnes, outside the murder house at the time of the murder, which evidence was found in the locked drawer of his desk when the investigation ordered by the right hon. Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan), who had recently been appointed Secretary of State for Scotland, was put in the hands of Detective Chief Superintendent McDougall and Assistant Chief Constable Bell? Between them they would have murdered Meehan.

But I said a moment ago that one of the greatest difficulties of capital murder is that it is the conduct of the defending counsel which is one of the principal determinants of whether his client lives or dies. I have not the slightest doubt that it was my cross-examination of Dr. Alan Clift which resulted in the conviction of John Preece.

Mr. Chris Mullin (Sunderland, South): The forensic scientist.

6.45 pm

Mr. Fairbairn: The forensic scientist—an English forensic scientist.

On the Friday evening he was a feeble, doubting and bad witness, and I took home all the slides of the fibres that he alleged came from the accused's rug and the deceased's coat. On Monday morning, he was a different man. Although on none of the slides that he had identified were to be found the fibres upon which he had based his opinion, he was confident and never ceased to add to every answer—"The fibres may not be there, but I have no doubt at all that that coat and that rug were together." That alone wrongly convicted Preece.

Mr. Mullin: Just like Dr. Skuse.

Mr. Fairbairn: It might be easier in that case to know who to charge with Preece's murder.

So we come to the next appalling question. In the capital treason trials, I as counsel had to ask some men to agree to plead guilty and be sentenced to death in order to save others. Fortunately, for reasons which I need not tell the House, those sentences were not carried out, but they had nothing whatever to do with justice.

Then we come to an even worse characteristic of capital murder, which I believe has never been raised. Of those charged with non-capital murders whom I have defended I could name straight off 20 or 30 cases in which I would undoubtedly have advised the accused—despite my belief, and correct belief, in their innocence, or in the justice of their defence, be it self-defence or whatever—to plead guilty to culpable homicide because I dared not take the risk that, because of the whims of a jury, they might convict him of capital murder; cases in which I knew that the Crown would happily have accepted a plea of culpable homicide, which, for English Members, is manslaughter. So I would wrongly have condemned 20 to 30 men—I have not counted them all, but I wrote down between 20 and 30 that I could think of in my head—to long periods of imprisonment because I dared not take the risk of advising them to take the risk of being acquitted or being hanged. That is a much greater extension of the wrong of wrongful execution.

It is important that we should understand the origin of capital punishment and how it came into our criminal system. If I contradict the law of England, I do so in ignorance rather than intentionally. Until there was a police force in this country, the only deterrent to crime —certainly to serious crime—was the deterrent of punishment. At different times in Scotland and England there were between 200 and 300 offences—from the meanest theft to the highest crime—for which one could be sentenced to death. The death sentence was not mandatory, but it was available, which is the basis of the new clause. It was ineffective; it did not work. Once there was a police force, all the categories of crime were removed from the list of between 200 and 300 except for three, for which capital punishment was made mandatory—treason, arson in the royal dockyards, and murder. Those three were excepted because they were the methods by which one could overthrow the constitution of the state.

Once the fleet was built of steel and not of wood, arson in the royal dockyards was forgotten as a category of

[Mr. Fairbairn]

crime. Before that, the burning of the fleet would have been a major method of overthrowing the constitution. After the failure of the 1715 and 1745 rebellions, in which the correct and superior claim to the throne of Great Britain by the Jacobite successor was overpowered by force and the Hanoverian successor sat happily on the German posterior of Queen Victoria, treason too became irrelevant. That left the third category of crime, which was kept only because it was the remaining method by which one carried out the overthrow of the state. It was murder.

In the great cases of the romantic Victorian period when people killed their wives to marry their lovers, as Ruxton did this century, the fallacy grew up that the death penalty for murder was an extension, repeat, echo or exercise in the lex talionis—an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth and a death for a death. That was a false deduction; it was never the case.

When the matter came into consideration in 1957, it was obvious that the penalty was illogical. One English case which is rarely mentioned but which seems to me to highlight the illogicality of the death penalty is the A6 murder. There is argument and doubt as to whether Hanratty was correctly or incorrectly convicted. However, there is no question at all but that he was sitting in the back seat of a motor car and that in the front were Gregston, who was driving and his lover, Valerie Storie. There is no doubt at all on the evidence at its height that Hanratty shot Gregston—probably by mistake, when he turned suddenly, and for that he was hanged. After shooting Gregston he drove Valerie Storie round southern England. He forced her out of the motor car on to the verge and raped her at gunpoint. He then emptied the other seven bullets into her body to eliminate her and her evidence. He rendered her a quadriplegic, but he could not be hanged for that. Which of the two crimes in justice would deserve the supreme penalty if it were available?

The penalty is illogical. The man who is a bad shot is not hanged, but the man who is a good shot is. The man who throws a stone into a pub and kills somebody by chance is guilty of murder by recklessness. The man who throws a hand grenade intending to kill everybody in the pub because they are thought to be of some other religion but instead blinds or maims them all lives. There is no justice or logic in a mandatory death penalty.

The new clause is an amendment of chance. As the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) said, we should look at the chances involved. The outcome does not depend only on the jury. I understand that the Bill would abolish the ability to manipulate one's jury by objection. In Scotland we still have that to some extent because I was persuaded as a Law Officer that to remove it would be to introduce absurd objections on alleged cause shown. Whichever way the matter goes, the 15 members of the jury are there by chance. One fact is never taken into account by those who listen to, or say that they are listening to, the public demand. The public who demand the death penalty are also the public who sit on the jury. When 15 members of the public are sitting on a jury, they do not represent the call of the public for capital punishment. If they did, Ellis, who I first defended on a charge of capital murder, would unquestionably have been hanged, and by a unanimous decision.

We do not just want a free vote. We ought also to come into the Chamber with a free mind. I am not encased by preordained attitudes in this matter—a point made by the hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East. I am open to any argument that persuades me. I have not necessarily always held the same view, but I am persuaded that the death penalty is illogical, irreversible, unfair and unjust. It may have been appropriate at times in the past, but I am persuaded that that is no longer so.

The right hon. Member for Sparkbrook referred to the age of television. We have already seen what happens. The House will remember the events surrounding the execution for cocaine smuggling in Malaysia. There were interviews with the family. The question was asked, "There is an hour to go; what does it feel like as the sister of a condemned man?" In the aftermath of "Spycatcher" and "Tumbledown", it is clear that if one of the two sides would stand to make money from an execution, it would not be the victim's family; it would be the family of the dec[illegible]d.

There are arguments in favour of those who say that there should be capital punishment. They say that it is a deterrent. It did not deter any of the first three people whom I defended for capital murder, who were very nearly hanged, from going on to commit appalling crimes with weapons.

It is said that the supreme crime demands the supreme penalty. That is a misunderstanding. It is said that the death penalty should be imposed for retribution, which I translate as vengeance. I want to make the next point without emotion but seriously. When I saw my hon. Friend the Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton) in a television debate on capital punishment eagerly putting up his hand as the first person who would want to leap up the steps of the scaffold to pull the lever—as volunteer No. 1 at the head of the queue—it seemed to me that he was more interested in the thirst for vengeance than in the justice of an appropriate penalty. It is important that passion and emotion should not play their part. The horror of any appalling crime immediately moves us, if we are human, to want to take revenge, but that is not the purpose of or the justification for the law, or the duty of this House.

7 pm

Those who vote for the new clause will inevitably vote to murder some innocent people. I defended two innocent people who were pardoned. I should not like to have to bear the thought that some act or omission of mine had resulted in their wrongful death. I have endured the agony of many capital trials. I have endured fear with the jury, the witnesses and the police, who are the investigators and prosecutors. I know what capital trials were about for all those involved. That awful event had nothing to do with hot justice and retribution, least of all for the jury.

The new clause would be absurd, but that is not the point. It is said in Scotland, "Oor juries always convict." One would therefore try to make sure that there was a transfer of the trial to Edinburgh, as happened in the Meehan case. We said, "Oor jury is not going to acquit a man who murdered Mrs. Ross from Racecourse road in Ayr." That trial was held in Edinburgh and it would have resulted in an acquittal but for the events in the trial, and before it, that led to a conviction by two votes.

For myself, and speaking only for myself, the power of life and death should, with limited exceptions, rest with

Almighty God and not with us. I do not believe that in any circumstances it is right for us to say that we should take unto ourselves that right, nor do I believe that it is right for us to say that the odd innocent, and hopefully also criminal, man who is murdered by the state is the right price to pay. There is no price to pay for life.

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): I do not propose to rehearse again the arguments that have already been canvassed at length about whether there should be the death penalty. Those arguments stand. Some people fundamentally believe that there should be the death penalty; other people fundamentally believe that there should not be the death penalty. I intend to deal with the proposed new clause.

I have to declare an interest as a practising lawyer. In my view, this is a thoroughly bad new clause. It brings sentencing into the mind of the jury. It has always been a fundamental principle of our system that the jury should determine matters of fact—whether a man is guilty and, if he is guilty, of which counts of the indictment he is guilty. If he is found guilty, the judge sentences him. The minute that we begin to depart from that principle, we depart from the principle on which jury trial is based.

The new clause seeks to do that. It says that the jury must consider whether a man is guilty of a capital crime. Having decided that question, it then has to consider whether that man should live or die. By asking a jury to take that second step, we are asking them to take a partisan view during the first step, which should be objective: whether, under the English system, the Crown has proved its case. It has always been a fundamental principle of our legal system that the defence has to prove nothing. It is for the Crown to prove its case. By seeking to introduce that aspect, the new clause takes us away from that fundamental principle and makes the jury very much partisan in the cause.

The new clause is also bad because there can be no certainty of uniformity. In theory, the system has always been that, whether one is tried in London or Newcastle, the verdict should always be logical. We know from our experience that juries vary. There is no way in which there can be a guarantee that the same decision will be arrived at in all cases. There has been much talk recently in the newspapers about juries. Certain politicians have already begun to climb on the bandwagon, suggesting that at Snaresbrook it is difficult to convict a burglar. That is not true. It is difficult to convict a handler at Snaresbrook because everybody seems to buy something in a pub. It is said that at Knightsbridge it is difficult to secure a conviction in other sorts of cases. If those problems already exist, how can there be uniformity of decision?

I notice that a few hon. Members are busy chatting about other matters, but I ask those who are in favour of the new clause to think about another simple issue. In future, jurors will not be selected at random, and there will be no right of challenge. The Bill takes away that right of challenge. How can we guarantee that a jury selected in Sheffield, Manchester or Leeds will be of the same sort and composition as a jury selected in London, Birmingham or Southampton? Without that certainty, there can be no uniformity of decision on the vital second question that the new clause seeks to ask—the right to live or die.

There will always be those who want to hang, and there will always be those who are violently opposed to capital punishment. I say to those who want a return to hanging that they should not ask for it to be brought back on the simple premise that is before the House. They should not put before the House a new clause that would lead to uncertainty and, more particularly, that would lead to the destruction of our trial system and to the imposition on a jury of a question that should never be asked. A jury should never be asked to decide the sentence. They are there merely to decide guilt or innocence.

Mr. George Gardiner (Reigate): I shall vote for the new clause for the same reason as I have voted for every proposed new clause, amendment or Bill that has been introduced since I was first elected in 1974 that had as its purpose the restoration of capital punishment to our judicial system.

I have never been in any doubt that innocent lives would be saved if those who were motivated to murder knew full well that if they took the life of another person they could forfeit their own. All common sense tells us that this must be so. Are the opponents of restoration seriously trying to tell us that no one who sets out to burgle with a gun in his pocket will think twice before using it if the possibility of the death penalty exists? Are they seriously trying to suggest that no man raping a woman at knife point will be deterred from using that knife to obliterate his principal witness? Do they really expect us to believe that no criminal will be deterred from using his gun or knife to kill a policeman to avoid arrest?

But tonight I want to consider a different aspect which should be of concern to all hon. Members.

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North): Will the hon. Member consider for a second the fact that capital punishment could be an encouragement to further murder if the original murder has been witnessed? What does he say to that point?

Mr. Gardiner: I would not accept that at all. I am speaking of deterrence as regards the original murder.

My principal argument concerns the continuing gulf between decisions that we take on this subject and the view of the clear majority of the people whom we collectively represent. The view of the public on restoration has been remarkably consistent ever since capital punishment was abolished 24 years ago. I cite the evidence of two respectable opinion polls, National Opinion and Gallup, since they have taken a regular interest in this issue over the years in question.

In 1964, before abolition, NOP recorded 67 per cent. wanting to keep the death penalty, but that did not stop Parliament abolishing it. In 1966 it recorded a staggering total of 82 per cent. against abolition, but still Parliament confirmed the experiment in 1968. Abolitionists assured us then that public opinion would in time come round to following this clear lead, but the public never did. Throughout the 1970s the proportion calling for restoration varied between 67 and 82 per cent., yet in 1979 the House still refused to heed that call. Since 1981 Gallup has recorded support for restoration from 64 to 69 per cent. Other opinion polls show even higher figures. Only last year NOP found 73 per cent. calling for restoration, and that was after 23 years' experience of abolition.

The public feel even more strongly on specific categories of murder. In polls conducted between 1981 and 1987, Gallup found the number wanting capital punishment restored for the murder of members of the Army and the police forces varying between 66 and 75 per

[Mr. Gardiner]

cent.; for terrorist murders from 73 to 78 per cent.; and for murders of women following sexual assault from 69 to 72 per cent.

Such figures cannot be dismissed as one-off verdicts following some particularly gruesome outrage; nor can they be dismissed as—to use the words of the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley)—"an emotional spasm". They represent the consistently expressed demand of the British people over 24 years. Yet that clear demand has been blocked repeatedly in the House.

I have spoken and written on the issue many times and the letters I have received afterwards have always made very sad reading for anyone who has the well-being of Parliament at heart. One comment repeated over and over again is:

"It's no use telling our MP—he just won't listen."

Another comment is:

"It doesn't matter what we think—Parliament just doesn't want to know. Yet we're the people who are afraid to walk alone or answer our door at night."

Yet another is:

"Will Members of Parliament never listen?"

Apparently not, for the will of the majority is consistently frustrated in this House.

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson (Newbury): Would not my hon. Friend agree that the only way for the House to know the will of the people would be through a national referendum on capital punishment?

7.15 pm

Mr. Gardiner: I have my doubts about a referendum, for the reasons outlined by my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, North (Mr. Gale). In my view, a referendum would tell us nothing that we do not know already from reputable opinion polls over 24 years. And, as we know, one cannot legislate as a result of a referendum; one can only conduct it in an advisory capacity. So it would tell us nothing more than we know at the moment. The majority view, recorded not in a referendum but in opinion poll after opinion poll, tells us that the vast majority of the population want restoration of the death penalty. Yet they are frustrated by the decisions of the House.

Sir Winston Churchill said:

"The will of the majority, in accordance with traditions that have come down to us from earliest times, is the only healthy foundation for the State. The much tried and often proved good sense of the mass of the British people is the only safeguard on which the British Constitution relies. Trust the people."

Why cannot we trust the people in their judgment of what directly affects the safety of their daily lives?

Mr. Seamus Mallon (Newry and Armagh): Will the hon. Gentleman accept that Winston Churchill also said that the grass will grow green on the battlefields, but never on the scaffold?

Mr. Gardiner: He did, but I do not think that that detracts in the least from the quotation that I have just made.

We are told that this vote is a matter of conscience.

Mr. James Couchman (Gillingham) *rose*——

Mr. Gardiner: No, I will not give way any more; I am sorry.

I accept that there are obviously some very deep religious convictions involved. Far be it from me to question the conscience of any hon. Member, but there is a danger that we all face of using conscience as an easy escape route to avoid taking a difficult decision. Surely our exercise of conscience must take cognisance of and embrace the clearly expressed wishes of the vast majority of those whom we represent.

Edmund Burke is frequently quoted to us saying that we cast our votes here as representatives, not as delegates, which is fair enough. But Burke also said:

"In all disputes between [the people] and their rulers, the presumption is at least on a par in favour of the people."

That was in 1771. Again, he said:

"The people are the masters."

That was in 1780. Let us not forget that they are our masters still. Our duty must be to heed their voice.

We are told that in the Division we shall lose. If that is the case, so be it. But this issue will come back to the House again and again so long as the people's wish is frustrated. Parliament cannot go on obstructing this consistent demand from the majority of people. The day must come when we cease to obstruct that judgment. I wish that that day were now.

Mr. Mallon: I acknowledge the powerful and impressive speech of the hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross (Mr. Fairbairn). He brought us face to face not only with the legality but with the humanity of the matter. It is right that, on the strength of such a remarkable speech, we should welcome him to the House.

It is a disturbing irony that we have had two almost simultaneous debates touching on the most central right of the individual—the right to live—and the right of society to state how individual rights will be decided. I refer of course to what is now known as the Alton Bill and this new clause. They have much in common. They are about the same thing—the sacredness of life and an individual's right to live out his God-given life until it ends in the way that it is supposed to end by that who gave him his life, and not by the abortionist's scalpel or the hangman's noose. I approach the debate from a pro-life and right-to-life point of view.

It is a fundamental contradiction that, one week, people can be pro-life in terms of abortion and, the following week, be anti-life in terms of capital punishment. I cannot see consistency, logic, or the type of humanitarian approach that must be brought to both debates if they are ever to reach the fruition that I hope to see.

There is danger in both debates. In effect, self-righteous indignation about both issues becomes self-righteous indulgence. Every year we trot out the sacred cow, give it its yearly outing, debate the issue, and then put it back out to pasture. That is bad for both issues. It diminishes the interest and the attitudes that we bring to the issues and the passion with which we should deal with them. We should debate this matter with passion, because we are dealing with the most fundamental principle—the sacredness of human life and whether it should be taken. Hon. Members should have no doubt that that is what we are discussing, and that is what we discussed in the abortion debate. We cannot allow the matter to become ritualistic.

Winston Churchill was quoted earlier in the debate. He made another point that is relevant to all of us, and we should remind ourselves of it when we debate issues with a high moral content. Of some of his friends, Winston Churchill said that they carried their rectitude like a

banner and stopped every now and again to salute it. Let us not do that with such fundamental issues as the unborn child's right to live and the adult person's right not to have his life terminated by the hangman's noose. I must bring that fundamental approach to the debate.

The Howard League for Penal Reform stated:

"A judicially sanctioned execution is an inherently immoral action. It is a barbaric, brutalising and degrading form of punishment which is contrary to respect and value for human life."

From that point of view, I have a closed mind. My mind was closed before I came to the debate. I shall vote against the new clause, because it involves the taking of a human being's life for reasons that simply cannot be justified.

We are considering one of the most convoluted ironies that one could imagine. It has been implied and stated through the media by some proponents and supporters that new clause 1 would not apply to the north of Ireland. If it were so, we should have the most ridiculous situation in which a clause relating to capital punishment would not apply to that country under the Government's jurisdiction which, by comparison, had a remarkably high murder rate. That would make us the laughing stock of the rest of the world.

Mr. Merlyn Rees (Morley and Leeds, South): I am working on the assumption that the supporters of the new clause expect it to be applied in Northern Ireland. That might make the situation worse, not better, for the argument, but I should like the matter to be cleared up.

Mr. Mallon: I thank the right hon. Gentleman for his intervention. Whether or not it applies to the north of Ireland, it is nonsense. We are constantly told by no less a person than the Prime Minister that the north of Ireland is as British as Finchley. If we are so British, then all the legislation that is passed by the House should apply to us. Yet this legislation simply cannot apply unless one thing is done, and that is to reintroduce jury trials. What a black comedy it would be if we were to reintroduce the jury system so that juries could recommend that people be killed. That is the type of black comedy that we would face with the new clause if it were to apply to the north of Ireland.

The ultimate protection for an accused person is his peers, and his peers are the jury. We do not have juries in the north of Ireland. To pass this legislation would be bizarre, contradictory, and macabre. We would be laughed at and scorned by every civilised country of the world.

Many eminent and able lawyers in the House will deal more effectively than I shall with the legalities of the legislation, but one point must be made as forcefully as possible. New clause 15 refers to

"particular premeditation, brutality or callousness".

I wonder how that will be determined. I wonder what it will mean to a jury who are charged with giving an opinion and a judge who is charged with making a decision. Will it be "quite callous and premeditated", "slightly callous and premeditated", "very callous and premeditated", or "extremely callous and premeditated"? At which point will an offence become a hanging offence? That is the difficulty that we face, and that is the tragedy that we shall bring to the country if the new clause is passed.

If the new clause means "very" or "extremely", rather than "slightly" or "quite", we shall get vengeance from society. If the wording is "quite" or "slightly", we shall get punishment from society. The aim of the law is not to do either; it is to achieve the maximum protection for society. If we seek vengeance, we shall not deal with justice. Vengeance is for the terrorist, the maniacal killer and for the person who has no respect for the law. Vengeance should never be part of what we treasure as a proper system of justice. Over the centuries, the march of justice has been to overcome private vengeance. To leave our judicial and legal system in search of vengeance would be a disservice not only to this generation but to future generations.

The Secretary of State stated that if the new clause were passed there would be media hype, media trials, and show trials, and he said also that, in a dramatic way, they would become the focus of attention. He looked at the matter from one point of view, but I specify another point of view. If the new clause is passed and we have hanging juries and hanging judges, can hon. Members imagine the type of media hype that will occur not when it is over but before and during a trial? I have seen it recently with terrorist trials. I venture to suggest that it is almost impossible for a person to be given a fair trial, with helicopters on the roofs, snipers all around and the media carrying pictures of the scenes of the crime in which he is supposed to have been involved, before the trial has even begun. That will be multiplied 10 or 20 times, until the law and the whole trial process become part of a substantial media hype which can only do it a remarkable disservice. Let us not forget that jurors are simply people. They read newspapers, watch television, listen to rumours and talk to their neighbours, and they would be substantially influenced by such a hype.

7.30 pm

It would be remiss of me, coming as I do from the north of Ireland, not to refer to the violence, terrorism and paramilitary activity there. I say with no fear of contradiction—because I come from a tradition in Ireland that knows it off by heart, has learned it the hard way and is still paying the price—that the most potent aspect of Irish political life is its martyrs.

We should remember the famous words of Padraig Pearse at the grave of O'Donnovan Rossa. Speaking of the British Government, he said:

"The fools, the fools. They have left us our Fenian dead".

How right he was. Nothing is so potent in Irish political life as the martyr's gravestone; nothing is so tuned to the bugle in the blood, whether it be Protestant or Catholic blood, as that feeling of martyrdom for a cause. That is the motivation, the tremendous driving force, that has kept this series of troubles going for four times as long as the second world war. And I am told that the death penalty will be a deterrent in the face of that motivation. It is not, and it never will be.

I ask the House again, as I asked in the last debate on this topic, never again to let this type of legislation apply in this country. It does nothing for Parliament or the people that it serves, and it will do a grave disservice to the whole process of justice.

Rev. Ian Paisley: In Northern Ireland there are killings weekly and sometimes daily, and every public representative must search his own heart and conscience on this issue, and those elected to public office must at all times be careful to recognise the position that they hold.

On Sunday afternoon, I was as at a home in Castlederg. There was a widow woman there. She had one son, who had been shot through the back of the head by the IRA.

[Rev. Ian Paisley]

The reason for his killing was his religion. He was a Protestant, and wore Her Majesty's uniform as a member of the UDR.

As has been mentioned, there have been some 17 murders in that area, for which no one has been amenable in the courts. We heard from the Home Secretary about Enniskillen, but he did not tell us that no one has been made amenable for that terrible massacre. In Kilkeel, in the constituency of the hon. Member for Newry and Armagh (Mr. Mallon)——

Mr. Mallon: The hon. Member's geography is wrong.

Rev. Ian Paisley: I always thought that it was part of Newry and Armagh, but I apologise to the hon. Gentleman if I am wrong. As he knows, we have experienced a great change of boundaries in the past.

In Kilkeel, a former UDR member had a mercury tilt bomb put under his van. Fortunately, only the detonator exploded, or there would have been three other victims. Visiting such homes, one is faced with the realities of murder. At another home that I visited on Sunday, I was shown a picture of a wedding that had taken place just a few years ago. The mother said, "Only one member of the bridal party is still living—the bride." The groom and the best man, who were members of the UDR, were murdered, as was the bridesmaid, who belonged to the Greenfinch part of the UDR.

When faced with such events, it is necessary to search one's heart and to realise that those people's convictions have a granite rock on which to rest. I do not believe that gut reaction is the foundation on which our convictions should rest, although there is nothing wrong with gut reaction in the immediate wake of such atrocities. It was Bishop Butler, the famous philosopher, who said:

"The indignation raised by cruelty and injustice, and the desire of having it punished, which persons unconcerned would feel, is by no means malice. No, it is resentment against vice and wickedness: it is one of the common bonds, by which society is held together; a fellow-feeling, which each individual has in behalf of the whole species, as well as of himself."

Perhaps that is a good illustration of gut reaction, but I must have something far more solid on which to rest my convictions.

I was deeply impressed by the speech of the hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross (Mr. Fairbairn). In that speech, which was made as a sort of confession of his relationship with trials in which he had taken part, he said that the power of life and death was in the hands of the Almighty. That is absolutely correct, but he should have gone on to develop the theme.

Capital punishment is in the hands of God, but God has delegated to mankind certain responsibilities and duties. Although we may not like those responsibilities or may resent those duties, we cannot get away from them. I have listened to some strange statements here today. The hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Campbell) —the Scottish Liberal—said that the state had not the right to take life. Let us analyse that statement: it means that the state has no right to declare war. Where would we find ourselves if we followed the logic of that?

The hon. Member for Newry and Armagh said that every man and woman in this country should have the right to be saved from the hangman's noose. They have that right, if they keep their hands out of crime. Every man has a right to keep out of prison if he does not violate the law—I have some practical experience of that. We all have our rights. Let us not be carried away with this wonderful theme of saving men from the hangman's noose. Everyone can be saved if he stays in line with the law. *[Interruption.]* I do not believe that every court in the land, every police officer, every judge and every jury is crooked. If that were so, we should wipe out the House because it would have no authority. I apologise for raising the temper of some hon. Members.

I believe with all my heart that capital punishment is a divinely revealed law that rests on the rock granite of biblical revelation. It rests on the very principle that some hon. Members have used to try to turn for their benefit. It rests on the sacredness of life. It is because life is not cheap and because life is sacred that divinely revealed scripture tells us that those who have responsibility in government should exercise the power of the sword.

The right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) may turn round to smile at his friends but he talked about that authority which deals with capital punishment. I too want to deal with that authority. The word of God tells us, way back before the Mosaic epoch:

"And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.

Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."

The sacredness of life demanded that if a man took life, he should forfeit his. That is why life is so valuable and sacred.

We come then to the Mosaic law where we have the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill". I have heard abolitionists say in the House and in other places that that supports their case, but anyone who has studied the Mosaic law will have seen that the scriptures advocate that certain crimes should have capital punishment. That scripture is dealing with a person who goes out to commit the crime of murder. Some hon. Members may say that that is the Old Testament and that we should forget about it, but the Bible is one book and the Old Testament has within it the genius and grace of the New Testament.

I turn to the greatest authority of all, the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. If ever any person set up the greatest of all deterrents, it was the incarnate Son of God when he walked this earth. He said that all that a man hath, he will give for his life. There we have the great deterrent from the one who spake as never man spake.

I have been in and out of prison and have talked to prisoners, and I know that all that a man has, he will give for his life. But Christ went on to point out that those who take the sword must be punished by the sword. I remember hearing in the House an hon. Member say that no man could be a Christian and not believe in the abolition of capital punishment. I asked that Member, "Do you believe that Paul was a Christian?" He said that of course Paul was a Christian. What did Paul say? He said:

"if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die".

Let us remember that Paul wrote most of the New Testament under the inspiration of God. So let us get the facts right as they are revealed in scripture.

The very genius of the Gospel is the genius that lies at the heart of this, because the genius of the Gospel is a cross and a death. If Christ had not died we could not live, for we all deserve death:

"The wages of sin is death"

and

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die".

That is at the very heart of the Christian message; someone else took my place and died for me.

I now come to the reality of the position as we have it in Northern Ireland today. When I first came to the House there was a debate on capital punishment. The IRA threatened to get everyone who voted against abolition. One man was got—the Rev. Robert Bradford, my near and dear friend. Two other Members of the House have been murdered by the IRA—the former Member for Southgate, Sir Anthony Berry, in the Brighton explosion, and Mr. Airey Neave, who was the Member for Abingdon.

7.45 pm

We were told by the IRA that if we dared show our hand in the House against abolition we would be on the line. What else were we told? We were told that for every person who was hanged, two would be shot dead. I do not bow to terrorist judgment. I have walked too long with death in Northern Ireland, as has every public representative; no matter what side of the fence he comes from, every public representative is in danger. Every public representative walks with death every day. I say to the IRA, "You will not dictate to the representatives of Northern Ireland how we cast our votes in this House." If it means death, so be it, because principle and liberty are more dear to me than life lived under the threat of the scum of the Irish Republican Army.

I resent deeply on behalf of Northern Ireland what was said by the Home Secretary today. He said that he had consulted the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. He said that the Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary had told him that his senior officers did not want capital punishment. Has ever a Chief Constable in Northern Ireland been attacked? Has ever an assistant chief constable been attacked? There is a trade union for police officers in Northern Ireland. I should have thought that that would appeal to the Opposition Benches. Why was the Police Federation never invited to give its views? Its members are the men who stand on the street. We heard today that a policeman is no different from a post office attendant. Policemen in Northern Ireland put themselves in the front line. Why were members of the UDR not consulted to find out their view? When they put on their uniform, they put themselves on the line. Those people are a special category.

Rev. William McCrea: Will my hon. Friend tell the House that the Police Federation has expressed an opinion which is totally contrary to that of the Chief Constable? The Police Federation has requested humbly that the House should give policemen the protection of capital punishment. That is the reality. Will my hon. Friend also tell the House that in Northern Ireland capital punishment is taking place? The killing of the innocent is happening. It is time that many hon. Members were more concerned about the innocent than the terrorists and the guilty.

Rev. Ian Paisley: I feel very sore that Opposition Members should think that that is something to smile about. I have been in too many police homes not to realise reality. We live with it day after day. We are not taking part in an academic exercise. We are walking and talking with these people every day. The clear teaching upon which the Government rest is their authority to use the power of the sword. Government is a divinely ordained institution. The chief magistrate has responsibility under God and we, as part of this Parliament, have responsibilities to discharge. There is no way that we can escape from that.

The power of the sword is in the hands of the chief magistrate to punish the guilty and to defend the innocent. Well, the innocent in Northern Ireland are not being defended today. I heard a graphic and gruesome description of hanging by the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley). I can tell the House of murders that will make everybody here sick. Hon. Members have seen on their televisions something of what we have had day after day. However, they did not see half of it, because the eyes of one of those corporals were gouged out by a knife in the hand of one of the IRA killers. That kind of action calls for the Government to do something to defend the ordinary people of Northern Ireland and to give them a chance to exist and to live. Any Government who fail to exercise the power of the sword fail in their bounden duty and responsibility. Those are the things that concern us in Northern Ireland.

I believe in jury trials. I do not believe that the juries should have been done away with. I voted against it in Committee with some of the hon. Friends of the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook, because it was not juries which were being threatened at that time; it was witnesses. I want to see jury trials. I believe that we must have jury trials if we are to have capital punishment. However, I will vote for the new clause because I believe that it is putting up a marker. It recognises that in our constituencies there are people who are saying, "We should have a return to capital punishment." Some hon. Members might close their ears to that, but that tide will rise and, as crime continues in that part of the United Kingdom, and as the IRA and terrorism worldwide tightens its grip on freedom-loving people, those Members will realise what we are really up against. They will have to come to grips with the fact that there is only one real deterrent, and that is to deal with the people who commit those crimes.

I finish with the words spoken in this House by my late, beloved friend, Robert Bradford, who said:

"The issue is not whether capital punishment is a deterrent. The fact that both sides resort to statistics to prove their point means that the exercise is futile because it is inconclusive. The one thing that is certain is that capital punishment deters the terrorist, who is removed from society by capital punishment.

When capital punishment is applied, there is commensurate punishment with the crime and at least one terrorist has been deterred. It does the Northern Ireland people a grave injustice to suggest that the murder of educationally sub-normal boys and girls and the murder of a two-year-old girl will result in a kind of secular canonisation of IRA terrorists."

That is what we have been hearing today: "If we deal with terrorism, there will be murders." There will be some sort of secular canonisation. Do hon. Members really think that the right thinking, decent Roman Catholic and Protestant people in Northern Ireland will give these murderous thugs some sort of secular canonisation because they meet their just deserts?

I conclude with the words of my late lamented friend, who said:

"I conclude by saying that we must all be realistic. Hostages will be taken, counter-murders will occur"—

and they are occurring—

[Rev. Ian Paisley]

"but unfortunately hostage and murder are ironies of our fate. One thing is clear: terrorism will win if we compromise our attitude in respect of the punishment applied."—[*Official Report*, 11 December 1975; Vol. 902, c. 709-10.]

Mr. Tony Worthington (Clydebank and Milngavie): I want to return to the main theme of the debate which is concerned with criminal law and the use of capital punishment for orthodox crime.

Of course, for many of us, the arguments about whether capital punishment is effective are independent. The argument about whether capital punishment deters is not the key issue. The key issue is how we feel about capital punishment. Whether the number of murders would be lowered is not the central issue. Every society has to decide which punishments, even if effective, are beyond the pale. Therefore, we deliberately reject some punishments, even when we know that they work. We reject the amputation of limbs, although we know that that would lead to fewer thefts. We reject some forms of drug therapy and brain surgery even when we know that they would lead to less horrific crimes. Many of us would also reject the idea of judicial execution even if the number of murders could be lowered by that route. However, there is no evidence that the number of murders would be lowered.

We take the view that judicial executions degrade us. One of the memorable experiences of my life concerns a friend who was a prison officer. He was a member of a team who, through the last stages of a prisoner's life, had to befriend him, make the remaining days of his life as comfortable as possible and then accompany him to the scaffold. Just hearing about that scarred me and I know that it scarred that prison officer. Among the most impressive evidence we have received has been that from prison governors who have said that they would have to reconsider their position in the service if execution was brought back.

We must continually be seeking to reduce the amount of violence. There is no other evidence other than that violence breeds violence. I have no evidence other than that which would show that, if we were to increase the amount of violence by judicial execution, it would be harmful.

There is no evidence that deterrence works in the case of murder. Deterrence is a flawed idea in any case. All around us is evidence of deterrents that do not work. One finds evidence in public house car parks of deterrents that do not work. There is evidence among smokers of deterrents that do not work. On the streets of America all sorts of people carry guns. The legal enforcement agencies carry guns. Instant deterrents are available, but look at the level of crime in that country.

We are constantly told that the certainty of detection is the best deterrence. The detection rate for murder is 97 per cent, yet that does not deter murder. Murder is a special crime about which the arguments for deterrents are even less effective than they are usually. We have heard several times that 75 per cent. of murders are among people who know each other—often very well. They are committed by people who are trapped in a unique situation—a once-in-a-lifetime situation of an emotional charnel house —that causes them to take this particular action. It cannot be those people that we are talking about today.

There is also a small minority of very disturbed people who will certainly not be deterred by the death penalty or anything else.

We must get away from the tempting idea that has been suggested in this debate that anything can be put right by judicial execution. Murder is a loss that cannot be restored. No matter how much we want to restore it, nothing can. Judicial execution would not put matters right.

New clause 1 is a cop-out and a fudge. It is put forward by people who basically want to reintroduce the death penalty but who know that a blanket provision for all murders is unthinkable and unsustainable in the House. They also know that choosing murders by category—for example, by the method or by the kind of victim—was completely discredited when it was used in the past. They have therefore gone for the idea of leaving it to the jury to choose who to recommend for the death sentence. That is a half-baked idea for reasons that have been mentioned. First, no one should add to the pressures on a jury in a murder trial. Imagine the pressures on those who oppose capital punishment when serving on a jury if they knew the consequences of a conviction.

The issue of whether majority recommendations would be allowed has not been adequately dealt with. It is difficult to imagine unanimous recommendations. We know the sense of relief that juries in ordinary criminal cases feel when, having found someone guilty, they then find out that that person has previous convictions Even if wrongly, they then have a sense of guilt lifted from them. If jurors had to recommend that someone should be executed, that sense of guilt would be much greater.

8 pm

It has already been stated eloquently this evening that, compared with when the death penalty existed, we now have a much seamier media in this country which would exploit such trails for the basest of reasons, such as increasing the sale of newspapers or the number of television viewers.

A second difficulty about leaving the decision to juries and about the new clause is that all the prejudices of the jurors would come out when making death penalty recommendations. From experience and from elsewhere, we know that it is much more likely that women would be sentenced to death. We know that unpopular minority groups—on the basis of sex, sexual behaviour or sexual orientation—would be much more likely to be recommended for the death sentence.

Many people will remember the Jeremy Bamber case. Five members of the same family were killed by Jeremy Bamber. Colin Caffell, Bamber's brother-in-law, has written to me. He is the ex-husband of Sheila Caffell and the father of the children who were appallingly killed by Bamber. Mr. Caffell wrote to me on this issue, and to the hon. Member for Thanet, North (Mr. Gale), stating:

"Had there been the death sentence, I suspect that Jeremy Bamber, who murdered my ex-wife and children, might have got off because people can't understand how 'a nice looking boy like him' could do something like that. Even though we can see, from the evidence, how dangerous he is, Jeremy doesn't fit the archetype image of a desperate killer. He is a good-looking and charismatic character with charm, a good education and everything to live for; a man who could, and almost did, sway the hearts of the jury; a man who could easily kill again!"

All the evidence, especially from America, shows that if there is the death penalty for categories of murder, it is the

people from the poorest sections of society who are most likely to be singled out for that recommendation. I thought that this would be a controversial point, but after what the lawyers have said today, it is not. We like to think that the law and juries are perfectly objective. However, we have heard some stunning evidence today about the lack of objectivity.

The third major difficulty about letting juries recommend the death penalty is that those who propose the new clause have seen that a tiny category of murders are so appalling and distressing that juries and courts will easily recognise them and recommend the death penalty. It must be realised that it is for precisely that category of murder that guilty verdicts are most unsafe. Timothy Evans would have been such a murderer. The hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross (Mr. Fairbairn) reminded us once again about Paddy Meehan. He would have been the kind of murderer who would have been recommended for the death penalty, having killed an elderly couple. David Blythe in Manchester, who was held for murdering two elderly women, would have been such a murderer. The Birmingham pub bombers and the Guildford bombers would have been such murderers. The Broadwater Farm murder was such a case.

I do not know enough about the latter three cases to pronounce on whether the people concerned were guilty or innocent, but I do know that there are grave doubts in each and every one of those cases about whether those people were guilty or innocent. Those were horrifying murders of the kind that engender intense emotion; when the pressures on the police to find the guilty are intense; when there are pressures to short-cut and where the evidence is much more likely to be circumstantial and flimsy rather than conclusive. Such murders might attract death penalty recommendations from juries, but it is in precisely such cases that the verdicts are least safe. At least those involved in those currently troubling cases are still in prison and alive. Under the new clause, they would not be.

Mr. Charles Irving (Cheltenham): Still vivid in my memory is the ordeal that I went through about 50 years ago as one of the pickets on the gates of Gloucester prison at the last hanging. I have never got over it. In all the years since, I have done my tiny bit to help to improve the appalling situation that existed in those days.

The deliberate taking of another person's life in cold blood is an uncivilised act under any circumstances. To carry it out accompanied by the solemn ceremony of the state apparatus is totally obscene. I feel passionately, therefore, that it would be utterly wrong to reintroduce the death penalty without the most conclusive evidence that it acts as a unique deterrent. That evidence does not exist. In fact, throughout the world, the evidence shows that the death penalty does not reduce the murder rate, but leads simply to a greater coarsening of attitudes to human life.

The arguments against capital punishment are well known to the House. So strong are they that they persuaded Parliament in 1965 to abolish the death penalty. So strong are they—*[Interruption.]* I thought that I heard somebody whispering or mumbling, but apparently not. So strong are they that they have persuaded Parliament time and time again not to reverse that momentous decision.

With the indulgence of the House, Madam Deputy Speaker, may I enumerate the compelling reasons why capital punishment was wrong, is wrong, and will ever be wrong—*[Interruption.]* It is off again—there is something in the background. *[Laughter.]*

First, capital punishment is not a deterrent. The Royal Commission of 1965——

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): Will the hon. Gentleman give way on that point?

Mr. Irving: No, I never give way and if you were the only girl in the world and I was the only boy, I would not give way to you.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman *rose*——

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. The hon. Gentleman has made his position perfectly clear.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: The hon. Gentleman is not a gentleman if he does not give way.

Mr. Irving: First, capital punishment is not a deterrent. The Royal Commission of 1965 said that there was no evidence to prove it. Recent surveys in the United States of America, where some states have the death penalty and some have not, show exactly the same.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: They always appeal.

Mr. Irving: I appeal to you, Madam Deputy Speaker, to ask the hon. Lady to stop interrupting.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman *rose*——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. It is reasonable to ask the hon. Lady not to continue interrupting from a sedentary position, as she has done most of the afternoon.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I have sought to intervene from a standing position but the hon. Gentlemen did not give way, so it is scarcely my fault if I interrupt from a sedentary position.

Madam Deputy Speaker: If one is not allowed to intervene from a standing position in this House, it is usual for hon. Members to restrict their comments until the Chair calls them.

Mr. Irving: Some states have the death penalty and some have not, but they all say exactly the same: where a killing is done in the heat of the moment, whether by a jealous husband or a thwarted mistress, the threat of execution seems to hold no terror.

Secondly, supporters of capital punishment do not call for it in every case. Surely that is a powerful admission by them that it is not necessarily a deterrent. Thirdly, we cannot restore life to a man wrongly convicted and executed. Alas, there have been in living memory the most appalling miscarriages of justice in a land which prides itself on its rule of law and whose legal system has been the object of worldwide admiration. Fourthly, hanging a terrorist would create a martyr and cause, not deter, more outrages. If capital punishment has the opposite effect, every Secretary of State for Northern Ireland of both political parties would have come to this House to seek those powers, but we are told, and I accept, that it would create martyrs whose deaths would inspire a hundred fearful imitations.

[Mr. Irving]

I confess to feeling greater hostility to the terms of this new clause than I have felt towards any of its predecessors, and I have spoken in every debate on this subject since I have been a Member of this House. The new clause proposes to place on the shoulders of the jury the burden of deciding whether a killing is sufficiently evil to recommend the death penalty. That proposal is unprecedented in our legal history. For the first time, it places upon the jury, not the judge, the function of influencing the sentence of the accused. Further, by its very definition, it puts on the jury the burden of deciding fine matters of motive and morality.

If a husband poisons his wife because she is dying of an incurable illness and he wishes to put her out of her pain, a jury in one place may find that evil and recommend the death penalty, whereas a jury in another area may not find it so. The provision would be wrong, unworkable and intolerable if it became law. Will the House insist in such a case, where the sanction is so terrible and final, that a jury must return a unanimous verdict? To do less would be to undermine the awesome nature of the punishment, and if the verdict must be unanimous it would require only one juror who is opposed to capital punishment in conscience to refuse to convict. The trial would then be stopped and the jury discharged. In those circumstances, would it be right for that man again to stand trial and again to fear for his life? That is not civilisation.

We do not gouge out the eye of the person guilty of theft, we do not break the bones of the one convicted of battering, and we do not yet burn the house of an arsonist. While it is evil for an individual to take a life—I wholly agree with some of the comments and the cases that have been mentioned—it is equally evil and reprehensible for a civilised state to respond in the same way.

8.15 pm

In any discussion on capital punishment, certain matters must be taken for granted by abolitionists and non-abolitionists: that the whole apparatus of the death cell and the executioner is disgustingly squalid, repugnant to decent feeling and offensive to most; that capital punishment inflicts intolerable mental agony on the condemned man and particularly on his family; that it imposes a sordid responsibility on the prison staff, so consequently may well keep many people from joining the service if it were reinstituted; and that it creates a mystique around murder which the press grossly and irresponsibly exploit.

If we pass the new clause, the bell will toll for this country and for the values which it should represent. The bell which tolls will be the death knell for a national reputation based on the solid foundations of civilisation and humanity.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones (Ynys Môn): Many moral issues cause right hon. and hon. Members on both sides great difficulty. I confess that I found the abortion issue particularly painful and had to reach a particularly painful decision about which way to cast my vote. Often we have great difficulty in deciding how to cast our votes. It is a great responsibility. We take these issues seriously and we work hard on them.

I have never found any of those difficulties attached to my decision on capital punishment. We can all find good reasons for opposing the reintroduction of the death penalty. We have heard many of the arguments rehearsed during this debate and doubtless they have been rehearsed on numerous occasions in this House over the years.

There is the powerful argument that there could be a miscarriage of justice and an innocent man or woman would be sentenced to death. As hon. Members have eloquently said, while the system of justice remains fallible, and at present there are no grounds to believe that it is not, the danger will always be there. There are many well-documented cases, both when capital punishment was an option available to the courts and since then, where innocent people have been sentenced and condemned to death, and then under the old system pardoned or since capital punishment has not been an option pardoned and released. That is an extremely powerful and compelling argument.

It is also been argued that the death penalty is not a deterrent. Many well-argued reports and research documents have been published and many conclude that there is no evidence to suggest that the presence and liberal use of the death penalty deters capital offences. Evidence from the United States shows that it is impossible to differentiate between homicide rates in those states that have capital punishment and those that have not. The Home Secretary has already said that the rise in the number of homicides committed in Britain is substantially lower than the rise in other violent offences.

There is a great danger that the use of the death penalty would be arbitrary and unfair. We all know how difficult it was to differentiate between the types of murders that qualified for the death penalty under the Homicide Act 1957 and those that did not.

The danger that lies behind the new clause is the public clamour for the use of the ultimate sanction. If the new clause were accepted that clamour would concentrate on certain well-publicised cases. The danger is that certain sections of the press would decide before a case was heard which defendant might merit the jury's recommendation for the death sentence. The pressure would build up day after day. Members of the jury, probably trying a case for the first time, would not be qualified to make a judgment. They would be under immense outside pressure to make a decision or a recommendation. I believe that those pressures would be intolerable and it would be most unfair to subject a jury to them.

Another argument that has been canvassed today is the fact that the act of execution is both cruel and inhumane. The hon. Member for Thanet, North (Mr. Gale) said that he did not support hanging and that other methods of capital punishment should be considered. We all know that there is no humane way in which to kill a human being.

All the arguments that I have outlined could be used against the restoration of capital punishment, but the most powerful, compelling and profound argument that could be deployed against its restoration is the moral argument. The taking of a life, even when it is sanctioned by the state, is a barbaric act. I believe that it is also an inherently immoral action. Such an act is based on the principle of revenge. We should base our sentencing provisions on the normal principles of justice and leave behind the feelings of private vengeance. That is why this is, above all else, a matter of conscience and why I shall vote against new clause 1.

Mr. Lawrence: There has been much disagreement in the House tonight, but I believe that we all share certain views. We all share the belief that the level of mindless violence in our society is far too high. We are appalled at the level of murders, maimings, terrorist acts, rapes, muggings and hooliganism. We all share a desire to take whatever steps we can reasonably take to reduce that violence. We would all share a desire to avoid capital punishment as it is horrible to contemplate the cold-blooded taking of human life and we seek any alternative punishment that would achieve a reduction in violent crime. Unfortunately, for 23 years we have tried the only logical alternative and it has manifestly failed as violence has continued to rise.

We must all agree that the overwhelming majority of people whom we represent believe that the one necessary and reasonable step that we should take to reduce murders, maimings, perhaps to reduce rapes and muggings or any other form of violence—the use of lethal guns, knives or other hideous weapons—is the restoration of capital punishment for murder. I am sure that all hon. Members agree with what I have said, but perhaps some would not agree that we have exhausted all the alternatives.

There are a number of matters, however, on which we do not all agree. Some hon. Members would never, under any circumstances, feel justified in taking human life. My hon. Friend the Member for Cheltenham (Mr. Irving) has said that such an act is uncivilised. It is in an uncivilised society, however, that civilised punishment fails to deter. We shall not enjoy the luxury of a civilised society until we reduce the level of murders, maimings, rapes and serious violence.

Some hon. Members are against retribution and that is an honourable view. If we are to have retribution, however, I should prefer state retribution according to the rules legally and properly laid down by it rather than the retribution of private individuals in back alleys. In any event, hon. Members who believe that society would be more civilised if capital punishment was not restored are in a minority in the country.

Some hon. Members are against capital punishment because they believe that if it were applied to terrorists it would result in reprisals and they cannot face that possibility. But if we gave way to such blackmail or fear it would mean that the lawless would be making the laws of our country and we would be betraying the trust of the people who put us here.

Some hon. Members are against capital punishment because mistakes could be made and innocent people might die. That argument rests on the reasoning that it can never be justifiable, under any circumstances, to run the risk of taking innocent lives. If that were the rule by which we lived our lives, would we have gone to war in 1939 or earlier? What do we think about Hiroshima, which resulted in the loss of countless innocent lives? Those lives were lost to save more lives that would have been lost had the war continued.

Should not the saving of innocent lives lead us to ban the most lethal weapon known to man, which daily takes tens or hundreds of lives in our society—the motor car? We should not let the risk of taking innocent lives, which might inevitably follow with capital punishment, stop its reintroduction but we should endeavour to make those mistakes unlikely or impossible. That is our obligation.

We can avoid repeating the mistakes of the past if we make careful rules. After a jury have recommended the death penalty there is no reason why a tribunal should not consider carefully all the surrounding facts concerning the convicted person to see whether there is anything at all that can be said to prevent that person from dying. If that test had been carried out on Timothy Evans, who had a mental age of 12, he would not have died. If Hanratty, who may or may not have been innocent and about whom there is much mythology, had advanced the defence of diminished responsibility he might have succeeded. However, he chose to advance the defence of an alibi which failed.

8.30 pm

Those are the things that could be considered by a tribunal with access to all the background information. If the tribunal found that the killing was so horrible that nothing could be said to justify the saving of the life, so be it, but by that time it would be certain that the man condemned to die would be thoroughly, completely and utterly guilty.

Some hon. Members are against capital punishment because they say that they could not bring themselves to carry it out and would not expect others to do it. There are all kinds of jobs that I could not bring myself to do. I could not inject an animal so that it died; nor could I carry out an abortion. We expect others to do those miserable jobs and it is a cop-out for us to advance that as a reason for not being in favour of capital punishment.

Some hon. Members say that in Northern Ireland capital punishment would create martyrs. Of course it would, but martyrs will be created even if there is no capital punishment in Northern Ireland. The difference is that instead of martyrdom being continuous it would be anniversarial, and people tend to forget the names of the people whose funerals they were celebrating one, two or three years before. It is an insult to the Irish people north or south to advance the argument that the restoration of capital punishment would make martyrs.

Some hon. Members will be convinced by what my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary said about new clause 1: that it is a non-starter because it is imprecise about the powers of juries and impractical because it does not sit easily with the Criminal Justice Bill, which I remind my right hon. Friend is not yet on the statute book. My right hon. Friend said that it would be too difficult to have it in Northern Ireland where there are no juries. He said that it is contrary to the wishes of the Chief Constable of the RUC and other important people and that anyway murder represents only one hundreth of 1 per cent. of crime and one tenth of 1 per cent. of violent crimes. Does that mean that we should not entertain such a new clause but should shrug our shoulders and walk away? The new clause could be further amended in another place once the principle of restoration is established. If we do not like the way in which it is amended we can vote for the new clause in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, North (Mr. Bendall) which is much simpler and does not raise those objections.

Mr. Rees: The hon. and learned Gentleman referred to the speech by the Home Secretary and to various aspects of what can be done in the Lords. He said that this is just a matter of principle. The Lord Chief Justice has offered

[Mr. Rees]

his view on it. As a recorder, what does the hon. and learned Gentleman think about the views of the Lord Chief Justice?

Mr. Lawrence: As I understand it, the Lord Chief Justice did not express his view about whether there should be a restoration of capital punishment. The view expressed by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary as being the view of the Lord Chief Justice was that in its present state the new clause would not work. I am saying that it can be further amended in the Lords and if hon. Members do not agree with that and are worried about it they can vote for the new clause of my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, North. It is much simpler and I do not think that the learned Lord Chief Justice has been asked to apply his mind to it. At any rate, we were not told that he had.

Mr. Tim Devlin (Stockton, South): When one boils the question down, does one not see that the principle of capital punishment comes to the simple question of one's individual conscience? Does my hon. and learned Friend agree that every man's conscience, whether it be the Lord Chief Justice or Joe Soap in the street, is equal on this issue? If that is right, surely the House should reflect the views and the consciences of the overwhelming majority of our people.

Mr. Lawrence: I am grateful for the obvious support from my hon. Friend. I did not know until this evening that he was likely to support us. We look forward to hearing why he has changed his views.

Some hon. Members may be against capital punishment because lawyers, judges, prison officers and witnesses might be intimidated and unwilling to do their duty and would want to resign or to reconsider their positions. What on earth did lawyers, judges, prison officers and witnesses do before capital punishment was abolished? Are any of us to be afraid of doing that which is right or necessary in order to save the lives of the innocent? Is that not a slur upon the sense of duty of those who make up the legal system?

In the United States of America where capital punishment is constitutional it has been restored in many states and I have not heard that the system is breaking down in those states because of lawyers, judges and witnesses being unwilling to do their job. Why should the system break down in Britain?

For one or some or all of the reasons that I have advanced, some hon. Members are opposed to the new clause. I remind them that in opposing it they represent a minority of the people of Britain.

The arguments for and against must turn on whether capital punishment is a deterrent. If it is a deterrent it will save lives. It will stop the convicted killer or the potential killer from taking innocent lives, the lives of people who have a right to live. If it is a deterrent, to oppose its reintroduction is to prefer the life of the convicted killer to the lives of innocent people. It is to pity the killer rather than the victim or the potential victim. To do that would be unjust, immoral and thoroughly indefensible. I am getting a bit tired of being called bloodthirsty because I support the restoration of capital punishment. If it is a deterrent it will save lives and not to restore it would be more bloodthirsty and far less defensible.

Those opposed to capital punishment say that it does not deter because there is no evidence to that effect, but there is some evidence. Professor Erlich of Chicago has produced evidence to show that between 1933 and 1969 there was a distinct deterrent effect in the United States and that each execution may have resulted in several fewer murders. A professor of Yale has concluded that between 1939 and 1968 capital punishment was a deterrent in Britain. There is evidence throughout the world that the murder trend has risen more slowly in countries where there is capital punishment.

Let me accept that the evidence is equivocal. If it is, it is because there is no way of registering statistically and convincingly the number of times that a murder was avoided because of the fear of capital punishment. We have to look elsewhere than the statistics for evidence about whether it is a deterrent.

My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Perth and Kinross (Mr. Fairbairn) made an interesting speech and gave examples of people who were not deterred. There will always be those who are not deterred, just as there will always be the poor.

I do not say that everyone will be deterred by capital punishment, but some will be deterred and that will save many innocent lives. Why do I believe that? First, it is common sense that in many cases the consequences of being caught with one's wrongdoing must have a deterrent effect on what one does. If not, why do we have punishment at all? Why do we have sentences of any kind unless we feel that a substantial justification for them would be deterrence?

Secondly, I believe that lives would be saved; the British people overwhelmingly believe that it would deter. The judgment of ordinary people about the motivation of ordinary people must be more compelling than the judgment of experts. We do not need experts to tell us how ordinary people would react to situations that sometimes end in murder.

Thirdly, another stratum of our society believes that capital punishment is a deterrent. I am referring to the IRA. Why else does it use capital punishment to bring its people into line unless it believes that capital punishment deters terrorists? Why else was the House threatened by the leader of the IRA some years ago, when we debated capital punishment, that if we reintroduced capital punishment there would be greater reprisals against British soldiers in Northern Ireland? If the IRA believes it, why should we disbelieve it?

I believe that capital punishment is a deterrent because in the 1960s I defended some really serious criminals in a number of serious criminal cases. I used to ask them, "Is capital punishment a deterrent? Did it ever deter you? Would it deter others like you?" I am talking about a time when capital punishment was just going out of operation. It was against their interests to say to someone who was interested in politics and might one day become a Member of Parliament, "Yes, we believe that capital punishment is a deterrent." They should have been saying, "No, it is not a deterrent." I do not remember one serious criminal sitting in the cells of any of our prisons of whom I asked the question "Is it a deterrent?" saying, "No." They said, "In the days when we knew that we might hang, we did not take guns on our enterprises. When we knew that we would hang, we did not take young tearaways with us who might go over the top and start killing people."

Serious criminals, who may or may not have killed and murdered, the IRA and the ordinary people who understand the motivations of ordinary people perhaps more clearly than the experts do with all their statistics make me sure that for some—not for all, but perhaps for many—capital punishment is a deterrent.

We shall all vote as our consciences lead us. I shall vote for the restoration of capital punishment, as I have always done, because I believe that its restoration will reduce the killing of the innocent, and the carrying of weapons which might be used to kill or maim the innocent. Whether juries have difficulties does not matter. What matters is that the would-be killer could never be sure in advance that he would not die if he were caught having killed someone innocent. I think that he would be deterred.

Of the two options I prefer the new clause tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, North, which states simply and clearly, as a matter of principle, avoiding all the criticism against it by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary or the learned Lord Chief Justice, that

"The maximum penalty for murder shall be death".

Mr. Mullin: First, may I say how saddened I was to learn from the intervention of the hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Devlin) that he is now in favour of the death penalty. Only recently I appeared with him on a television programme and he said the opposite.

Mr. Devlin: May I elucidate that point? Personally I am not in favour of the reintroduction of capital punishment, but 86 per cent. of my constituents are. I regard my conscience as being no superior to that of my constituents, so I am prepared to represent their view on this issue, which I believe to be outside politics, and which was not in my manifesto, and I shall carry that through into action this evening.

8.45 pm

Mr. Mullin: It is extremely sad that the hon. Gentleman lacks the guts to do what he knows to be right.

I am against the death penalty under all circumstances, for the reasons given by many hon. Members who have spoken so articulately tonight. I wish to dwell on only one aspect of the argument which has been touched upon by other hon. Members, and which I know a little about, and that is the possibility of mistakes because mistakes are the bottom line in this argument.

In America, a study carried out in 1985 by the American Civil Liberties Union concluded that this century in the United States 343 innocent people had been convicted of capital crimes and of those 25 had been executed. I mention that only in passing because tonight hon. Members on both sides of the argument have accepted that innocent people would be executed. I pay tribute to the hon. Member for Thanet, North (Mr. Gale) who robustly faced up to the possibility, or certainty, that innocent people would be executed, as in the past others who take his view have not.

I believe that we have made rather more mistakes in convictions related to murder than we have been prepared to admit hitherto. I was interested to hear the hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross (Mr. Fairbairn) say that he personally knew of 20 or 30 cases in which he believed that innocent persons had been convicted of murder. That is more than I thought we were dealing with, but from my own experiences I realise that it is quite a big problem.

One aspect of that problem is the inability of our legal system to own up to mistakes. The bigger the mistake, the more difficult our legal system finds it to own up. That was acknowledged by the Select Committee chaired by Lord Eden six years ago, which considered miscarriages of justice. It acknowledged then that the present system of appeal does not do justice in most of the great alleged miscarriages of justice.

Lord Denning, who often can be counted on to say out loud what other distinguished judges will say only in private, has illuminated another aspect of that problem. Faced with a choice between owning up to a mistake and discrediting public confidence in the legal system, many of our senior judges will choose to avoid owning up. That very serious allegation was made by Lord Denning in a programme in February. He was perfectly prepared to contemplate the possibility that innocent people had been and would be convicted and he felt that it was better that they should be, to avoid discrediting the legal system.

The problem is compounded by our habit of convicting people on the most slender evidence. That is at the root of many great alleged and accepted miscarriages of justice, as are confessions given in police custody and repudiated in court. They run like a thread through many of the cases with which we are familiar.

There was recently an even more remarkable example in the case of Winston Silcott, convicted of taking part in the murder of PC Blakelock. That was a particularly horrible murder that aroused great public feeling. He was convicted solely on the verbal evidence of a police officer. He did not sign any confession and there was no other evidence against him. He was, as they say in the trade, "verballed". I do not allege that Mr. Silcott was innocent, but it was not proved to my satisfaction that he was guilty. That is the view of many other reasonable people. No one is in any doubt that, had we had the death penalty, Winston Silcott would certainly have been an early candidate for hanging.

There are other cases of mistakes to which our judicial system has eventually been persuaded to own up. Some of those cases have been touched upon by other hon. Members. Timothy Evans was convicted and hanged in 1950. In 1953, the police caught the person who committed the crime and it took another 13 years, with little help from the judges, before our judicial system or the Home Office was prepared to pardon Timothy Evans.

A case that has not been mentioned is that of Cooper and McMahon who were convicted in 1970 of the Luton post office murder. The case was referred to the Court of Appeal by no fewer than four successive Home Secretaries, including my right hon. Friend the Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees). On each occasion the judges sat stony-faced and said that they had heard nothing new. In the end, the Home Secretary of the day, now Lord Whitelaw, became so embarrassed at the inability of the Home Office to persuade the judges to own up to the mistake that he simply ordered the gates of the prison to be opened, gave the men a railway ticket each and sent them home without so much as an apology for the decade they had spent in gaol.

The case of Patrick Meehan has been mentioned. He was convicted in 1969 and released in 1977 with a pardon. He was framed on the evidence of police officers and would certainly have hanged. The case of Jack Preece has been mentioned. He was convicted in 1973 of a murder involving sexual assault. He was released and pardoned in

[Mr. Mullin]

1981 after it became clear that the Home Office forensic scientist had dabbled with the evidence. He would certainly have hanged.

Geoffrey Mycock was convicted in 1969 and released in 1984. He was convicted on the basis of a confession obtained in police custody and on the evidence of our old friend the forensic scientist, Dr. Clift.

I should refer to one of Dr. Clift's colleagues, Dr. Frank Skuse. His was the key evidence in the case against the six men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings. Dr. Skuse, like Dr. Clift, has also been dismissed on the grounds of what the Home Office coyly describes as limited effectiveness. In Dr. Clift's case, 17 or 18 convicted people, including several convicted of murder, had to be released. In Dr. Skuse's case, no one has been released; that is because everyone knows that it would lead back to the Birmingham pub bombings and no one dares face up to that.

Ronald Leighton—no relation of my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-East (Mr. Leighton)—was convicted in 1972 of the Confait murder. He was released and pardoned in 1975. He would probably have been hanged. Hon. Members have mentioned other cases, including that of James Hanratty who was hanged.

Mr. Couchman: The hon. Gentleman might care to know that Ronald Leighton was 15 years of age at the time of the killing of Confait.

Mr. Mullin: I thank the hon. Gentleman and accept that point——

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): He was still not guilty.

Mr. Mullin: James Hanratty was hanged. I do not know whether he committed the crime, but I do know that the evidence was extremely slender and depended on the identification evidence of a woman who had been shot many times. He went to the gallows protesting his innocence to the last moment.

The case of the newsboy, Carl Bridgewater, has not been mentioned. That was a particularly emotive and wicked murder involving firearms. The people responsible for that would certainly have been sent to the gallows. Three men were convicted of that murder, but many people who have studied the case believe that they are innocent. I believe that the Home Secretary is looking into that case now.

I shall now deal with the case known as the greatest contemporary alleged miscarriage of justice, the conviction of six men who I believe to be innocent of the Birmingham pub bombings. No case this century has aroused such revulsion and emotion as the wicked act of placing those bombs in those pubs killing 21 persons. I am sure that nobody in the House is in any doubt that had we had the death penalty at that time those six would have been sent to the gallows. I have studied that case in detail and I know each of those men and their families well. I can place my hand on my heart and say that those men had nothing more to do with the Birmingham pub bombings than any of the people in the House today. I go further than that. I believe that many hon. Members on both sides of the House, and probably on both sides of the argument about the death penalty, know that to be the truth. The problem is that no one has yet devised a way to persuade our legal system to own up to a mistake of that gravity.

The question of deterrence has been mentioned. It is perfectly obvious that one does not deter by putting away the wrong people. I cannot see any advantage in that. I have an advantage over the House, in that I know who did carry out the Birmingham pub bombings. That is an issue I am happy to debate at some time. One of the people who did carry out the bombings went on to commit another crime. Had he been captured, and had the police concentrated on catching the right people, he would not have committed that murder.

The case of the Guildford and Woolwich pub bombings is well known. Three of the four people involved would certainly have been hanged. A total of seven or eight people were killed in those bombings. The only person convicted who would have survived is the woman who was too young to hang. All those people and another seven convicted with them were convicted on the basis of the confessions of one man, which were obtained in police custody.

I might add that those confessions had to be rewritten six or seven times in order to meet each new set of facts as they become available. It is widely felt by many people on both sides of the House who are more distinguished than myself that those people had nothing to do with the Guildford and Woolwich pub bombings. In the year 1974, that would make a total of nine people who would have gone to the gallows for crimes they did not commit.

Judith Ward was convicted in 1974 of the M62 coach bombing. Unlike the other two cases, I cannot put my hand on my heart and say that she did not do it. However, persons more distinguished than I who have studied the case in detail believe that Judith Ward, now serving 30 years imprisonment, is entirely innocent of the bombing. If that is so, she certainly would have hanged and 1974 would have been a black year in which a total of 10 innocent people would have gone to the gallows. Most of them were convicted by forensic evidence, which is now extremely dubious, or confessions given in police custody.

It has been suggested that perhaps we should have the death penalty only for terrorists, but that is precisely when mistakes are most likely to be made. In the wake of a terrorist atrocity, the police are most under pressure to get results, and public hysteria is at its highest.

It is sometimes said—usually by other judges—that we have the best judges in the world. We have some of the smuggest and most self-satisfied judges in the world. We also have some of the finest and some of the lousiest lawyers. Even if our judges are the best in the world—and that is not necessarily something I believe—mistakes would still occur. The choice between admitting a mistake on the scale that has been mentioned and discrediting the judicial system is one that judges find too difficult to face.

I said earlier that the hon. Member for Thanet, North had robustly faced the possibility of the wrong people being convicted. He was prepared, with equanimity, to face that possibility, but Labour Members and some Conservative Members are not prepared to do so. That, however, is not the real test. The test is whether the hon. Member for Thanet, North is prepared to be hanged for something that he did not do. Under those circumstances, I suspect that he might not be quite so keen on the death penalty.

9 pm

If we had the death penalty, would our judges or the police be more willing to own up to mistakes that they know have taken place? I should like to think that that would be the case, but in the Birmingham case the police already know, or strongly suspect, that they have the wrong people. As to the Guildford and Woolwich cases, I believe that the authorities, including the police, have known probably from the third day, but certainly after six months, that they had got the wrong people. I believe that that is known all the way up the line to the Director of Public Prosecutions. The authorities understood that at the time because they caught the right people—the Balcombe street IRA unit. It is evident from the way in which the Balcombe street case was massaged, with the exceptional amount of fraud and perjury that had to be organised, that everyone involved understood what had happened. They had got the wrong people, and they were trying to cover up.

As to the case of Judith Ward, a friend of mine recently had lunch with an assistant chief constable of a force that was not involved in the original investigation. They were discussing the Birmingham case, and the assistant chief constable said, "That lassie in Durham gaol did not do the M62 coach bombing either, did she? That was a cock-up by the Yorkshire police." It is common gossip, and they know that they have got the wrong people.

I cannot help noticing that those who bay loudest for blood are the most reluctant to face up to the possibility of error. The fact that we have not had the death penalty for the past 20 years or so leaves open the possibility that one day we shall persuade those in authority to face up to the wrongs that have been committed in the Birmingham, Guildford and Woolwich cases. It leaves open the possibility that one day those people will be released and compensated, and justice will be done. Had we had the death penalty, this discussion would be academic.

Mr. Vivian Bendall (Ilford, North): It is 23 years since the death penalty was done away with in this country. There is no doubt, on the admission of the Home Secretary, that murder has increased. In particular, extreme violence has increased in every sphere of society. It is not only a question of the elderly lady who is frightened to live alone. People are frightened to take their children to a football match. The increase in violence has caused grave concern to the House and British society.

What we have tried to achieve in bringing an end to violence has not succeeded. Indeed, violence is on the increase. If my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary and other hon. Members say that capital punishment is not a deterrent to murder, how will they curb the further and greater violence that is continuing in our society? The Home Secretary, on his own admission, in the past week has realised the extent of this problem. He has said that he will further increase sentences for murder and extremely violent crime. Not before time, because there is no doubt that that is one of the most serious problems facing society today. It is no good having a society whose economy is improving and which sustains life through modern technology if that betterment of life is ruined by the type of violence that is going on in our society.

It is right to seek to put the onus of capital punishment on the judge, as my new clause 11 proposes. I can see the problems and dangers of the jury making such a decision. However, it is no good the Home Secretary saying that judges can decide sentences in cases of extreme violence but that it would be wrong to put the onus on the judge to decide whether to impose the death sentence. Whichever way one looks at it, that is to have double standards. After all, the most competent person to decide whether the maximum penalty should apply must be the judge. He is the person with the wealth of experience, not the jury. He would not have been appointed if that were not the case.

There has been a lot of talk about the problem of martyrs in Northern Ireland. I should be extremely surprised if any hon. Member could easily remember the names of the hunger strikers, other than Bobby Sands. Let the House remember that it was the parents of those people on hunger strike who finally persuaded them to give up. Therefore, that argument does not arise.

Capital punishment has been compared with abortion. The unborn child cannot argue about being aborted.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: It is innocent.

Mr. Bendall: It is innocent. But the murderer has that decision in his own hands. Therefore, there is no comparison whatever.

The death penalty would act as a deterrent. In the 23 years that we have been without the death penalty the situation has worsened. Give us three years and let us see whether it acts as a deterrent. It will act as a deterrent to the young, headstrong person who murders an elderly person in his flat for 25 shillings. That is the sort of person that it will deter. It will deter the criminal from carrying a firearm. People have been carrying firearms in much greater abundance in recent years.

When I tried to introduce the death penalty in the House in 1982 I said that without the death penalty the use of firearms by criminals would continue to grow, and that is exactly what has happened. More and more, as time goes on, innocent people will be killed in the cross-fire when the police ferret out such criminals. If we had the death penalty, criminals would frisk one another to make sure that they did not have firearms. People would not go out with firearms. If the House decided to support the new clause, it would give the people a chance to see that the death penalty would act as the deterrent that they desire.

Mr. Roy Beggs (Antrim, East): It is not inconsistent to have supported the Alton Bill to date and to be committed to the restoration of capital punishment. I know—probably more than, or at least as much as, my colleagues from Northern Ireland—the real difficulty of sharing the sorrow of the relatives of those murdered in Ulster. Be they Protestant or Roman Catholic, their sorrow is the same. I have no hesitation in supporting efforts made to restore the death penalty, because it is the only appropriate punishment for murder.

I am opposed to private vengeance, but I believe that we have a duty and responsibility to society and to protect the innocent and the defenceless. The premeditated killing of any human being—the taking of any human life—requires the maximum sentence that can be imposed for that crime. The death penalty is final and in my opinion it is the only just sentence.

Reference has been made to moral arguments. I hope that the House will bear with me, because I speak with conviction. I accept God's word as my guide for life. Many eminent philosophers, academics and, indeed, gifted orators in this House believe that man-made laws are superior to God's laws for mankind. I do not share their

[Mr. Roy Beggs]

views. I remind those unfamiliar with Genesis, chapter 9, of the covenant made between God and Noah. God blessed Noah, but required acceptance by him of the principle that

"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed".

Also in the Old Testament, chapter 35 of Numbers contains examples of murder. After each example comes the specific verdict:

"he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death."

In verse 33 of the same chapter, we read the reason for the death penalty:

"So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are: for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it."

Regrettably, our land is polluted by evil and by innocent blood. We as a nation must return to God's law.

There is ample provision in God's law, through "cities of refuge", for lesser sentences than capital punishment for manslaughter; and I entirely agree that we must continue to make such provision. I also agree that life sentences must be applied where appropriate.

There are many other Old Testament references. Some would say of them, "That is only the Old Testament." The hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley) has already referred to Acts, chapter 25, verse 11, in which St. Paul says:

"For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die".

That shows the continuity of the death penalty as between the Old and New Testaments.

God's law should guide us all. The opponents of the death penalty argue that the absence of capital punishment is the mark of a civilised society. It could equally be argued that the present absence of capital punishment and the short sentences, with remission, for serious crimes are leading the United Kingdom into becoming an uncivilised society. Life sentences for murderers, those guilty of serious crimes against the elderly, against women and children should, in the absence of the death penalty, be sentences for the rest of the criminal's natural life. There is so much evil and so much injustice. There is too much sympathy for and with criminals. Too many excuses are made for them, and there is too little sympathy for the victims.

The sentences still do not fit the crimes that are being committed in our society. Hon. Members have referred to Northern Ireland. Since 1969, more than 250 members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the reserve have been murdered. Those figures refer only to one section of our security forces. There is no reference to the members of the regular Army or the Ulster Defence Regiment, but there are more than 2,000 innocent dead in Northern Ireland as a result of there being no real deterrent. Over 2,000 innocents have been murdered. Many of their murderers are still running free. The horror and tragedy of Enniskillen is almost forgotten.

Some terrorists may be fanatics. If the death penalty were in place for murder, it might not deter the fanatics, but it would remove some of them from circulation and thereby reduce the number of active terrorists who are terrorising law-abiding people. It would also make young people who have not yet become involved as active terrorists think twice before they joined a terrorist organisation.

9.15 pm

Society must not be held hostage and under threat, as it would be if the argument about the possibility of terrorists and criminals taking hostages were allowed to prevent the restoration of the death penalty for murder. The threat is already being carried out, as the release of prisoners is sought in exchange for hostages and as hostages are held for ransom to raise funds for terrorist organisations. Each hon. Member, according to his conscience, abhors evil, but we must also act so that the scales of justice are tipped towards greater detection, conviction and punishment for crime. It has already been said that there is too much sympathy for criminals and too little sympathy and help for the victims. The state has a basic responsibility to protect its citizens. I contend that, without the death penalty as the ultimate sanction, we cannot combat crime successfully or properly protect society.

Mr. John Wheeler (Westminster, North): I have been listening with interest to the hon. Gentleman. He proposes the restoration of capital punishment in Northern Ireland, but there is no jury system in Northern Ireland. For many centuries now nobody has been executed in the United Kingdom other than upon the verdict of a jury. How does the hon. Gentleman propose to implement capital punishment in Northern Ireland? Has he consulted the judiciary in Northern Ireland?

Mr. Beggs: That is a technical point. We are debating the principle of the restoration of the death penalty. If the decision is taken to restore the death penalty, the implications of its application to Northern Ireland will have to be dealt with. I have no doubt that there are honourable, upright citizens of both persuasions who are willing to do jury service and who should be given that opportunity. Hon. Members with constituencies in Northern Ireland continually say in this House, "Treat us as every other British citizen is treated." We ask for no more and no less. We ask for equal treatment. We shall accept the responsibilities that flow from it.

We should like to see an end to the present generous remission system. Those who are in prison for serious terrorist offences become recycled terrorists. They rejoin their organisations when they are released after having served only a short sentence. The death penalty is imposed almost daily on innocents by terrorists, who are the most sophisticated criminals today. Capital punishment must be reintroduced to restore balance, and to protect the innocent.

Rev. William McCrea: Will the hon. Member agree with me that in the history of Northern Ireland the 20 years of alternatives to the death penalty have been an abysmal failure? Will he agree with me that after 20 years murder is increasing? Does he therefore agree with me that the House owes it to the innocent to put pressure on the terrorists, on the guilty, to allow the innocent the right to live?

Mr. Beggs: I thank the hon. Member for his intervention. The tragedy of the last 20 years is that Members of the House representing Northern Ireland constituencies have not been heard. Their advice has been

dismissed. A former colleague and member of my own party who served in this House, Robert Bradford, was himself a victim and was murdered. I ask all who have supported everything but the death penalty, including the failed Anglo-Irish Agreement, to consider seriously the value of introducing at this time capital punishment for murder.

Mr. Peter Temple-Morris (Leominster): For obvious reasons, this speech will be a short one. The House will forgive me if it is somewhat truncated and is not a natural development of arguments at the length that I would like.

I respect the views of the hon. Member for Antrim, East (Mr. Beggs), with which I fundamentally disagree. I respect, as does everyone on my side of this argument—I almost said "on this side of the House", but it is not that sort of debate—the fact that he is in the front line. I hope that he respects our views too and remembers that on various tragic occasions we in mainland Britain have also been in the front line. The final point that I address to him for his consideration is that, in my humble and respectful view, if this new clause and an amendment to the new clause are passed we in mainland Britain will be more and more in the tragic front line that inevitably will follow capital punishment generally and capital punishment for terrorism in particular.

The deterrence argument was very capably put forward by my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) and my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, North (Mr. Bendall). But if it is so obvious that capital punishment is a deterrent, it is an awfully long time in the proving. Various distinguished lawyers, and a very distinguished Royal Commission in 1953, have not been satisfied that capital punishment is a deterrent. My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton agrees on this and says that it will never be possible to prove it because we do not know the motives for murder. We then had a whole stream of legal reminiscences about his various clients who were quite satisfied that it would have been a deterrent for them. But, by the very fact that he agrees that it cannot be proved, he is only stating his belief based upon his very considerable experience.

Many hon. Members may not think of me as a legal eagle, but I had 14 years' practice at the Bar and a certain amount of criminal Bar experience, and also appeared as counsel in various murder trials, and I utterly and completely disagree with the conclusions of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton. Additionally, since everybody is speaking a bit personally about this subject, I also had certain experience as a very young member of the Bar as a judge's marshal in the days when capital punishment existed, when I sat next to the judge during a whole series of capital murder trials. In answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, North, in my view the worst murderer got off, and the most pathetic, who was almost the exact replica of the person to whom my hon. Friend referred in the midst of his oratory about an old person getting a battering and so on—one pensioner killing another in a lodging house in the course or furtherance of theft of a few shillings—was well, firmly and tragically hanged. So much for my hon. Friend's new clause and the example that he seeks to draw.

I support what my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary said. For three or four months, I actually sat with and, by the peculiar position of judge's marshal, I lived and ate with the judges who had to try such cases. Even then, let alone now, the effect on them during a trial and when the moment comes—I dare say that not everyone has witnessed it—when the black cap goes on is not only formidable in itself but pretty traumatic for those who must wear it.

Over the years, I have had varying views about capital punishment. I voted against capital punishment on the last occasion, and I shall vote against it tonight. I shall never vote in favour of it again. In 1983—this is purely personal—I sat in my usual place, waiting for the vote to be taken, having supported capital punishment. I waited with the first of recent Parliaments with a considerable Conservative majority. Hon. Members may remember that we were not quite as sure about the result as we perhaps have been on other occasions. The pride that I felt for those Conservative hon. Members who, on that occasion, voted against capital punishment was accompanied by a slight shame that I felt for what I had just done. It made me decide definitely that never again would I support such a measure.

I shall make two final points in addition to, rather than by way of repetition of, what has been said. The amendments have already been described as crazy. Without going into legalistic argument, I thoroughly endorse that description. From his point of view, my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, North (Mr. Gale) was quite rightly anxious to emphasise that there would be appeals all round—that point has not really been made yet—whoever imposed the capital punishment. Whether there is a judge or a jury, it is highly likely that, from the defence or the prosecution, appeal there will be.

What a nightmare it will be for the Court of Appeal when a whole parade of cases are put before it on exactly the same grounds as the case before them when capital punishment has not been decreed by either judge or jury. How on earth can the Court of Appeal ever sentence anyone to death in such circumstances? One has occasionally heard of Home Secretaries almost being made ill by the decision. The exercise of the Queen's prerogative of mercy in this sort of matter would be a crazy task and quite impossible to execute.

With regard to terrorism, and without going into the details of the arguments, the same rules must apply, if ever this type of measure is introduced, in mainland Britain and Northern Ireland. I regret to say that that is the fact of the matter. If we cannot have juries in Northern Ireland, by way of caution trials may have to be brought across to mainland Britain. In the terms of the proposed measures, the consequences of terrorism, capital punishment, hostage taking, revenge killing and so on will not be confined to Northern Ireland. If this crazy legislation is passed by the House, we in mainland Britain will be in the same situation.

I say finally to the House that we have had enough of these debates. There should be an end to them. For goodness sake, can we not get on with dealing with crime and murder and not excite false expectations about capital punishment?

9.30 pm

Mr. Bruce Grocott (The Wrekin): I have listened to nearly all the debate, but I shall be brief and try to avoid repeating points that have already been made. I shall confine myself to four points. Two are propositions that have, I feel, been established during the debate, and two

[Mr. Bruce Grocott]

are issues that have—surprisingly—been avoided, particularly by the proponents of the new clause and amendments.

The propositions that seem to me to have been established—and I have listened carefully throughout—are these: first, that should we vote for the new clause and amendments, we shall undoubtedly be voting for a course of action that will result in the killing of innocent people. That was admitted by a number of speakers who favour the reintroduction of capital punishment, and spelt out very eloquently by my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin), who referred to many cases of people given life sentences since abolition who would otherwise undoubtedly have been executed. Without doubt, those who vote for the new clause will vote in the full knowledge that innocent men and women will be killed as a result of their decision.

The second proposition is perhaps rather negative, but it, too, has undoubtedly been established. It is impossible to substantiate by statistics the case that capital punishment is a deterrent. In view of the first proposition —that the reintroduction of the penalty will result in innocent people being killed—it seems to me that the failure to establish the second means that it behoves everyone to vote against the new clause.

Mr. Julian Brazier (Canterbury): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Grocott: No, I must be brief.

Evidence exists—it has surprisingly been ignored today —particularly in North America where states exist side by side, some with the death penalty and some without. Such states as California and Mississippi, with murder rates of 10·5 and 10·6 per 100,000 of the population—those are the 1985 figures—have the death penalty. States without the death penalty have figures ranging down to the lowest in North Dakota, with one murder per 100,000 people. There is clearly no conclusive evidence that the death penalty deters; far from it. If anything the evidence points in the other direction.

Let me call in evidence someone who ought to know something about whether deterrence works—someone whose unique evidence is contained in his autobiography. Perhaps the best-known executioner, Albert Pierrepoint, said:

"It is said to be a deterrent. I cannot agree. There have been murders since the beginning of time, and we shall go on looking for deterrents until the end of time. If death were a deterrent, I might be expected to know. It is I who have faced them last, young lads and girls, working men, grandmothers. I have been amazed to see the courage with which they take that walk into the unknown . . . All the men and women whom I have faced at that final moment convince me that in what I have done I have not prevented a single murder."

That was said by the executioner who, first as assistant and then as public executioner, carried out more than 400 executions between 1931 and 1956. His is surely a unique testimony which the House would be mistaken to ignore.

That brings me to two points that have been ignored almost entirely—and, I have to say, in a rather cowardly way—by the proponents of the new clause. They have not talked at all about the method of execution. And, my word, it is very easy to talk in generalities in the relative comfort of these Benches when others must deliver the goods.

The hon. Member for Thanet, North (Mr. Gale) at least gave us a negative statement; he said that he was opposed to hanging. As we know, there is no humane way to kill people. We know how revolting hanging is. Again I call in evidence the Pierrepoint autobiography which described the careful calculations which Albert Pierrepoint and his uncle had to make to determine the strength of the condemned man's neck so as not to give him too big a drop which would pull the head off, and not to give too small a drop which would result in strangulation rather than a speedy death. People must consider seriously any form of judicial killing, whether by the electric chair, by lethal injection or by gassing. There has been no reference to that. It is cowardly that the proponents of capital punishment, who want the House to change its policy after all these years, should not tell us precisely how they would carry out capital punishment.

That brings me to my final point. Again the proponents of capital punishment have not told us who should carry it out. All too often the House ignores such matters. The hon. and learned Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) touched on this but he was not convincing. If we vote for the return of the death penalty, executioners will have to be recruited. They may be other kinds of executioners rather than hangmen, but executioners they will be. There was a strange tradition with the Pierrepoints whereby father passed on to brother who passed on to nephew the job of official executioner.

Where would we find new executioners? Where would we train them? Would it be in South Africa where so many executions are carried out? Would executioners be recruited by public advertisement? These are the grisly and detailed questions which proponents of capital punishment have refused to face up to. Again I call in evidence the person who knows about these things in a way that no one in the House can possibly know about them. Albert Pierrepoint said at the end of his autobiography, and I remind the House that he said it with the awful burden of his experience, having carried out over 400 executions:

"I now sincerely hope that no man is ever called upon to carry out another execution in my country. I have come to the conclusion that executions solve nothing, and are only an antiquated relic of a primitive desire for revenge which takes the easy way and hands over the responsibility for revenge to other people."

In my judgment, that is a responsibility which the House should never hand over to anyone.

Mrs. Peacock: As we have heard, this subject has as always produced strong feelings inside and outside the House. Very few Members have mentioned the victims. Could we not give a little thought to the victims? What I have to say comes from deeply held convictions which have not been lightly or recently arrived at but which I have been persuaded over many years are right. My convictions are widely supported throughout the country.

There have been many passionate speeches on both sides of the argument for many different reasons. In recent years there have been 16 debates in the House, all resulting in an abolitionist stance towards capital punishment. The arguments for and against have been well rehearsed and we have not heard anything new in today's debate.

It is my belief and the belief of those who support the new clause that capital punishment is the supreme deterrent. If not, why do people appeal against it? If they are not afraid to die, why do they appeal? As evidence for

this, I draw the attention of the House to the fundamental and obvious changes which have taken place in society since partial abolition in 1965 and full abolition in 1969.

Recent tragic events in this country relating to elderly people and especially to innocent children are graphic examples of the fact that the possession of and resort to lethal weapons have become commonplace in today's Britain. In the 10 years from 1973 to 1983, the number of offences involving guns rose from 1,754 to 8,067. The number of murders arising out of the commission of some other offence—usually theft or rape—rose by a staggering 73 per cent. from 1965 to 1977. Figures for the years since show similar increases.

It is true that such rises reflect a general increase in the level of crime and that an overwhelming statistical case for the deterrent effects of capital punishment is always difficult to make, as is the argument that it does not deter. However, as with many other arguments over this issue, no absolute proof can be obtained. It is clearly impossible to calculate how many people would be deterred from carrying and using firearms if capital punishment was available to the courts.

We are told that the reintroduction of capital punishment would encourage a nothing-to-lose attitude among certain sections of the public. Do we not already have a nothing-to-lose attitude on the streets of Britain today? We must emphasise what has been an undercurrent in my comments so far—that murder has become commonplace. We never thought that we would see it in the streets of our country, but we have it and it cannot be denied.

Some people would argue that the absence of capital punishment is the mark of a civilised society. What is a civilised society thinking about when it encourages and enables elderly people to be battered to death in their homes and young children to be murdered when they are walking to their grandmothers? Recently there has been the "babes in the wood" murder in Brighton. I understand that the parents of those children have been in the House to see how Parliament debates these issues.

When will we think of the victims? When will we ask the courts to think of the victims and stop just thinking about the murderers? The criminal law no longer provides credible sanctions for the most heinous form of wrongdoing. Something must be done, and the House must take that decision today. The majority of people in this country are in favour of the reintroduction of the death penalty. Many polls have shown overwhelming evidence that that is so and that people would support the new clause tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, North (Mr. Gale). While we cannot rule by a national referendum, if we had a national referendum today, I am sure that there would be overwhelming support for the reintroduction of capital punishment. Let us make no mistake about that.

Of course, as Members of Parliament, we are representatives. We are not delegates, so we are not delegated to represent views. However, we have to take into account the views of our constituents; otherwise, why are we here? We must listen occasionally to what they have to say. If our constituents decide that their interests are best protected by the death penalty, who are we to tell them that that is not so? Do we think of ourselves as morally superior? Do we have some secret information which persuades us to decide otherwise? I suggest we do not. It cannot be that a small majority of 650 people, elected to the House, are in a position to take such an arrogant attitude merely because of the letters MP after their name.

On the streets, murder and violence are not distant and unreal, as many of our constituents are finding out on their own doorsteps. Fear of such happenings, not only perhaps to ourselves, but to our children and to our elderly relatives, is a constant companion and is real.

Of course, we recognise the fear of miscarriages of justice, of hostage-taking and of martyrdom. However, I implore the House that we should take this giant step for sanity and reintroduce the death penalty. It is high time that some hon. Members came down from their ivory towers and listened to what the people of this country want and voted for new clause 1.

9.45 pm

Mr. Couchman: There is little fresh to say in this debate. The arguments against the reintroduction of capital punishment have been repeated many times since its abolition in 1965. As a convinced abolitionist and strict non-reintroductionist since before the abolition of the death penalty, I for one have no shame in reiterating the three defects of capital punishment which have held me steadfast in my view.

Although I am a fan of the British system of justice, I do not believe in judicial infallibility. I am persuaded that capital punishment is not a unique deterrent for a unique crime. Its reintroduction would further brutalise a society in which violence is already far too prevalent. A great deal has been said this evening about the mistakes that can be made. I fully admit that I am most persuaded against the reintroduction of capital punishment by the possibility of a mistake.

We have heard about John Preece, Patrick Meehan, Albert Taylor and the three young men who were convicted of the Confait killing. We have heard about the Birmingham pub bombers. The common thing bringing all those people together is that they were all alive to benefit from a review of their conviction and sentence, and to enjoy a pardon, if granted. One can only speculate as to whether any of them would have been executed if the new clause tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, North (Mr. Gale) had been the law in force when they were convicted.

Inevitably, those of us who oppose the reintroduction of the death penalty will always return to the case of Timothy Evans. The posthumous pardon that was granted to Evans in 1966 was cold consolation to his mortal remains, lying interred in quicklime in unconsecrated ground. Other cases cause us unease, such as the unequal treatment of Craig and Bentley—Craig, the killer, was spared but Bentley, the accomplice, was executed. We remember the doubts about Hanratty. I do not believe that anyone in the House does not regret the execution of Ruth Ellis. The irony of her case is that, had her lover, whom she subsequently shot, not assaulted her so brutally that she lost the baby she was carrying, she would not have been executed, because pregnant women could not be executed at that time.

I re-read our debates of 1983 and 1987. No hon. Member who spoke against reintroduction failed to mention his concern about the possibility of the innocent being executed. No hon. Member who spoke in favour —an honourable exception tonight was my hon. Friend

[Mr. Couchman]

the Member for Thanet, North when he moved his new clause—was prepared to shoulder the responsibility of the possibility of executing the innocent.

New clause 1 places an impossible onus on the jury, because public expectations will be raised by media reporting in particularly notorious murder cases, stating that there should be a recommendation for capital punishment. Clearly it is essential that a majority verdict could not lead to the death sentence; otherwise, the dissenting jurors would feel that they were party to sending an innocent person to death. Juries which are cognisant of their full responsibilities might be inclined to find the accused guilty of a lesser crime. It happened before and it will assuredly happen again.

I have never been convinced of the deterrent effect of capital punishment. More eloquent people than I have given reasons for that, with which I wholeheartedly agree. Therefore, I shall not delay the House any longer on that issue.

The hon. Member for The Wrekin (Mr. Grocott) challenged those who are in favour of reintroduction to explain what method of execution they would prefer. My hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, North does not like the idea of a return to the rope. What then would we have? Would we have the continental guillotine or garotte? Would we consider the transatlantic, high technology, electric chair or gas chamber? Or, if we are looking for a truly deterrent sentence, perhaps we should consider one of the brutal judicial murders prescribed by Sharia law, such as by stoning or the sword.

Another deterrent would surely be the media representatives who would accompany any person who had been convicted and sentenced to death. We would have that horrible build-up, which we used to have without the benefit of television. I am young enough to remember the grisly ritual of trial and appeal; of consideration by the Home Secretary; the titillation of the visit by the relatives on the last occasion on the night before execution; the prospects and possibility of a last-minute stay of execution; and the climax of that little white notice being hammered on the board outside prison walls by the warden just after 8 o'clock to say that another poor soul had met his end.

Our record on capital punishment is truly dreadful, from the days of Henry VIII when 72,000 were put to death in 38 years to the early 19th century when we were still hanging near-infants of seven years. Do we really want the brutalisation which would accompany the reintroduction of the death penalty? I think not.

I differ entirely from my hon. Friend the Member for Reigate (Mr. Gardiner) who seemed to lay great stress on the opinion polls that have been published over the past 24 years and normally depend for their sample on about 1,000 voters. Interestingly, he rejected the notion that we should have a referendum, in which all electors should be asked for their opinion. If we were subjected to a referendum after a lead up period similar to that of a general election or the EC referendum in 1975, with the television showing mock executions and throwbacks to the Ellis trial and execution, the answer would probably be no to capital punishment. I urge all hon. Members to reject the new clause and to dispense with this matter once and for all.

Mr. David Amess (Basildon): Five years ago following the 1983 general election we had a similar debate on the restoration of capital punishment. I sat through all our proceedings and the debate had a lasting effect on me. I could not believe the sense of jubilation when the result was announced. I drove home feeling depressed because the House had not reflected the views of the general public.

Murder has become so commonplace that it hardly draws any attention. The day after the 1983 debate the newspapers reported two further murders. I wondered how many hon. Members when they woke up the next day felt that they had done everything they possibly could to deter murder. Few could have answered yes.

Two years ago my cousin's wife was murdered. She took her children to school, parked her car in a multi-storey car park and was stabbed to death 52 times. The murder and the conduct of the trial were reported, but then the media dropped the case. No one wants to know what happens to the victims of crime. It is not good media copy. I hope that the 650 Members of this honourable House are interested in the victims of crime and that each and every one of us in doing our duty will ensure that we make laws which will deter crime.

I thought that the purpose of a sentence was not only to protect society from the criminal, but to teach the person who committed the crime not to repeat it. How on earth can one teach a person who has murdered someone not to murder again? How can we justify keeping someone such as the Yorkshire Ripper in gaol? He murdered 13 women; he raped a further seven and he destroyed the lives of more than 100 people. We continue to keep him in gaol and no detail is given as to how he is guarded.

Mr. Ashby: Is my hon. Friend aware that the Yorkshire Ripper is kept in a secure mental home? The man is mad and he would never have been executed.

Mr. Amess: I am grateful for my hon. Friend's opinion, but I am not sure that that is the case. I certainly do not believe that every person who kills another is insane. A number of people know perfectly well what they have done.

How can we justify keeping people such as Brady or Hindley in prison? I am sick to death of the endless media stories about them and of people pleading that they should be released. I do not believe that any hon. Member has the right to ask a person who has had a loved one murdered to forgive.

I hope that when we vote we shall not see scenes of jubilation similar to those that followed the vote in 1983. This is a serious matter. On the 18 occasions on which we have discussed it we have been rather arrogant and we have not reflected the views of the public.

I believe that murder is the ultimate crime and it should receive the ultimate sentence. When we wake up tomorrow morning we might unfortunately read of more murders, such as the three young women who were recently murdered in separate parts of the country. I hope that following our vote, however, we shall all have a clear conscience and feel that we have done all in our power to deter such crime.

Mr. Tom Sackville (Bolton, West): Capital punishment is usually discussed in legal or moral terms. The underlying assumption is that all that has to happen is for Parliament

to bring in a Bill and there we are. I question that assumption and I believe that if we brought back hanging it would not work.

The first reason why capital punishment would not work is that the attitude and behaviour of juries have changed enormously in the past few years. Any prosecution lawyer will tell the House that it is extremely difficult to get a conviction in a murder trial. The attitude towards civic responsibility has changed and, because of sympathy for the accused or whatever, it is difficult to get a conviction. A leading prosecution lawyer who has spent most of his professional life dealing with murder trials told me that if hanging were in prospect his job would be impossible. If that were the case, what would happen? The prosecution might try for a reduced charge of manslaughter and therefore someone who should go down for life would come out with a four or five-year sentence. If an obvious premeditated murder had been committed it would not be admissible to bring a reduced charge. Therefore, there would be a strong risk that someone who had committed a murder would be acquitted and would walk from court. We should not do that and I should not be asked to expose my constituents to that risk.

Hon. Members have mentioned the much vaunted 70 per cent. of public opinion that is in favour of hanging. If people were asked the abstract question, "Do you want to bring back hanging?" many of them would say yes. But what matters is what happens when the public are confronted with a real case of a person who will be hanged and the broadcasting media being let loose on the family. We did not have that in the 1950s.

It being Ten o'clock, the debate stood adjourned.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered,

That, at this day's sitting, the Criminal Justice Bill *[Lords]* may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hour.—*[Mr. Dorrell.]*

Criminal Justice Bill *[Lords]*

As amended (in the Standing Committee), again considered.

Question again proposed, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Sackville: The time when the broadcasting media get loose on the families and start interviewing the weeping daughters and the mother and relations of the accused man and when people start focusing on the physical method of execution is the moment when opinion needs to be tested.

I remind the House that a large proportion of the present adult population have been brought up since abolition and their attitude is different from that of people who were brought up when the death penalty was in force. To carry out such a drastic and uncivilised act as marching one of our fellow citizens to the end of a passage, putting a rope round his neck and dropping him through a trapdoor to break his neck, a democratic Government in peace time would need at least 90 per cent. of public opinion behind them. We would be lucky to get 50 per cent. If the House votes in favour of the new clause and in the more unlikely event of its being passed in another place, the legislation would not work and hanging would not have the effect that people want. I do not underestimate the public concern about crime and violence, but this is the wrong way to go and I urge the House resoundingly to reject the new clause.

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle): It is said, and I accept, that Parliament cannot characterise capital murder. We cannot say that only terrorists should hang, because of the difficulties of determining whether a bank robbery is committed in the course of terrorism. It is said that we cannot hang those who kill warders because the man who kills a warder in escaping from prison and then kills a young woman outside could not be executed for one murder and not for the other. It is said that we cannot have a referendum on these matters because the issues are too complex to put to the people. It is said that we cannot impose life sentences that mean life because we could not control people who were serving perhaps 30 years in prison. If we accept all those things we are left with the new clause.

We cannot return to the days of the automatic death penalty for all murders, because about 75 per cent. of murders fall within a tightly knit group. I do not deny for an instant the awesome responsibility that would be placed on a jury by the new clause. It is not a perfect solution, but I suspect that for modern conditions it is the only solution that makes any sense. It is said that the state should never commit judicial execution, but where does that leave the concept of the just war? It is said that the state should never take life judicially and legally, but where does that leave the concept of abortion? It is said that judicial execution is not a deterrent, but why is it that before the abolition of the death penalty professional criminals took great care not to go armed when committing a robbery?

The arguments are evenly balanced, but in the end this is a moral issue. In moral issues the judgments of our constituents, inexpert as many of them may be, are as valid as ours. We in the House have a duty to respect and to honour the judgment of our constituents. If we do not honour those judgments, an increasing number of people may become alienated from the parliamentary process because they feel that Parliament is not prepared to take the ultimate step to defend their freedom and their liberty under the law. For those reasons, I shall vote for the new clause.

Mr. David Wilshire (Spelthorne): Five hours ago, when my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, North (Mr. Gale) introduced the new clause, he said that he wanted this debate so that new Members would have a chance to say what they thought and to cast their votes. Not many new Conservative Members have had the chance to speak. I am one of those 53 new Members. Like the other 52, tonight I have to move from a personal belief to a public opinion. Like the other 52, I have been subjected to a fair amount of persuasion to vote yes. But, unlike most of the other 52, I am a long-standing opponent of capital punishment. Earlier this evening my hon. Friend the Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Devlin), who joined the House last June at the same time as I did, said that he had decided, after pressure, to change his mind from voting no to voting yes. I, too, have thought along those lines.

Mr. Devlin: It is not pressure to consult one's constituents; it is not pressure to consult representatives from every part of one's constituency—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Mr. Devlin.

Mr. Devlin: I would contend that this is a moral issue and the moral opinion of the highest in the land is as good as that of the lowest in the land; therefore we in the House should reflect the majority of the moral opinions in the country. Does my hon. Friend agree?

Mr. Wilshire: I shall come to that point in a moment. I want to explain why the train of thought which we have just heard is wrong.

I have not found the past few weeks easy. I have come to realise that it is much easier to have personal views than it is to have public opinions and a public vote. I have come to understand very clearly the force of a widely held public opinion. I accept that the majority of people in this country want us to vote yes tonight. I have also come to appreciate the great advantage of trying to please my electorate and my party supporters. I freely admit that I have been tempted to go down that track.

In the past few weeks, I have been doing a number of things. I have been thinking, I have been reading everything that has been sent to me, and I have been listening. I have contacted all my local Church leaders and I have looked for new facts and evidence. I have concluded that there is no new information and there is no consensus from the Churches. I have had very little direct input from my constituents saying one thing or the other. But in the past few days I have come to appreciate something else. If I may paraphrase the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley), I have been looking for a pragmatic way out of an instinctive tight corner.

I have to admit that some of my motives were to try to please my electorate and to protect my future. I have ended up not very proud of myself. However, despite all my wriggling, I still believe that judicial killing is wrong. I still hold the view that vengeance has no place in the law of the land. I still know that I could not pull that lever. Yet it is predictable that I will be criticised by quite a lot of people for taking this view. In my defence, I would say that Members of Parliament are often criticised for having no principles. They are often criticised for trying to curry favour at any price and for not standing up for their beliefs. What price a Member of Parliament who has lost his self-respect?

I end by telling my hon. Friend the Member for Stockton, South and anybody else who is thinking of switching their vote from no to yes that we should stand by the principles that we all had before we came here. Remember the need to like what one sees when next looking in the mirror and, above all, hang on to a vision of a future that is caring and compassionate, a future that will override vengeance and will not return to judicial killing.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): We have heard a lot today about terrorism. Many of the worst terrorist attacks are conducted during hijack. Most hijacks are carried out in order to free imprisoned terrorists. In the hijacks, innocent lives are lost. In the recent Kuwaiti hijack, if there had been no terrorists in prison in Kuwait, there would have been no hijack.

Most terrorist crimes are carefully planned and entail work and organisation by many people. One need only deter a single person in that chain of terror, and the act is never committed.

Sands and his friends believed that the Home Secretary would succumb to blackmail. To his great credit, he did not do so, and no one afterwards starved himself to death.

Since the abolition of the death penalty, figures for murder have been misleading. Once the death penalty had been abolished, the prosecution was more ready to accept a plea of diminished responsibility. Therefore, the figures are completely distorted. Hon. Members have argued that the death penalty is not a deterrent. If that is so, as my hon. Friend the Member for Batley and Spen (Mrs. Peacock) pointed out, it is strange that people condemned to death always appeal.

What frightens me about the present position is that there is a premium on wiping out witnesses. Twenty years ago the noble Lord—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. We are coming to the end of an important debate and I ask the House to give the hon. Lady a fair hearing.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: Twenty years ago the noble lord who until recently was the Lord Chancellor pointed out that if criminals receive no higher penalty for killing than for robbery they would simply eliminate witnesses to reduce the probability of detection. How much more is that the case now that we have introduced the concept of criminal bankruptcy? That means that criminals lose not only their liberty but their loot. They can no longer serve their sentences contemplating living a life of luxury on their ill-gotten gains. That will be even more the case when the Criminal Justice Bill becomes law and drug dealers will also be deprived of their loot.

The crucial point is that, whatever one does in law, in practice one can never abolish the death penalty. One takes it from the calm atmosphere of the court and places it on the streets. If criminals carry guns, which are now standard items of criminal equipment, the police must be armed when they face death on our behalf in apprehending armed criminals. In the shoot-out that follows, innocent bystanders receive the death sentence, while the criminals, when they are apprehended, receive a custodial sentence. As with abortion, the innocent are killed. That cannot be right, so I shall have no hesitation in voting for the restoration of the death penalty.

10.15 pm

Mr. Geoffrey Dickens (Littleborough and Saddleworth): The House is always restless at this time because it wishes to vote. If I am given a fair hearing, I shall be brief.

I should like to remind hon. Members of the sort of country in which we live. Women cannot pass freely without fear of being molested, raped or murdered. The elderly do not feel safe if they are out after dark and even do not feel safe in their own homes. Children cannot play safely without fear of being abused or perhaps murdered. That is the society by which hon. Members stand to be judged.

Every hon. Member has a duty to protect the citizens of this country by every means possible.

Mr. Hugh Dykes (Harrow, East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I beg to move, That the Question be now put.

Mr. Speaker: I cannot accept that motion. We are coming to the last speech, and we have not had the winding-up speech yet.

Mr. Dickens: It would be quicker if I were to be allowed to finish; it will save a vote.

That is the sort of country that we have produced, and the state has a duty to protect its citizens. Members of Parliament, whatever sentencing powers we are giving our judges, are not getting it right to the satisfaction of the public. If we get the highest tariff right—for murder, to restore the death penalty—I am sure that it will be reflected throughout sentencing provisions and the attitudes of judges.

If the police, who are at the sharp end of the job, feel that it is a sanction and deterrent that they would wish to have, who are we to deny them it when we expect so much from them to protect everyone?

I hope that every hon. Member, even those weak-willed hon. Members who do not reflect public opinion, will realise that many hon. Members treat this place as a glorified club. They are here to carry out the will of the people, not for the glory of being Members of Parliament. I hope and pray that we shall go through the Lobby and once again lower the majority. There will be a bigger vote than ever in favour of restoring capital punishment, which will show the way for the future. This matter will not go away, so let us show the way forward in the Lobby.

Mr. Rees: The hon. Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. Dickens) is right: there is concern among our people about the crime rate. It has steadily become worse under every Government, and it is a good deal worse than it was in 1979. Perhaps we would do better to investigate why that has happened and why I am concerned because I made arrangements to collect a lady at 10 o'clock who was worried about walking near the House in the centre of our capital city. Perhaps we should be considering that rather than pretending that there is a simple answer that will sweep all the problems away.

I have spoken in many debates on capital punishment, but tonight we are voting on new clause 1, not on the principle of capital punishment. Many hon. Members have sat and listened to the debate as it has gone backwards and forwards, and a very good debate it has been. However, the hon. Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth is mistaken if he thinks that we have been talking about the principle of capital punishment. He has to decide whether the new clause would work. My argument is that it would not, and it is that argument that I wish to pursue.

There is anger and anxiety in our inner cities. People are asking what can be done, and some think that if we only had capital punishment all would be solved. They forget that when the crime rate was last at the height it is—in the words of the Home Secretary—in the 1880s, there was capital punishment. It was not long since people had been hanged in public. There was no shortage of punishment by hanging, and in other ways, but still the crime rate was high. Perhaps we should figure out why matters improved just after the first world war. It could not have been because of the death penalty, because that had existed before.

Political manifestos at the time of elections say, "We shall solve the problem of law and order." Such claims bring us into disrepute with the electorate because they know it is not true. We know that it is not true. I was in the United States last week, in mid-town New York with its guns and drugs. If America leads the way, God help us. That cannot possibly be due to the lack of capital punishment. The new clause certainly could not repair the situation.

New clause 1 is nonsense. The Lord Chief Justice has given his views on it, not on the principle. It is not his duty to give us his views on capital punishment in principle. It is his job to tell the Home Secretary whether he thinks the new clause would work, and he has said that he does not think that it would. It gives duties to jurors and the courts that they were not designed to have. It also gives powers to the Court of Appeal, which I had not realised until that was referred to today. In his reasonably good opening speech, the hon. Member for Thanet, North (Mr. Gale) said that the new clause was not a return to 1957 and categorisation. Nevertheless, the new clause brings random categorisation which would make life for the courts, and certainly for the appeal courts, so difficult that they could not carry out their job.

Our job is to pass legislation that can be interpreted by the courts and will work. Whatever the views of right hon. and hon. Members, the new clause cannot go to the other place to be corrected. It would be turned aside straight away. It is not worth voting for. Those who are concerned about capital punishment—I understand their concern—can do better than this. However, it is on this that we are voting today.

I shall vote against the new clause. If this were put before the Home Secretary by someone from the drafting department, the Treasury solicitors or wherever, he would not have to consider it. As the Home Secretary knows, the best Home Secretaries are not lawyers. The motive for the new clause is misconceived. It is a return to the 1880s. Suffice it to say that capital punishment would not deter. It certainly would not have prevented the two burglaries that I have had in the past year. One of the young men involved was sentenced to two years' imprisonment and another to one year. They would not have been deterred by capital punishment. *[Interruption.]* They would not have been affected in any way. The reason for the rise in the crime rate has nothing to do with the absence of capital punishment.

I do not find the statistics neutral. I feel strongly about the moral aspect, but if I felt for one moment that the statistics showed that captial punishment deterred, I should have to take note of that—perhaps not as a Back Bencher but certainly as a Home Secretary. I do not believe that that is what the statistics show. They do not show that the number of homicides, however classified, would be reduced.

I am conscious of the time and I shall keep to the limits that we agreed—[HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] The hon. Members who are cheering are those who have not been here for the debate. In view of the interest outside, and before we go into the Lobbies to vote, it might be as well to consider all the aspects of this matter. If it is so important, we should surely do so. It is certainly important to our colleagues from Northern Ireland who live with death and who have expressed themselves in such terms this afternoon. I warrant that those cheering do not fall into the same category as Northern Ireland Members, on both sides of the fence.

Hon. Members have referred to terrorism. I understand their feelings and the bestiality of it. One could not think of Arab terrorism and what the Arabs have done to people without feeling ashamed of humanity. However, I reflect that one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter.

[Mr. Rees]

I do not believe that that is true in Northern Ireland; that is why I ended political or special category status in Northern Ireland. In Northern Ireland everybody over the age of 18 has a vote. They can express themselves at the hustings. If the terrorists on both sides of the divide stood for election and could win a majority, it would put us in a different position, but they do not. It is hon. Members on both sides of the House who represent the people of Northern Ireland, just as Mr. Haughey represents the people in the south of Ireland. The ballot box is there.

Mr. A. E. P. Duffy (Sheffield, Attercliffe): A fixed ballot box.

Mr. Rees: My hon. Friend says "a fixed ballot box", but there is a ballot box in Northern Ireland, which is not the case elsewhere. There is sometimes a certain weariness when the Irish speak because it is felt that the Irish never forget. As I consider the new clause, I sometimes think that the English never remember. They forget what happened in 1916. They ignore the question of martyrs on both sides of the divide.

As there are no juries in Northern Ireland it is impossible to implement the new clause. It could not possibly be applied in Northern Ireland. It would be nonsense to vote for the proposal and expect it to apply in Northern Ireland.

Like the Home Secretary, I do not believe that capital punishment for murder in general and terrorism in particular is the answer to our problems. As I said, I do not call in aid a moral judgment. In any event, the principle of capital punishment is not the issue tonight; it is the new clause on which we are to vote. It is not fit to be passed, and it should be voted down this evening.

Sir Rhodes Boyson (Brent, North): I speak for my right hon. and hon. Friends who would like to see the return of capital punishment, and in support of my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, North, (Mr. Gale) who tabled the new clause. I must take issue with the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees), for whom I have great respect. This is the second time that we have met across the Chamber on this subject.

To most hon. Members attending the debate the issue is capital punishment. Three new clauses and an amendment have been selected and we are debating the question whether the House feels that capital punishment should return. If we decide that it should return, we shall consider the whole situation again—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh, no."] We can change the new clause in another place—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh, no."] Just let us have it and we will show hon. Members; give us the chance and we will deliver. I have not the slightest doubt about that. Let us try it and we will not disappoint. [HON. MEMBERS: "Let us vote."] We shall have a vote, but there must be a summing up on this side, as there was on the other. That is what democracy is about.

For most of the time during civilised life, there has been capital punishment. We have only to look at the Scriptures. The hon. Member for Antrim, East (Mr. Beggs) referred to them in his speech. There has been much talk of morality but little of the Scriptures in this debate. There is reference to the death penalty in both the Old and the New Testaments. It is referred to in the 37th article of the Church of England and in St. Augustine's writings. It was only about 40 years ago in this country that the movement to abolish capital punishment began. It coincided with the beginning of the permissive society. The abolition of the death penalty has been the flagstaff of the permissive society. We know what that has meant for the people of this country.

Local newspapers are full of articles about robbery, murder, rape and, literally, pillage. These are bad times for the weak, the handicapped, the old and the young.

10.30 pm

Capital punishment could be used to deter terrorism. Six airliners have been hijacked, the last one in the middle east. If hijackings continue, nobody will want to fly in aeroplanes. What will happen to the Channel tunnel then? Political terrorists believe that they will be released, their friends will continue to take hostages and there will be more deaths.

Some of my hon. Friends have said that unless capital punishment is restored the police will have to be armed and there will be shooting in the streets. There is already shooting in the streets. I find it very strange that—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is a very important debate and it is coming to a close.

Sir Rhodes Boyson: It is very odd that hon. Members on both sides of the Chamber have said that the state has no right to take life. If that is the case, they should all be conscientous objectors when there is a war. The right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South and I both served in the last war, he for much longer than I, and we were given the right by the state to take life.

There must be something wrong with the conscience of those who vote for the abortion of a conceived but unborn child yet vote against capital punishment for evil murder. Quite a few of my hon. Friends have referred to the fact that most people want the return of capital punishment because they believe that it will act as a deterrent. They want a return of capital punishment not because they are more evil than hon. Members of other opinions on both sides of the Chamber but because they believe that it will be a deterrent.

Good government means that the Government and the people must not draw too far apart. If we stroke the cat one way it purrs; if we stroke it the other way it hisses. Human nature and democracy react in the same way. Most of the people in this country disagree with Parliament on this big issue. We should pay careful heed to what they say. As has been said time and time again, when conscience is involved the conscience of the man in the public bar is as good as the conscience of the man in the saloon bar or the conscience of hon. Members in the bars of the House of Commons.

I ask my right hon. and hon. Friends and Opposition hon. Members to support the new clause. If they do, I believe that a cheer will go up throughout this country that Parliament has listened to the people on an issue that causes them serious concern.

Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 218, Noes 341.

Division No. 342] **[10.33 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Aspinwall, Jack

Atkins, Robert
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Beggs, Roy
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Burns, Simon
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Gill, Christopher
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Hayward, Robert
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Hind, Kenneth
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hunter, Andrew
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lightbown, David
Lord, Michael
McCrea, Rev William
McCrindle, Robert
McCusker, Harold
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Paice, James
Paisley, Rev Ian
Patnick, Irvine
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Price, Sir David
Redwood, John
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Robinson, Peter *(Belfast E)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Cyril *(Rochdale)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stokes, John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. John Greenway and
Mr. Ian Bruce.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amos, Alan
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashton, Joe
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Body, Sir Richard
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowis, John
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Buckley, George J.
Budgen, Nicholas
Butterfill, John
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Cartwright, John
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Cope, John
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Couchman, James
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Critchley, Julian
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Curry, David
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas, Dick
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dykes, Hugh
Eastham, Ken

Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forman, Nigel
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, John
Freeman, Roger
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Goodlad, Alastair
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Gow, Ian
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hampson, Dr Keith
Harman, Ms Harriet
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Lilley, Peter
Livingstone, Ken
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
McFall, John
McGrady, Eddie
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNamara, Kevin
Madden, Max
Madel, David
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Major, Rt Hon John
Mallon, Seamus
Maples, John
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moate, Roger
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Needham, Richard
Nellist, Dave
Nelson, Anthony
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Patchett, Terry
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Richardson, Jo
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowe, Andrew
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Salmond, Alex
Scott, Nicholas
Sedgemore, Brian
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Sheerman, Barry
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Snape, Peter
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stern, Michael
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Walley, Joan
Walters, Dennis
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wheeler, John
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilshire, David
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. David Ashby and
Mr. Bruce Grocott.

Question accordingly negatived.

Further consideration of the Bill adjourned.—*[Mr. Kenneth Carlisle.]*

Bill, as amended (in the Standing Committee), to be further considered tomorrow.

Mr. R. C. Arnold

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Kenneth Carlisle.]*

10.51 pm

Sir Anthony Grant (Cambridgeshire, South-West): Portugal is our oldest ally, a partner in NATO, in the EEC and, of course, in the Council of Europe. We have all admired the transition of Portugal to a democracy in recent years. However, one of the characteristics of democracy is that the rights of individuals should be respected. It is because such rights have been transgressed in the case of my constituent that I raise the subject tonight. The failure to settle and the prevarication of the Portuguese Government over some 13 years can only be described as an international scandal.

In January 1970, my constituent, Mr. R. C. Arnold, of Harston, Cambridgeshire, with his partners, acquired 11,000 acres of land at Galveias farm, Alentejo, Portugal, with a lease of 18 years, which was later increased to 24 years. They successfully operated until the Portuguese revolution. Then, in October 1975, they were dispossessed by the Sindicado, which is the Communist trade union. I understand that valuations of the property were made by Portuguese valuers at the time of expropriation.

When democratic government was established in Portugal, the Government recognised the need to adhere to the treaty of 1914 and to compensate for the expropriation, which was agreed in principle. The amount of money involved was approximately £1 million, much of which was for repaying banks.

Subsequently, my noble Friend Lord Pym and then my hon. Friend the Member for Cambridgeshire, South-East (Mr. Paice), one of whose constituents was a partner in this venture, have pursued the matter vigorously on behalf of their constituents. However, no progress has been made, despite continued expressions of agreement.

I then came into the picture. On 4 July 1985, Baroness Young, who was then Minister of State, told me that "welcome progress" was being made. That was after 10 years. She told me that the Portuguese had set up an inter-ministerial commission in October 1984. On 10 July, we were told, "Rest assured, we shall continue our efforts" to pursue this matter on behalf of my constituents.

On 8 November, we were told that the claim was about to be settled but a general election intervened in Portugal and caused further delay. However, we were told that it was "agreed in principle". The Foreign Office told me:

"Your constituents' claim will be treated first against those still outstanding".

That was in November 1985, but absolutely nothing happened.

I understand that in May 1986 my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister told Senor Cavaco Silva that she viewed the matter with some concern. On 22 July, my constituents told me that the Portuguese lawyers acting for them had been

"trying for weeks, without success, to bring the Portuguese authorities to the negotiating table".

On 31 July 1986 Baroness Young told me that the Portuguese Ministry of Agriculture officials would contemplate their valuation report by September 1986, but once again nothing happened. At that stage, my constituents counted up the number of promises of settlement and they came to no fewer than 44, but not a single escudo had been produced.

On 21 October 1986, we were told by the Foreign Office that the

"valuation work was all but completed"

and that continued pressure would be brought to bear at the highest level to ensure that, but absolutely nothing happened.

On 4 December 1986, we were told that on 28 November 1986 the British ambassador had handed a message from my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to the Portuguese Prime Minister expressing concern that the matter had still not been resolved. The Portuguese Prime Minister agreed that it had gone on for "far too long". We were told:

"the way is clear for direct negotiation".

Another six months elapsed and an 80-page document in Portuguese descended on my constituents. Much of their claim was ignored but a derisory offer of less than £300,000 was offered on terms which were by no means clear. On 21 May 1987, my noble Friend Lord Pym was told that the Portuguese Foreign Minister was

"anxious to resolve the matter".

There were elections in Portugal on 19 July last year but the Foreign Office said that they "should not delay matters". Once again the time-honoured Foreign Office words were, "We shall continue to press hard". My constituents had received about 69 letters on the subject, but not a solitary escudo.

On 17 August 1987, my right hon. Friend the Minister of State who is to reply to the debate emerged on the scene and informed me that the Foreign Secretary himself had raised the matter twice. The new Portuguese Government had an overall majority for the first time and I was told that the Foreign Office view was that its officials would press hard for the earliest possible decision to be made. However, all that tremendous pressure makes one wonder that the Portuguese have not been ground into the soil. Nevertheless, on 5 November 1987, the Foreign Office said that Senor da Costa Pereira was "urging an early decision" and that they would

"not let the matter rest".

We now come to 16 November 1987 when the Portuguese Foreign Minister said that he

"appreciated the seriousness of the matter"

and that he would do what he could to clear it up. The last thing that happened was that on 22 March this year my right hon. Friend the Minister of State told me that prior to the Portuguese Prime Minister's visit to this country on 10 to 12 March the Portuguese Government had informed the embassy that they were prepared to compensate British subjects for expropriation "in a just way". My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said that she hoped that the matter would be settled quickly, but absolutely nothing has happened.

Thirteen years have now elapsed and, frankly, that is just not good enough. I have always loved Portugal, have admired its people and worked closely with the Portuguese parliamentarians during the 10 years that I was a member of the Council of Europe. However, this is not the behaviour that we expect from our oldest ally and partner. If it had happened in the middle east we should have had hostage taking and violence by now.

Nor does the Foreign Office come out of this affair well. All the talk of pressure has led to nothing. It has been far too feeble in its approach—I exonerate entirely my right hon. Friend the Minister of State from this—and far too wishy-washy. I sincerely hope that my right hon. Friend

[Sir Anthony Grant]

will have some better news for my unfortunate constituents and those of my hon. Friend the Member for Cambridgeshire, South-East, who has fought, as I have, on their behalf.

10.59 pm

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mrs. Lynda Chalker): I am grateful for the opportunity which my hon. Friend the Member for Cambridgeshire, South-West (Sir A. Grant) has given me to explain the Government's action on behalf of his constituent, Mr. Arnold, and the managers of the Galveias farm.

First, let me express to Mr. Arnold and his partner the Government's sympathy for the considerable financial loss which they have sustained. I share my hon. Friend's sense of frustration and that of Mr. Arnold that, despite the enormously long lapse of time, no compensation has yet been paid. I hope that I can demonstrate to the House that this is not due to a lack of vigorous and continuous action by this Government or our predecessors. It is due to a lack of response from those who alone can make the positive decision to alter this wrong state of affairs.

The Galveias farm was one of nine British-owned or rented farms in the Alentejo area which were expropriated in 1974-75. The British were not the only ones to have their farms expropriated: Portuguese, Germans, Belgians and other nationalities were also faced with the loss of their livelihood.

It was not for the British Government to negotiate the terms of compensation with the Portuguese. Our role was to do what we could to ensure that compensation was paid. To this end, successive British Governments have made repeated calls on the Portuguese Government on behalf of the owners of the nine expropriated British farms.

We finally appeared to be getting somewhere when, in 1983, five of the original nine farms were returned to their original owners. We believed then that a satisfactory solution for the other four claims was at hand. I am as cross and disappointed as they that our good friends the Portuguese, which they are, have not found it possible to resolve these four remaining claims. The Galveias farm issue and the other three claims are of grave concern which I will raise next week when I see the Portuguese Minister for Foreign Affairs in Luxembourg at the Foreign Affairs Council. I have arranged for the ambassador to have a copy of the report of this debate tomorrow so that he will be fully aware of the seriousness with which we regard this issue.

During her visit to Portugal in April 1984, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister discussed the question with the then Portuguese Prime Minister, who is now the President, Dr. Mario Soares. They agreed that the issue should be resolved by officials. We continued persistently to lobby in both London and Lisbon.

The Portuguese Government set up an inter-ministerial commission in November 1984 to investigate the claims. Our efforts seemed about to succeed when the inter-ministerial commission accepted the principle of the claim lodged by Mr. Arnold and his partners, and set a deadline for the cases to be resolved by the end of April 1985. Any optimism again proved to be illusory. In the summer of 1985, the Portuguese National Assembly was dissolved, elections were called and again the decision-making process ground to a halt. But our ambassador in Lisbon continued to press for a resolution of the case as soon as the new Government were in place.

In January 1986, the ambassador raised the question with the new Prime Minister, Professor Cavaco Silva. The ambassador provided him with a list of the claims and Professor Cavaco Silva promised to get the new Minister of Finance to look into the matter. The embassy followed up by leaving an aide memoire with the Foreign Ministry in February. On 12 May 1986, when Professor Cavaco Silva called on my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister in London, she again pressed for a speedy resolution of the problem. Professor Cavaco Silva told her that a settlement was close and only the amount had to be decided. I visited Lisbon later that month and I too took up the issue. Despite constant pressure from our embassy in Lisbon, no sign of a satisfactory conclusion has appeared.

As my hon. Friend has mentioned, on 28 November 1986, my right hon. Friend sent another message to Professor Cavaco Silva expressing her concern that the problem had still not been overcome. In reply, Professor Cavaco Silva said that the commission report evaluating the four outstanding claims had just been completed. We subsequently learned from the Portuguese embassy that the report had been agreed and that the way was clear for direct negotiations with the claimants.

Pressure on the Portuguese Government continued throughout last year. In particular, my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary raised the matter with the Portuguese Foreign Minister when they met on 15 June and again on 22 June.

The Portuguese elections in July last year again delayed progress. The ambassador raised the matter with the Secretary-General of the Portuguese Foreign Ministry in September, as soon as the composition of the new Government was known, and with the Foreign Minister in October. The next part of the litany is that the ambassador reminded the Foreign Minister of the assurances given by the present and previous Governments to settle the claims, and referred in particular to Professor Cavaco Silva's remarks to the Prime Minister in May 1986.

Our ambassador again emphasised that the delay in settling the claims was becoming intolerable and that we did not want the issue to cast a shadow over our otherwise excellent relations. He warned the Portuguese that adverse publicity could be expected if a settlement was not reached soon. The Foreign Minister said that he appreciated the seriousness of the matter and that he would do what he could to clear it up.

Shortly before the visit of the Portuguese Prime Minister to London in March this year, the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs notified our embassy in Lisbon that the Portuguese were prepared to compensate, as my hon. Friend has said, "in a just way." They said that they now had sufficient information to allow them to enter into direct negotiations with the parties concerned or their representatives.

I must tell the House that, when my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister saw Professor Cavaco Silva in London on 11 March, she again impressed on him the need to resolve the issue quickly. The embassy in Lisbon subsequently told all the claimants that they should make the necessary contact with the Foreign Ministry and the four British claimants have now provided full details of

their claims to the Portuguese Foreign Ministry. Only last week, our ambassador also spoke again to the new Secretary-General of the Foreign Ministry, as he explained to me earlier today.

I make no apology for running through the chronology of events in some detail. That is important if we are to understand the efforts that have been made by the Foreign Office—I must correct my hon. Friend—and by successive British Governments. We have sought to resolve this matter, but it is not in our hands to give the solution into the hands of my hon. Friend's constituents and those of my hon. Friend the Member for Cambridgeshire, South-East (Mr. Paice).

This outstanding bone of contention with the Portuguese Government has gone on far too long and it is high time that it was sorted out. Portugal is our oldest ally. We have very good relations, and in 1986 we celebrated the 600th anniversary of the treaty of Windsor. We are friends and partners, and we sit next to one another in European Community meetings. We have a good spirit of friendship that normally solves problems without them ever having to come even to the notice of hon. Members. Certainly they should not take up debating time late in the night.

I believe that the Portuguese Government are aware that such cases are doing harm to their reputation. I hope that they will take it from me tonight that we are determined and convinced that this problem can and should be solved forthwith.

The debate will have provided the Portuguese Government with a demonstration of the depth of feeling aroused by the matter. As I mentioned earlier, our ambassador in Lisbon will be instructed to hand over a copy of the *Hansard* record of this debate to the Portuguese Foreign Minister. I shall speak to him next week about this matter. I hope that we shall very soon see the grave problems of Mr. Arnold and the other three people solved so that once and for all this issue can be put behind us, which is what should have been done many years ago.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at nine minutes past Eleven o'clock.

House of Commons

Wednesday 8 June 1988

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Nelson Mandela

1. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations Her Majesty's Government have made to the Government of the Republic of South Africa for the release of Nelson Mandela.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mrs. Lynda Chalker): With the Commonwealth and our European partners, we have long called for the unconditional release of Mr. Mandela and other political prisoners. The issue was most recently raised with the South African Government last month.

Mr. Pike: As the Minister is aware, Nelson Mandela will be 70 on 18 July. I am sure that there will be a massive show of support in Britain for demands for his release on his 70th birthday. Will the Government give an assurance that they will identify themselves in every possible way with the demands that the South African Government release Mr. Mandela at the earliest possible date?

Mrs. Chalker: Our continuing long-standing support for Mr. Mandela's immediate and unconditional release will again be voiced if there is not the most welcome 70th birthday present for Nelson Mandela. We would welcome his release.

Mr. Burns: Will my right hon. Friend comment on any moves within the EEC to bring pressure on the South African Government to resist the introduction of new restrictions on externally funded aid programmes——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The question is really about Nelson Mandela.

Mr. Winnick: Would not sending birthday greetings to Nelson Mandela show that the Government understand and appreciate that he is the most outstanding South African of his generation? Has he not dedicated his life to fighting racial oppression and tyranny in South Africa? If the Government genuinely believe in human rights, do they not think that those rights should apply in South Africa as well as in the Soviet Union?

Mrs. Chalker: The answer to the hon. Gentleman's second question is yes. As I said to his hon. Friend the Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike), the Government would very much welcome the immediate release of Mr. Mandela and other political prisoners. We hope that that will happen as soon as possible, perhaps without even waiting for 18 July.

I must say to the hon. Gentleman and the House that there are many outstanding black South Africans. We wish that their common sense could be brought to bear on the untenable position of apartheid that still remains.

Mr. Forth: Is not my right hon. Friend just a little unhappy about any suggestion that countries should intervene in the judicial processes of other countries? Is there any end to that? What would be my right hon. Friend's reaction if the South Africans or any other Government approached Her Majesty's Government demanding the release of prisoners in this country?

Mrs. Chalker: My hon. Friend has posed that question many times and the answer remains the same. We do not attempt to intervene in any case unless we believe that there are political grounds—indeed, very particular political grounds. We have said that on many occasions. The Government's policy on Nelson Mandela has been consistent and we do not intend to change it.

Mr. Kaufman: In response to the Minister's hon. Friend —if she can call him that—the Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth), does she agree that if a 70-year-old man had been in prison in Britain for more than 25 years on trumped-up political charges, it would be perfectly right for other democratic countries to protest?

Does the right hon. Lady agree that it is appropriate that the House sends its congratulations and good wishes to Mr. Mandela on his birthday in support of her demand that he be released? Does she further agree that while the release of Nelson Mandela is essential, the ending of the filthy system that has put him in prison is even more necessary?

Mrs. Chalker: The right hon. Gentleman knows me better than to put those slightly barbed questions. I believe that it is a matter for you, Mr. Speaker, whether the House should send greetings to any individual. However, on the occasion of Mr. Mandela's 70th birthday, I sincerely hope that the request of all EC countries and of Governments throughout the world for his release will be granted. I may add that that is the Government's policy and not just mine as an individual, and the right hon. Gentleman should take care to make that distinction.

Mr. Dykes: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the Government's policy is robust and clear and that it is supported on both sides of the House? Will my right hon. Friend do what she implied in her earlier answer and give publicity to others who are not as well known as Nelson Mandela but who are incarcerated with him or still on Robben island, and consider a further collective EC initiative to publicise that tragic and criminal act of continuing incarceration?

Mrs. Chalker: With my right hon. and learned Friend, I shall consider with great care the comments of my hon. Friend. We have always called for the release of all political prisoners and have not restricted that call only to Mr. Nelson Mandela.

Mr. Steel: Following the previous question, does the Minister agree that Nelson Mandela's 70th birthday provides an opportunity for Her Majesty's Government, as the biggest single contributor to the European

Community's programme of support for the victims of apartheid, to protest vigorously against the legislation that is passing through the South African Parliament and which may bring an end to that programme?

Mrs. Chalker: We do not have to wait until 18 July for that to occur; we are making that protest continually and repeatedly. We shall go on doing so for as long as may be necessary.

Israeli-Arab Dispute

2. **Mr. Robert Hicks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he intends to take any new initiatives to try to resolve the Israeli-Arab dispute; and if he will make a statement.

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Sir Geoffrey Howe): We continue to work for the convening of an international conference as a framework for negotiations to resolve the conflict, and we urge all parties to respond positively to Secretary Shultz's continuing initiative.

Mr. Hicks: Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories is now entering its seventh month? Does he agree that during that period the Palestinians have shown commendable restraint? Does that not suggest that the time has come, if we are to make the progress that my right hon. and learned Friend seeks, to speak to and recognise the PLO, which represents the Palestinians in the occupied territories?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I agree with my hon. Friend that the long duration of the patient protest of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories underlines the urgency of the case for action towards the settlement of this long-running dispute. We are in regular dialogue at official level with the organisation to which my hon. Friend refers. The PLO is well aware of those aspects of its policy which make renewed ministerial contact difficult. They are the need to acknowledge without qualification Security Council resolution 242, to recognise Israel's right to exist, and to eschew the use of violence.

Mr. Galloway: Hearing the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, and having returned only a day or two ago from the occupied territories, I wonder whether the Government are as aware as they ought to be of just how serious is the reign of terror in which the occupying forces are engaged. Bodies are being carried through the streets to hospitals and clinics. People are being shot, beaten and gassed—including indiscriminate gassing by crop-spraying aeroplanes flying over refugee camps.

I wonder whether the right hon. and learned Gentleman is aware of the case of an elderly gentleman, Mr. Mohammed Abu Shawish, who is an official of the United Nations and is the refugees services officer in Jabalia camp, and who took the Minister of State around that camp and served as his interpreter? That gentleman's elderly wife of 63—*[Interruption.]* Please, this is an important point.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I ask the hon. Gentleman, in the interests of others, to be brief.

Mr. Galloway: The 63-year-old wife of the gentleman who helped the Minister of State was savagely beaten by Israeli soldiers three days after the Minister left the camp. Four of her ribs and her arm were broken by the Israeli occupying troops.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The hon. Gentleman is quite right to remind the House of the unacceptable conduct being sustained in the occupied territories. I have discussed it in the course of the past few days, not only with Secretary of State Shultz but with the Soviet Foreign Minister, Mr. Shevardnadze. It is clear that, as Mr. Shultz said on his arrival in Israel:

"The continued occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza strip and the denial of political rights to the Palestinians is a dead end street . . . The belief that this can continue is an illusion."

I share the concern expressed by the hon. Gentleman at the possibility of the use of gas in any circumstances in those conditions. As for his particular complaint about my hon. and learned Friend's guide on his visit to Palestine, I shall certainly instruct Her Majesty's consul-general in Jerusalem to contact the family and report immediately. If any kind of link can be demonstrated between the treatment received by the guide and his family and my hon. and learned Friend's visit, we shall clearly have to take an even more serious view of what may have happened.

Mr. Adley: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that the activities of the Syrians in Lebanon, particularly in Beirut, are a welcome step in the right direction towards reducing anarchy in that city? Does he not agree that it would be advantageous, if we are to make progress with the peace conference to which he has referred, for diplomatic contact with the Syrians at all levels to be maintained by countries interested in playing a part in the peace process?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The time has not come, nor have the conditions been fulfilled, for us to reconsider any change in our relationships with the Syrian Government. Clearly, however, any action being taken by that Government that can help towards the promotion of peace, unity and independence for Lebanon is certainly to be welcomed.

Mr. Cartwright: Will the Foreign Secretary again confirm that the Palestinians are just as entitled to a homeland of their own as is any other nation on the face of the earth, and that there can be no lasting peace in the middle east until that simple fact is accepted by all concerned?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Two propositions stand with equal importance alongside each other: the right of Israel and other states in the area to a secure existence, and the Palestinian right to self-determination. Those are the two bedrock principles on which, sooner rather than later, the parties must begin to negotiate for peace, on the basis of territory.

Ethiopia

3. **Mr. David Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has received from Her Majesty's Ambassador in Ethiopia on the situation in Eritrea and Tigray and its implications for the United Kingdom's relations with Ethiopia.

Mrs. Chalker: Although neither Her Majesty's ambassador in Ethiopia nor his staff are permitted to visit

these areas, he reports regularly and fully on the situation in Eritrea and Tigray. Their reports are taken fully into account in framing policy towards Ethiopia.

Mr. Davis: Will my right hon. Friend tell the House the number of people at risk from famine in Eritrea and Tigray? Does not the appalling situation in those provinces, and the restrictions applied to aid workers by the Mengistu Government, tell us that there should be a much more liberal and less extreme regime in respect of the northern provinces?

Mrs. Chalker: The best estimate that we can make of the number of people at risk from famine is some 7 million;3 million in Eritrea and Tigray. We believe that enough food is available at present; certainly it has been pledged. The difficulty will always be delivering food to war-affected areas, and that is made the more difficult if aid workers in the country cannot help in the process. We have urged the Ethiopian Government to reconsider their decision. Some United Nations personnel have been allowed to return to the north, but there are many other aid agency people in Ethiopia who want to help to prevent famine.

Sir Jim Spicer: Does my right hon. Friend not accept that that begs the main question? The people of Eritrea were handed over into bondage under the Ethiopians. They were not consulted about it. They were handed over with the then Government of this country playing a major role. Has not the time come for us to accept that they do not wish to be part of a country that is ruled by a corrupt, evil, authoritarian Communist regime, and should be given the right to decide whether they wish to be independent?

Mrs. Chalker: The territorial integrity of a country such as Ethiopia is a matter that we look at carefully, as my hon. Friend knows. The situation in Ethiopia is serious and worrying, and we will do our best to help in humanitarian terms. However, I am afraid that it is not for us to comment on the allusion of my hon. Friend.

Chile (Plebiscite)

4. **Mr. Worthington:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has made any representations to the Government of Chile concerning the conditions under which the impending plebiscite will be held.

Mr. Eggar: Yes Sir. We make frequent representations.

Mr. Worthington: I am relieved to hear that news, because there is widespread anxiety among Opposition Members about the deteriorating situation in Chile, which is shared by Solidarity, the Vicararade and Amnesty International. The persecution of trade union leaders and opposition Members in Chile is running at the rate of 95 a month. Will the Minister double his efforts to protest about the deteriorating human rights situation in Chile?

Mr. Eggar: I recognise the concern in the House about the situation in Chile. I assure the hon. Gentleman that, together with our European partners, we make a number of private and public representations about human rights there. We hope that the plebiscite will be conducted in an appropriate manner, and the co-operation among the opposition parties, in particular, is encouraging.

Mr. Temple-Morris: Is my hon. Friend aware that the plebiscite is a reality in which General Pinochet has chosen to offer himself as the only candidate? Therefore, will my hon. Friend accept that the most practical action that the House can take—in conjunction, one hopes, with Washington and our European allies—is to ensure that during the run-up to the campaign—and not just for the statutory 30 days of the campaign—there is fair access to the media for parties that have only the option of campaigning for a no vote and generally fair treatment during the campaign? Will he exercise pressure on behalf of the Government to that end?

Mr. Eggar: Of course, no announcement has yet been made about whether General Pinochet will be the candidate, although there are a number of rumours to that effect.

It is important to note that all the major opposition parties have combined and have announced that they will be campaigning for a no vote in the plebiscite. The signs so far are that the plebiscite will be fairly conducted.

Mr. Wareing: I found the answer of the Minister astounding. Surely, there cannot be a freely elected President of Chile as long as the leaders of political parties —such as the leader of the Socialist party—are in prison. Would it not be appropriate for the Minister or, better still, his right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, who has recently visited dissidents in the Soviet Union, to ask the Chilean dictator if they could visit Chile to speak to the dissidents, in the hope that there might be some glasnost in Chile next year?

Mr. Eggar: I have already said to the House—I think that it is widely recognised—that we take an active part in promoting the cause of human rights within Chile. We will continue to do so. However, the fact remains that over 5·5 million Chileans have registered for the plebiscite to entitle them to vote. They are registering at the rate of about 400,000 a month. That is to be welcomed. It has been welcomed by the opposition parties. One has to take account of the fact that the opposition parties in Chile are taking part in that plebiscite and are combining for a no vote.

Mr. Foulkes: The hon. Member for Leominster (Mr. Temple-Morris) has cogently pointed out the shortcomings of the plebiscite. Does the Minister agree that if the plebiscite is to have even a semblance of fairness, it is essential that the right of free association is given to the opposition, along with free access to the media at all times, the immediate lifting of the state of emergency and the immediate release of Clodomiro Almeyda, the Socialist leader? Will the British Government join the American Government and our European partners to make it abundantly clear to General Pinochet and the junta that those are the minimum guarantees to ensure any kind of fairness?

Mr. Eggar: I advise the hon. Gentleman that there is a later question on that matter on the Order Paper. The Chilean Government are well aware of our concern about Senor Almeyda. The democratic opposition now have some access to the television—I know that the hon. Gentleman recognises that as a step in the right direction —but we should like to see more access and we have made that absolutely clear. We welcome Admiral Merino's

recent commitment to lift the state of emergency 30 days before the plebiscite but we should much prefer that to be done now.

Secretary General, United Nations

5. **Mr. John Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next plans to meet the Secretary General of the United Nations; and what subjects he expects to be discussed.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I have no immediate plans to do so. I last met the secretary general of the United Nations on 23 May. We had a useful and wide-ranging discussion.

Mr. Evans: Will the Foreign Secretary assure the House that the next time that he has the opportunity to have a discussion with the secretary general he will raise the question of chemical weapons? Has any progress been made at Geneva in the talks on the reduction of chemical weapons? I agree with the statement at the special session of the United Nations on disarmament that the use of chemical weapons is a particularly repulsive form of barbarism. Has any progress been made in on-site inspection and verification, especially in commercial chemical plants?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The hon. Gentleman is right to raise the importance of that point. When I spoke at the United Nations general assembly yesterday in the presence of the secretary general, I devoted a large part of my speech to the need to make headway in outlawing chemical weapons. I stressed the work that has been going on—in which Britain has been taking a leading part—in the Geneva talks and that is technical, difficult and must be pressed ahead urgently. That is why the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union have opened their chemical weapons defence establishments to inspection by each other as a contribution to openness. I also stressed the need for more urgent action to outlaw the spreading use of chemical weapons in conflicts such as the Gulf war.

Mr. Lester: When my right hon. and learned Friend has discussed events with the secretary general, has he raised the deteriorating situation in the Sudan, which causes many of us great concern because there is clear evidence of genocide and complete irrationality in the behaviour of the Sudanese Government? When I last spoke to Sadiq al-Mahdi, he particularly wanted the secretary general to go to Sudan and to consider the situation in the Horn of Africa. Has that featured in my right hon. and learned Friend's discussions?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. Friend is right to draw attention to that. It is not a subject that I discussed with the secretary general when I saw him on 23 May, but I knew that it was on his mind because he was then on his way to the OAU meeting in Addis Ababa. I shall certainly keep it in mind for my next contact with him.

Ms. Short: When the Secretary of State meets the secretary general, will he explain why he would be unwilling to meet the PLO until it renounces the use of force and recognises the right of Israel to exist, when he happily meets representatives of the Israeli Government who are engaged in massive and brutally illegal use of force in the occupied territories and give absolutely no undertaking that they recognise the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination in their own state, whereas the PLO said that it would embrace all United Nations' resolutions, which includes a willingness to recognise the right of Israel to exist? Why do the British Government have double standards?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: We do not have double standards in that respect—*[Interruption.]* Nor in any other respect; I always address myself to the question.

When I met the Foreign Minister of Israel in Brussels about three weeks ago it was clear that he well understood the need to respect the rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people, and it is on that basis that one has contact with the properly established Government of a country with whom we have diplomatic relations.

With regard to the PLO we have striven very hard—the hon. Lady may remember our efforts of two years ago—to establish a meeting of a joint delegation of Palestinian and Jordanian people on well-known terms—the repudiation of violence, recognition of resolution 242 without qualification and recognition of Israel's right to exist. In our judgment—we are not alone in this—it is important to go on emphasising those conditions.

Dr. Blackburn: When my right hon. and learned Friend next meets the secretary general of the United Nations will he confirm that it is the view of Her Majesty's Government that United Nations resolution 242 is not negotiable and that the Government stand four square upon it? Will he also consider the prospect of helping in the process of restoring diplomatic relations between the state of Israel and Russia?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Our commitment to the importance of resolution 242 goes without saying and it is of the utmost importance. The restoration of diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Israel is clearly worthy of consideration. I know from my recent meetings with the Foreign Ministers of both countries that that is in the minds of both parties.

Mr. Anderson: The Foreign Secretary will be aware that there was some confusion in our press yesterday as to whether the Prime Minister had received a communication from the secretary general about Cyprus and particularly on the latest initiative of the secretary general in respect of that island. Was that letter received in our capacity as a guarantor power? What response will the Government make? Will we try to persuade the President of Cyprus and the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community to meet as foreshadowed in that letter?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The Cyprus question is another important matter that the Prime Minister and I both discussed with the secretary general during his visit here on 23 May. We give strong and continuing support to his efforts to reach a settlement.

Yesterday in New York I was able to have a short meeting with President Vassiliou and I was glad to welcome his readiness for negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations. Yesterday he reaffirmed that readiness to the secretary general. In the same way we are encouraged by Mr. Denktash's acceptance, in principle, of the secretary general's initiative to attend an early meeting with President Vassiliou. We are in close and continuous contact with the parties. The only thing that is not yet well established is the existence of a letter of the type to which

the hon. Gentleman referred. No such letter has been received, but in its absence we are doing everything we should.

Mr. Boswell: On a more domestic vein, will my right hon. and learned Friend consider raising with the secretary general the question of outstanding arrears of subscriptions to the United Nations by various member states?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Yes, I discussed that matter with the secretary general when we met. It is an important matter because, at the beginning of the year, no fewer than half the member states of the United Nations were in arrears with their assessed contributions. We shall continue to press the matter.

Entry Clearance Applications (Indian Sub-continent)

6. **Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what further proposals he has for reducing delays in entry clearance applications to the United Kingdom from the Indian sub-continent.

Mr. Eggar: More than 90 per cent. of visit-visa applications in the Indian sub-continent are processed within 24 hours. Any delay in remaining visit cases is usually due to the need to produce further documentary evidence.

Mr. Madden: Is the Minister aware that there has been a sharp increase in the number of settlement applications referred to the United Kingdom for inquiry? Is he aware that that means that many fiancés and spouses are having to wait an extra six or 12 months for a decision to be taken on their application, having already waited anything up to 12 months for an initial interview? Will he encourage overseas posts, especially Islamabad, to reduce the number of applications referred to Britain for local inquiries to be made, or press the Home Office to appoint more immigration officers so that the necessary interviews and inquiries can be conducted far more expeditiously than they are now?

Mr. Eggar: At the end of 1979 there were almost 43,000 people awaiting interview in the Indian sub-continent. There are now just over 12,000. The hon. Gentleman will welcome that considerable progress. Only four years ago we had 43 ECOs in the Indian sub-continent and we now have 86. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman might occasionally welcome the improvements that have been made.

Mr. Marlow: Is it not time that we considered introducing a language test for those seeking entry clearance to this country? Where both parties to a marriage have a common language and that language is not English, is it not more sensible, sensitive and humane for them to be settled in the country where that language is spoken?

Mr. Eggar: I am sure that my hon. Friend would receive a full reply to that point from the Home Office.

Mr. Janner: Does the Minister accept that the delays in obtaining entry clearance documents are not the end of the matter because the delays at Heathrow for people who arrive there remain unworthy, intolerable and among the worst of any airport in the world? Does he propose to attend to that end of the problem and thereby to make life decent and easier for those who visit this country, never mind those who wish to stay?

Mr. Eggar: While all delays at airports are regrettable there has been a dramatic improvement since we introduced the visa regimes in the Indian sub-continent.

China (Economic and Trade Relations)

7. **Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what rôle his Department is playing in promoting economic and trade relations with the People's Republic of China.

Mr. Eggar: We work closely with the Department of Trade and Industry to help British exporters. British companies have won substantial contracts financed at concessional rates under our bilateral aid programme. The claims agreement signed with China in 1987 has opened access for China to the London capital market.

Mr. Shaw: Is my hon. Friend satisfied that British business men are doing enough in this respect and taking advantage of all the opportunities that his Department is opening up? Does he think that if more was done by British business men the economies and jobs of both countries would benefit?

Mr. Eggar: We welcome the considerable commitment that has been made by British business. More than 2,500 British business men visited our posts in China in 1986. There are more than 20 companies with permanent representative offices and we have no fewer than 11 United Kingdom-based commercial staff in Shanghai and Beijing.

Mr. Mullin: Does the Minister have any plans for raising with the Chinese Government the issue of human rights in that country; or am I being naive?

Mr. Eggar: I would not want to comment on the second part of the hon. Gentleman's question, but human rights and other issues are discussed when my right hon. and learned Friend meets representatives of the Chinese Government.

Mr. Roger King: Does my hon. Friend agree that we are seeing in China a degree of reform in its economic policies by the concentration of economic growth on a growing number of small business men? Is not that factor very much to the fore in this country and can we not export some of our economic reforms under Thatcherism to China?

Mr. Eggar: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. There has been a considerable resurgence in economic activity in China and it is largely due to the liberalisation reforms that have been introduced by that Government. The economic policies propounded by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister have been followed not only in China, but throughout the world.

Hong Kong (Basic Law)

8. **Mr. Jim Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when and how he intends to make representations to the Government of China in relation to the Basic Law of Hong Kong.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The drafting of the Basic Law is the responsibility of the Chinese Government. If there are points which we consider are inconsistent with the joint declaration, we shall make our views known to the Chinese authorities clearly and firmly.

Mr. Marshall: Is the Foreign Secretary aware of the rising tide of migration from Hong Kong, particularly among professional people who fear for their future there after it is taken over by China? As a consequence of that, does he propose to suggest any alteration to the draft Basic Law to seek to allay the fears that are giving rise to migration?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am aware that there has been some increase in the amount of emigration from Hong Kong, not least because of increased opportunities in some of the recipient countries. There are also large numbers of people returning to Hong Kong. That should be regarded as an important factor in maintaining confidence in the territory. It was on that basis that I discussed it yesterday with the Chinese Foreign Minister, when I met him in New York. In the same conversation I made it clear, as he well knows, that it is important for the Basic Law, which is now the subject of consultation for a five-month period, to fulfil precisely the commitments which were so important in the joint declaration signed by both countries. We shall continue to stress its importance in the many opportunities open to us.

Sir Peter Blaker: While there are probably some parts of the draft Basic Law which need to be changed, which would not be surprising in any first draft, does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that the wide consultations that the Chinese authorities have arranged regarding the draft Basic Law, both before its publication and since, shows their desire for the final Basic Law to correspond with the joint declaration and to be acceptable to the people of Hong Kong as a whole?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I agree strongly with that point. The Basic Law first draft as published is itself a substantial document with important alternatives on some key points. It is expressly the subject of wide consultation in Hong Kong. When I was there last week, I welcomed the willingness of the Chinese authorities to consult as fully as they are doing. I am sure that will make an important contribution to confidence in Hong Kong.

Dr. Bray: Is the Foreign Secretary aware that the draft of the Basic Law departs from the joint declaration in certain important respects, such as the autonomy of the special administrative region and the power of the courts in Hong Kong to determine the legitimacy of legislation, rather than for this to be determined solely by Beijing? Is the Foreign Secretary aware that the strength of his position has been undermined by his statement in Hong Kong that full democracy is not for Hong Kong?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: It would have been if I had said that. What I said was that at the time of the original commitment in the course of our negotiations on the joint declaration, when we secured a commitment to an elected legislative authority, that did not necessarily imply any particular form of election in any particular volume. That has been the subject of many discussions in the subsequent Green and White Papers, the latest conclusions of which were welcomed by an overwhelming majority of the Legislative Council the other day. The Basic Law itself makes important provisions for the independence of the judiciary, for the continuation of the common law system and for final judgment to be vested in Hong Kong, but I am aware that difficult areas are bound to exist in the distribution of powers of this kind, which are the subject of further consideration in Hong Kong.

Turkey (Human Rights)

9. **Mr. Anthony Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has received on human rights violations in Turkey.

Mrs. Chalker: We have received a number of representations. The Turkish Government are well aware of our views about this matter.

Mr. Coombs: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that despite numerous requests to the Turkish Government, direct and through the United Nations, there are still 1,619 Greek Cypriot citizens unaccounted for, many of whom were taken to Turkey following the Turkish invasion in 1974? Will my right hon. Friend assure the House that any significant progress on the Turkish application for full EC membership will be made conditional upon the rectification of such human rights abuses?

Mrs. Chalker: May I comment on the second part of my hon. Friend's question. In accordance with standard procedures, the Turkish application for membership of the Community was referred in April last year to the European Commission for the preparation of an opinion. Any Government would reserve comment on an application until they had studied the Commission's opinion. That is by no means likely to come forward soon. Of course we recognise that any application to join the Community has in it the understanding that the rules of the Community will be abided by; that includes human rights.

As to my hon. Friend's question about the specific number of missing Greek Cypriots who may be in Turkey, the Turkish and Greek Prime Ministers called in Brussels in March this year for the reactivation of the United Nations missing persons committee. We believe from the Greeks that some missing Greek Cypriots may be in Turkey, but the Turks deny it. I shall go further into this issue because it was discussed between the Greeks and the Turks when they met in a committee following the meeting between the two Prime Ministers in Davos.

Mr. Morley: Apart from considering the important issue of human rights in Turkey, will the Minister ensure that the veto is used to keep Turkey out of the Common Market until there is some genuine progress in resolving the situation in Cyprus and a move towards the reunification of the island?

Mrs. Chalker: The hon. Gentleman raises a matter that is with the Commission and which is not likely to come back to the Council of Ministers for some considerable time. As my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary said in answer to a previous question, resolving the problems of Cyprus is very much a matter of the two communities beginning to talk together. I have every confidence that such talks will take place and that

gradually through the umbrella of the United Nations, we shall seek to give whatever help we can to resolve the problem of Cyprus.

Mr. Madel: Will my right hon. Friend confirm the Government's view that Turkey should not become a member of the European Community as long as it keeps part of its army in Cyprus?

Mrs. Chalker: I do not think that we have to address that specific question at this time. As far as one can see the matter is far off. I remind my hon. Friend that any application to become a member of the Community has to have the assent of the European Parliament. It is well known how strongly the European Parliament exercises its views on human rights issues. The Parliament will be looking at the matter as will member Governments of the Community. As I have said, the whole matter is a long way off.

Mr. Corbyn: Is the Minister of State aware that in Turkey the use of the Kurdish language is officially banned and that people are imprisoned for using it? Is she also aware that many people have been in prison for the past few years because of their political opinions, that some trials have continued for three or four years and that today in Ankara the trial opened of the general secretaries of the Workers' party and the Communist party of Turkey? Does she not think that it is time for the Government to condemn all abuses of human rights in Turkey and to stop propping up the Turkish Government diplomatically and supplying them with arms?

Mrs. Chalker: As usual I am afraid that the hon. Gentleman has made one or two assertions which are his views and a long way from the actual situation. The trial of Mr. Kutlu and Mr. Sagin opened today in Turkey. We are well aware of the allegations of torture and expect Turkey to abide by the European and United Nations conventions against torture. We are confident that Mr. Kutlu and Mr. Sagin will receive a fair hearing under Turkish law. It is vital that human rights are respected throughout the world, and that excludes nobody, but nobody.

United States Secretary of State

11. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will next meet the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Shultz; and what subjects he expects to discuss.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I met Mr. Shultz in London last Friday and shall meet him again in Madrid this evening. We regularly discuss a wide range of bilateral and international topics.

Mr. Allen: When the Foreign Secretary meets Mr. Shultz in Madrid this evening, will he ask him what plans he has to reciprocate the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan? What gestures will be made by the American side? If Mr. Shultz has no concrete suggestions, will the Secretary of State suggest that Mr. Shultz should see his colleagues and friends in Honduras and ask them to disperse the Contra bases that still exist in that country?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I doubt whether I shall be discussing the latter point with Mr. Shultz in Madrid this evening, or in the near future. On the first point raised by the hon. Gentleman, he has a total misunderstanding of the situation. The idea that anyone should take any reciprocal action for the action of the Soviet Union in withdrawing its troops from Afghanistan is wholly without foundation. The world welcomes the decision by the Soviet Union to withdraw its troops and to complete withdrawal this year. We now look forward to an opportunity for the Afghan people to reach a comprehensive peace settlement on the basis of a Government acceptable to them all.

Mr. David Howell: In preparation for his meeting with Mr. Shultz, will my right hon. and learned Friend make it quite clear that, contrary to some newspaper reports, he holds no preference between one American presidential candidate and another in the forthcoming presidential election, that that is a matter for the American people to decide, and that either would do quite nicely?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend. As I said on the David Frost programme on Sunday—that important organ of public opinion—it is part of the democratic process that one works with the leader who emerges at the end of the day. I and Her Majesty's Government look forward to continuing close and friendly co-operation with whatever Administration emerges.

Mr. Ernie Ross: When the Foreign Secretary meets Mr. Shultz tonight will he discuss with him the failure of his most recent peace initiative in the middle east? Will he try to explain to Mr. Shultz that it is no good making rather bellicose statements in Israel, Egypt or anywhere else in the middle east unless the Americans are prepared to meet the Palestinians, and that means meeting representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organisation? Would it not help if, when he meets Secretary Shultz tonight, he confirms that he intends to meet the Palestinian representatives?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The hon. Gentleman may not have observed that on his arrival in Israel on this occasion, Mr. Shultz offered to meet Palestinian representatives, but unfortunately they were unwilling to meet him. The important thing to acknowledge about the latest sustained initiative by Secretary Shultz is the tenacity with which he is pursuing it. It is enormously to be welcomed that he is continuing his visits to the region, pressing both sides with the central, inescapable features that the prospects of peace must be founded on the recognition of Israel's right to a secure existence and on the recognition of the Palestinian right to self-determination, and that those parties must get together on that basis. I very much welcome the extent to which Mr. Shultz has been hammering home those essential features and emphasising to all those concerned that the present state of affairs cannot possible continue and they have to get together and look for a better future.

Mr. Bill Walker: When my right hon. and learned Friend meets Mr. Shultz and discusses with him the problems of the West Bank, will he remind him of the post-Palestinian era and that the Arab legion was the first occupying army on the West Bank? It occupied it in 1948 and was not removed until some time later. That has bedevilled the situation and the attempts that have been made to find peace in that area.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I think that is one of the features which I shall not be drawing to Mr. Shultz's attention, because I do not think that either side is likely to find material for building a better future by digging that deep into the past.

Mr. Robertson: Over brandy this evening in Madrid, will the Secretary of State take the opportunity to explain to Mr. Shultz why only seven days after Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan choked off the rhetoric of the cold war, the Secretary of State for Defence and the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office chose yesterday to kick-start the engine of confrontation by bleating out the redundant vocabulary about the increasing Soviet threat? Is it not bizarre that the Right-wing President of the United States of America should now be preaching international reconciliation while Ministers in this Government are preaching confrontation and conflict?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I have seldom heard the hon. Gentleman achieve such profound misunderstanding. *[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) says that if I were here more often I would hear it more often.

I shall try to resolve the misunderstanding between the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley and the hon. Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson). Of course we welcome the tremendous progress that has been made during the past five years in establishing a better, sustainable foundation for East-West relations, and it is important to acknowledge the part played by Mr. Reagan and by Mr. Gorbachev, but it would be foolish to allow ourselves to forget the continuing reality. As I said to the United Nations yesterday, the Soviet Union continues to maintain an offensive weapons posture and to launch a new submarine every 36 days, and it will achieve complete renewal of inter-continental resources from the mid-1980s to the 1990s. We have to maintain a reality in our minds while we go on working, as we shall go on working, for steady improvements in the long-term pattern of East-West relations.

Mr. Sackville: Will my right hon. and learned Friend impress on Mr. Shultz the fact that, however great are the improvements in United States-Soviet relations, the Soviet Union retains two important characteristics—it is the most heavily armed nation ever in peace-time and it is a dictatorship? That is a very dangerous combination.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I shall continue to remind Mr. Shultz, although he does not need reminding of it, that there has been no reduction in the Soviet threat to Western Europe. It still retains a massive conventional superiority and an overwhelmingly large chemical weapons capability. Moreover, it still retains almost all of the features of a totalitarian state. Only modest qualifications have been made. Modifications are being made. We shall continue to press for them and to welcome them, but we shall continue to maintain the vigilance that is proper in this matter.

Senor Clodomiro Almeyda

12. **Mrs. Clwyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he intends to make to the Government of Chile in relation to the continued imprisonment of the Socialist Party leader Clodomiro Almeyda.

Mr. Eggar: The Chilean Government have been told on several occasions of our concern, and that of our European Community partners, about Senor Almeyda since his arrest in 1987. We remain in touch with our European Community partners on this issue.

Mrs. Clwyd: Does the Minister agree that while significant leaders of the Left such as Mr. Almeyda remain in prison on trumped-up charges, there can be no meaningful return to democracy in Chile? Does he further agree that it is an utter deception for him to suggest otherwise, as he did earlier?

Mr. Eggar: I made it clear that we have made representations about the treatment of Senor Almeyda. I said, and I am happy to repeat it, that there have been considerable moves in the right direction in Chile. They have not gone nearly far enough, but we should at least recognise movement when there has been some.

Mr. Gow: To what extent, if at all, is it a principle of British foreign policy that we do not interfere in the internal affairs of other sovereign states?

Mr. Eggar: I did not recognise my hon. Friend criticising the President of the United States for making representations about human rights in the Soviet Union. It is clearly recognised, by the various United Nations and other conventions to which we are party, that we have a right to indicate our views on human rights in other countries.

Mr. Heffer: Is the Minister aware that I agree with what he said to the hon. Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow)? It is important that the British Government are as strong about human rights in Chile as they are about human rights in the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, will the Minister be a bit more vigorous about what is happening in Chile, just as the Government have rightly been vigorous about human rights in the Soviet Union?

Mr. Eggar: When the hon. Gentleman leaps to my defence I get slightly worried, but I must tell him and my hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow) that, in regard to human rights, we try to be utterly consistent as between different countries and different regimes. Even if that is not recognised by the hon. Gentleman, it is by the international community and the human rights commission of the United Nations. We have a fine record of being consistent.

USSR (Refuseniks)

13. **Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will make a statement on the frequency with which he makes representations to the Russian Government about their treatment of refuseniks.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. David Mellor): We raise human rights questions, including the problem of Jewish emigration, with the Soviet authorities at every suitable opportunity. My right hon. and learned Friend did so in detail during his talks with Mr. Shevardnadze in Moscow in February. He also raised some humanitarian cases in his meeting with Mr. Shevardnadze in New York two days ago. We shall be making further detailed representations during bilateral human rights talks in June.

Mr. Marshall: Does my hon. and learned Friend agree that the number of exit visas granted by the Russians is much smaller and the basic Russian laws much harsher than they were in 1979, long before glasnost? Will he continue to tell the Soviet Union that as long as it cheats on the obligations that it accepted in Helsinki, its signature on all other international documents will be suspect? When he next raises individual cases, will he raise the case of Mr. Oscar Eleyev, who has waited 20 years to receive an exit visa from Russia, and Mr. Vladimir Mishkov, who has waited for eight years? Those delays are quite intolerable.

Mr. Mellor: My hon. Friend knows that we raise such cases. I shall look sympathetically at this suggestion that we raise those two cases and write to him about them. We are looking for an outcome to the Vienna CSCE talks, which will mark a movement forward from Helsinki. We have made it clear to the Soviet Union that we attach importance to it honouring the obligations into which it entered in Helsinki as a sign of its good faith in other agreements. Of course it is important that there should be freedom of movement, but it is also important that some of the pressure in Soviet society from people wanting to leave should be reduced by allowing people religious freedom, so that Jewish people can practise their religion freely in the Soviet Union. That would be a step forward in accordance with the obligations entered into in Helsinki.

National Engineering Laboratory, East Kilbride

3.32 pm

Mr. Adam Ingram (East Kilbride): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the proposed privatisation of the National Engineering Laboratory at East Kilbride."

The Government announced yesterday in a written answer to me that they propose to sell off to the private sector one of the foremost research establishments in the world. The National Engineering Laboratory celebrates its 40th anniversary in one week's time. During the 40 years of its existence, it has established a reputation not only in this country but throughout the world as a centre of scientific excellence in engineering research.

It is the only major research establishment in this country that is not based in the prosperous south-east. It is the only major research establishment in any of the regional development areas.

Given its importance to the Scottish economy, the manner in which the Government made the announcement, without due regard to the need for accountability in such matters to the House, was decidedly unacceptable and showed contempt for the people who will be affected by it.

The Government have given potential purchasers only until 22 July to submit bids for the establishment. That indecent haste will effectively mean that the sell off will take place when the House is in recess and, therefore, will not be subject to parliamentary scrutiny.

The announcement is completely at variance with the assurances given by the Secretary of State only a matter of weeks ago, when he denied that such a proposition was likely to see the light of day.

The proposal places at risk 600 high-quality jobs and involves the sell off of a major British resource, without regard to the national interest and without any guarantee for its long-term future.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the proposed privatisation of the National Engineering Laboratory at East Kilbride."

I have listened carefully to what the hon. Gentleman has said, but I do not consider that the matter he has raised is appropriate for discussion under Standing Order No. 20. I cannot, therefore, submit his application to the House. I hope that he will find other ways of raising the matter.

Points of Order

3.35 pm

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. As reported in column 729 of yesterday's *Hansard,* you said in response to my hon. Friends the Members for Glasgow, Maryhill (Mrs. Fyfe) and Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) that the possible misleading of the House by the Secretary of State for Education and Science might be a matter of privilege. You asked us to write to you, and that we have done. I understand perfectly well——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman has written to me on this as a matter of privilege and I am looking into it. I cannot allow him to raise it now.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. From time to time you are placed in some difficulty as a result of the Government evading their responsibility and not making statements to the House. *[Interruption.]* There is no need to get excited; we are not setting light to anything.

According to reports today and a written answer, the Government are proposing to announce a serious change regarding planning requirements for local authorities in respect of opencast applications. Bearing in mind the commercial viability that the Government are now asking local authorities to take into account when considering opencast applications, in my opinion and the opinion of many, the change would alter the nature of planning consent by local authorities in respect not only of opencast applications but perhaps of incursions into the green belt in your constituency, Mr. Speaker, and goodness knows how many others.

On occasions, Mr. Speaker, you have chided the Government for using the method of answering written questions late in the day when hon. Members cannot challenge them. Bearing that in mind, will you take steps to ensure that we have an opportunity to raise the matter with the appropriate Secretary of State so that hon. Members on both sides of the House may ask questions about this controversial change in planning consent?

Mr. Speaker: As the hon. Gentleman knows, there are several dozen written questions tabled for answer every day.

Mr. Skinner: It is a big 'un.

Mr. Speaker: It may be a big 'un, but we had better wait to find out what the answer is.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. It relates to the Opposition Supply day debate on the takeover bid for Rowntree. As you know, Mr. Speaker, hon. Members are debarred from voting on matters in which they have a direct pecuniary interest. The Government's amendment, in effect, allows, indeed encourages, a takeover bid by Nestlé. The effect of the takeover bid has been to increase share values. Therefore, any Conservative Member who has shares who voted for the amendment would be voting to enhance his pecuniary interest. May I suggest that you call on hon. Members who are in that position not to vote in the debate?

Mr. Speaker: I can clarify the issue. Any hon. Member who has an interest in any of the companies should declare it in the debate. On a question of public policy, it has always been in order for hon. Members to vote.

Alcohol (Health Warning)

3.38 pm

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to require the display of a health warning label on all products containing alcohol and to require the display of such notices in licensed premises.

I should make it clear from the beginning that I like a drink myself and I am certainly not approaching this subject from a puritanical point of view. Indeed, for those who believe that alcohol is the devil's brew, I would remind them of the miracle of the wedding feast where Jesus Christ turned water into wine. Presumably he could have turned it into Rowntree's cocoa or Nestlé's coffee, but for reasons that I would not dare to question he chose wine.

The labelling with a Government health warning of alcohol products for consumption is supported by hon. Members on both sides of the House, and I would draw the House's attention to early-day motion 599 in that regard. I am confident that it is only a matter of time before such a measure is adopted. The reasoning behind the proposal is both self-evident and self-explanatory. Drinking alcohol is injurious to health and dependency starts at a very low level of intake. The medical royal colleges recently stated that safe weekly consumption is the equivalent of 10½ pints for men and the equivalent of 7½ pints for women. Those who drink every day—that goes for many people in this House and no doubt many people in the country—are probably on target for some form of alcohol-related illness.

Alcohol is a killer, both directly and indirectly, and reports from the medical royal colleges suggest that at least 25,000, and probably 40,000, deaths a year are linked to excessive or inappropriate drinking.

I accept that long statistical lists are somewhat tedious, but all the available statistics show the growing seriousness of alcohol abuse in this country. A variety of published studies has shown that alcohol abuse is associated with 52 per cent. of deaths from fires, two thirds of suicides, 62 per cent. of serious head injuries among males—*[Interruption.]* There will be a few more if hon. Members do not listen more carefully to what I am saying. Moreover, alcohol abuse is associated with 45 per cent. of fatal road accidents involving young people, 36 per cent. of road traffic accidents involving pedestrians, one third of all domestic accidents, 30 per cent. of non-traffic accident fatalities and 30 per cent. of drownings. It is a horrendous list, and if hon. Members would like more statistics they can consult the report prepared by two young constituents of mine in Newham, Moira Bramley and Susan Withers, who I know are taking a close interest in this afternoon's proceedings.

A recent study at the university of York by Professor Alan Maynard calculated that at 1985 prices the annual cost to society arising—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. May I ask the House to listen carefully to what the hon. Gentleman has to say about this important matter?

Mr. Banks: I put it all down to heavy lunches, Mr. Speaker.

Professor Maynard estimated that the annual cost arising from alcohol abuse was a staggering £1,846 million

[Mr. Banks]

—or £5 million a day. Included in that figure are costs to industry, costs to the National Health Service—about one in five of all admissions are now alcohol related—and costs related to damage arising from road accidents and criminal activities.

Every year at Christmas the Government launch a very welcome campaign to try to reduce drinking and driving. Unfortunately, it concentrates on only one aspect—the indirect consequences of drinking. I believe that the campaign should also cover the direct consequences of drinking excessively and it should be a round-the-year campaign.

Alcohol consumption in the United Kingdom is increasing dramatically in all drink categories. That is especially true of our annual consumption of wine, which has increased by no less than 2,945 per cent. since 1945, according to Customs and Excise figures. The consumption of alcohol has doubled in the past 25 years. While many other countries are actively trying to respond to the call by the World Health Organisation to reduce that figure by 25 per cent. by the year 2000, the United Kingdom is doing the very opposite. The United Kingdom now has a higher per capita consumption of alcohol than the Soviet Union, Finland and Poland—all countries generally accepted in the public mind as having a serious alcohol problem.

It is not really surprising that alcohol consumption has increased so dramatically bearing in mind the additional outlets that are now available for the purchase of alcohol. According to Home Office statistics, between 1973 and 1986 the number of on and off-licence premises increased by 32 per cent. The Government themselves are busy increasing availability by the easing of licensing controls. In addition, while consumption has doubled in the past 25 years, the real price of alcohol has been halved.

The most worrying aspect of all is the incidence of alcohol abuse among young people in the 15 to 24 age range. People under 25 years drink more than those in any other age group. It is calculated that 31 per cent. of men and 23 per cent. of women began drinking before the age of 15. Furthermore, 1,000 children under the age of 15 are admitted to hospital each year with acute alcohol intoxication. Clearly the laws governing the sale of alcohol need to be more rigorously enforced.

Although other age groups can now expect to live longer, there is currently a reduced life expectancy for the 16 to 24 age group due to the rising number of deaths resulting from drink-related accidents. An enormous amount of slick advertising is aimed at encouraging drinking among the young. The industry admits that about £200 million a year is spent on advertising—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Will the club below the Gangway contain itself?

Mr. Banks: The drinks industry admits to spending £200 million a year on advertising, but I believe that to be a gross under-estimate. It does not appear to include the money that it spends on sports sponsorship, where the brand names are clearly displayed. Advertisements for drinks such as Martini, gin, Pernod and Bacardi are aimed at creating a glamorous image associated with expensive cars, money, sun-drenched beaches, travel—like the Foreign Secretary—and life in the fast lane generally. Beer and lager advertisements are aimed at the macho image. All drinking is associated with fun and glamour rather than with the sordid picture that the statistics clearly reveal.

If the House granted me leave to introduce the Bill, it would have to be part of an education programme pointing out the dangers of drinking. People generally, but especially the young, do not believe that alcohol is dangerous because they think that if it was the Government would do something about it. That is a rather simple view. The Government have committed £17 million to the drugs campaign, but less than £1·5 million to combating alcohol abuse. To put the figures into perspective, there were 235 deaths from illicit drug use but at least 25,000 deaths from alcohol abuse in 1984—the year for which figures are available. We need a general public information campaign along the lines of those aimed at combating drugs and AIDS.

If my Bill were to become operative, it would require that all bottles and cans displayed labels saying, "HM Government warning—alcohol can seriously damage your health." A notice to that effect would also have to be prominently displayed in all licensed premises, and on all wine lists in bars, clubs and restaurants.

I realise that the drinks industry is politically powerful, with many friends in this House and elsewhere, and also that it gives very generously to the Conservative party. I trust that neither of those facts will prevent the House from dealing with the growing crisis of alcohol abuse. I am not advocating prohibition—that would be both unrealistic and hypocritical because, as I have already said, I like a drink. I am certainly not trying to interfere with the freedom of individuals. I am merely asking that people be advised, at the point of consumption, about the damaging consequences, both directly and indirectly, of drinking alcohol.

The Bill should be only part of a vital education programme aimed at making excessive drinking as socially unacceptable as smoking is now becoming.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Who will prepare and bring in the Bill?

Mr. Banks: Mr. Ronnie Fearn, Ms. Joyce Quin, Mr. Harry Cohen, Mr. Simon Hughes, Mr. George Galloway, Mr. Robin Corbett, Mr. Dafydd Wigley, Rev. Martin Smyth, Mr. Julian Critchley, Mr. Peter L. Pike, Mr. Barry Jones—and far too many more to mention.

Mr. Speaker: Second Reading what day?

Mr. Banks: Friday 8 July—the slaughter of the innocents day.

Mr. Speaker: Let us just say Friday 8 July.

ALCOHOL (HEALTH WARNING)

Mr. Tony Banks accordingly presented a Bill to require the display of a health warning label on all products containing alcohol and to require the display of such notices in licensed premises: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 8 July and to be printed. [Bill 175.]

SCOTTISH GRAND COMMITTEE

Ordered,

That the matter of Health in Scotland, being a matter relating exclusively to Scotland, be referred to the Scottish Grand Committee for its consideration.—*[Mr. David Hunt.]*

Rowntree plc

Mr. Speaker: No fewer than 22 hon. Members are seeking to participate in this short debate, and I appeal for brief contributions from both the Front and Back Benches. I must announce to the House that I have selected the amendment in the name of the Prime Minister.

3.50 pm

Mr. Bryan Gould (Dagenham): I beg to move,

That this House condemns the failure to refer the Swiss bids for Rowntree to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission; regrets that a matter of crucial importance to the Rowntree workforce and to the local communities affected, and which involves the national interest, is to be decided only according to the narrow interests of institutional shareholders; deplores the fact that an important regionally based enterprise is now likely to be absorbed by a Swiss-based multinational; notes that, unlike Swiss companies, British companies are extremely vulnerable to hostile takeovers; and calls upon the Government to adopt merger and competition policies which allow British industry to prepare effectively for 1992 without the constant threat of predatory takeover bids.

We have initiated this debate because we wish to express our disappointment and anger at the Government's failure to refer the bids for Rowntree to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. That decision represents a betrayal of thousands of people who work in British industry, and a betrayal of all those who wish to see a bright future for that same British industry—particularly given the opportunities which the advent of 1992 and the internal market will present.

That failure represents also a missed opportunity to pause and reflect, to make a proper assessment of where the national interest lies, and to take into account the developing circumstances—which mean that, if this bid goes through, there will be a veritable queue of predators waiting to take their chance in the same way.

That failure came as a great disappointment to, and dashed the hopes of, Rowntree's 13,000 employees. To them, it meant a total denial of their interests. They were, typically, the last people to be consulted, the last to be kept informed, and the last to have their interests taken into account. It is typical of the Government that matters of such importance should be left exclusively to nameless and faceless institutional shareholders, and that the interests of those whose livelihoods depend, day by day, on the ownership of Rowntree should be totally ignored.

Rowntree's 13,000 work force has had to be content instead with airy assurances from the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry that their jobs are not at risk.

Mr. John Marshall (Hendon, South) *rose*——

Mr. Gould: No, I shall not give way. I have only just begun, and the hon. Gentleman must be a little more patient.

The work force has had to be content with assurances based on no evidence or information, as far as one can tell, and carrying no certainty, that jobs are not at risk. Yet those people know the truth, because the food and drink industry, more than any other, has been the victim of merger mania. The employees of Rowntree know from bitter experience that when mergers of this type take place, the catchword has almost always been "rationalisation". They know also that rationalisation has proved in almost every case to be a euphemism for job losses, laying off and redundancies.

[Mr. Gould]

They know that in many cases there have been unmistakeable signs pointing to the need for exactly that kind of slimming down. Where the price offered by a predator is much higher than the market price so that the predator is paying over the odds, it stands to reason, and follows as a matter of logic, that at one point or another the new owners must recoup the premium they paid and get their money back. On almost every occasion in the past, that has meant cutting costs, and it has almost always meant cutting jobs.

Mr. John Maples (Lewisham, West) *rose*——

Mr. Gould: No, I shall not give way.

That is why the work force at Rowntree is right to be concerned about jobs and why it is right not to place any reliance on the assurances given by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

Mr. Quentin Davies (Stamford and Spalding) *rose*——

Mr. Gould: I will give way in a moment, but first I want to get into my speech.

The second great disappointment which flows from the failure of the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to refer this matter to the commission was the blow, which so many Government Members recognised when the original statement was made, to the regional economy. The local authorities are in no doubt about that. They held a quasi-historic meeting in York on the day of the announcement and, to their very great credit, a number of Conservative Members, including the hon. Member for York (Mr. Gregory), made it clear that they, too, recognised the regional significance of what was happening. The hon. Member for York used the telling phrase "regional assassination", which is one we endorse. *[Interruption.]* Let it be clear to those who groan and show no interest in this point that Rowntree is one of only 13 of Britain's top 100 companies to have its headquarters in the regions. We have seen already what has happened in the regions as a consequence of mergers. Scotland, for example, has lost Bells, Distillers, Britoil and Coats and Paton as a consequence of mergers and takeovers. There are many more instances in other parts of the country. That regional element, of such great importance to the north of this country, will certainly be lost if and when Rowntree becomes simply a satellite of a Swiss multinational corporation.

Let me quote someone who, although he may not cut much ice with my hon. Friend the Member for Halifax (Mrs. Mahon), may persuade some Conservative Members. Sir Hector Laing, writing in *The Times* less than a week ago, said:

"If too many of our major companies are taken over by non-British owners, and free market forces make that more rather than less likely, then the UK will become increasingly a satellite economy, with decision-makers based elsewhere."

Mr. Patrick McLoughlin (Derbyshire, West): Would the hon. Gentleman describe a satellite company as one that employs more people in the United Kingdom than in Switzerland? Is it not a telling point that at present Nestlé employs more people in the United Kingdom than in Switzerland?

Mr. Gould: That point, which had certainly not escaped my notice, simply demonstrates that we are dealing with a very powerful and widely extended multinational, and that the takeover would not mean decision-making in York or even in London, but decision-making in Zurich or Lausanne. That is what is significant and important.

Mr. Quentin Davies *rose*——

Mr. Gould: No, I wish to finish the point.

That is why the takeover would mean not only economic loss to the region in terms of pounds and pence, but loss in terms of skills and decision-making power. I am sorry that so many Conservative Members seem unaware of that important regional dimension.

Mr. John Marshall: Can the hon. Gentleman square his comments with the fact that on 13 May, when the European Parliament was voting on whether to have an emergency debate on the bid by Nestlé for Rowntree, British Labour Members of the European Parliament voted against holding such a debate, and Dr. Barry Seal, a prominent member of the British Labour group, said at a press conference that the best hope for Rowntree was a bid by Nestlé?

Mr. Gould: I had hoped that the hon. Gentleman would recognise more clearly his responsibilities to his own constituency. Let me make it clear that I have no doubt whatever that Labour Members of the European Parliament would vote for the motion we have tabled today.

The failure to refer the bid is a great disappointment to a successful British company. I know that there is always a temptation to treat companies in Rowntree's position as though they were paragons of every conceivable virtue, but the fact is that Rowntree is and has been a profitable, well-managed company with good industrial relations and a good record of investment. It has had great success in building up its brand names. It has shown great marketing flair. It is well poised to take every advantage of the great opportunities, so often lauded by Conservative Members, that are opening up with the advent of the internal market in 1992.

But that company finds that, as a consequence of the Government's irresponsibility, it is denied the opportunity to exploit those advantages. It finds that the Swiss, who have been so much less effective in competing in these markets, have decided to buy what they cannot build. The Swiss have decided, by means of acquisitions, to eliminate a powerful rival and acquire a market share that they could not otherwise obtain.

I believe that that is an indictment of the Government's cavalier attitude towards the interests of successful British companies. If Nestlé acquires Rowntree, the danger is that it will simply dissipate the great achievements which have been worked for for so long by that company. There is the real danger that production will be moved elsewhere. I wonder how many hon. Members are aware that, even under Rowntree's management, major brands in the ownership of Rowntree are being manufactured abroad. For example, Quality Street is being manufactured in Dijon and After Eight in Hamburg. How much greater scope for that diversification and for that removal of manufacturing capacity if the owners are not a York-based company but a Swiss-based multinational.

Mr. John Maples (Lewisham, West): The hon. Member keeps saying that the only way that Nestlé can recoup its investment is by dissipating Rowntree's assets. Surely, if

one pays more than the assets' book value, one cannot recoup one's investment by dissipating them. The only way one can make them profitable is by bringing the two companies together to make them more profitable than they were individually.

Mr. Gould: With respect to the hon. Member, I did not say that Nestlé would recoup its outlay by dissipating Rowntree's assets. I said that it would reduce Rowntree's costs and would therefore lay off jobs. It can retain the benefits and assets by manufacturing elsewhere.

Mr. Quentin Davies *rose*——

Mr. Gould: I have given way often enough. This is a short debate, in which many others wish to speak.

I will pursue the theme of disappointment, because, not least among those disappointments, as a consequence of the Secretary of State's decision, was the disappointment of those people who hoped that at last we might obtain some sign from the Government of a constructive and coherent competition and mergers policy. Those hopes have been gravely dashed by this decision.

In 1984, the former Secretary of State, the right hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit), said that the essence of competition policy was competition. One might have thought that that was not the most helpful indicator of where the Government's policy was leading us. However, there were then some wobbles. Elders' bid for Allied Lyons and the Kuwaiti shareholding in BP were referred. The criteria seemed to become more complex. There was at least some hope that the Government were at last prepared to take proper account of the public and national interest.

The problem is that, with this decision, we are back to a situation in which the only element that appears to weigh with the Secretary of State is how he feels when he gets up in the morning. We have little guidance from the Secretary of State as to what criteria he will use in making essential decisions. The danger is that he does not appear to have recognised the growing European dimension. There is every sign that the Government, in their naive enthusiasm for 1992, are losing sight of the fact that, even in that context, there remains an identifiable British national and public interest which it is the Government's responsibility to protect.

The confused state of merger policy, as a consequence of this decision, is not just a matter of substance. It is also a matter of the procedures that are followed. There will be sympathy on both sides of the House for the Rowntree board's complaint that, as a consequence of the time that was taken and the uncertainty that arose between 26 April and the decision not to refer to the Mergers and Monopolies Commission, the Swiss predators were able to build up their shareholding from 21 per cent. to 43 per cent., in circumstances in which Rowntree were powerless to resist.

That happened because shareholders knew—given that there was a chance that a reference would be made—that they had to move swiftly to accept an offer that might not survive. That meant that, in the intervening four weeks or so, Rowntree was unable to stop the rot. Far from confronting a minority shareholding, it confronted the fact that Swiss predators had virtually obtained control before the matter could be decided.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): I have been following the hon. Gentleman's argument closely. Will he agree that one of the problems is that we are talking about 1992 and mergers policy? Rowntree and Cadbury might well have wished to merge in the United Kingdom, but would have been considered a British monopoly. Under the 1992 policy, they would not have been a European monopoly. Therefore, a great opportunity has been lost for those two great companies to get together. It is now too late and, unless the policy changes, it will be too late for other companies as well.

Mr. Gould: I suspect that the situation of Cadbury is worrying from a different viewpoint. Many people fear that, as a consequence of this decision, the next victim being lined up is indeed Cadbury.

The problem is that the decision not to refer this bid is not only a source of disappointment to all the groups I have identified, but also a cause of unease as to what it portends. That unease is widely shared in the House. Again, I pray in aid Sir Hector Laing, who in that same article said:

> "It seems that in the present climate, any and all of British industry is for sale if the price is right. 'Prostitution' is not a pretty word. I am sure we will not sell ourselves cheap, but at any price it is still prostitution."

Even in the face of that stinging rebuke from one of the grandees of the Conservative party, the Government persist in placing their faith entirely in market forces. They glorify market forces as the only arbiter—virtually a moral arbiter—and as the rewarder of those who are virtuous and the penaliser of those who deserve nothing better. The Government take the view that, right or wrong, whatever the market does, however much it cuts across the public or national interest, it must nevertheless prevail. The irony is that the evidence that the Government surveyed in their paper on merger policy lends no support to the view that mergers are in the companies' interest or in the national interest. In fact, the reverse is true.

That paper concluded the appendix on the academic evidence by saying:

> "Evidence on post-merger performance . . . supports the earlier findings of disappointing or inconclusive performance. Indeed, the consistency of the results of the various studies and the wide range of approaches used tends to reduce the force of the methodological limitations and to increase the robustness of the findings."

Those findings were that, far from improving their performance, companies involved in mergers were less efficient than the average of those in other countries.

What is true of individual companies is also true of the entire economy. Merger mania reinforces the short-termism of which even the Chancellor of the Exchequer has on occasion complained. It reinforces the emphasis on short-term liquidity and performance. It militates against the kind of long-term investment that is so essential to our industrial performance. It also militates against the essential spending on research and development and on training on which our industrial future so closely depends.

As the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) pointed out, all of that will become a more pressing problem as we approach 1992. We are already a more open market than any other in Europe. By virtue of our open stock market, the market for what is now fashionably called corporate control is freer here than it is anywhere else. Whereas in our country virtually any public listed company can be bid for and obtained if the price is right, in countries such as Germany and

[Mr. Gould]

Switzerland that is not possible. Hostile bids are virtually unknown, because the way in which industry is financed is different.

The close nexus between banks and financial institutions on the one hand and industrial ownership on the other makes it virtually impossible for a hostile bid to succeed in those countries. Our successful companies have no protection because of the way in which they are structured. Their only protection rests with the law—the Government. The Government are responsible for maintaining the public interest and protecting that interest. If that is not done, then our companies are defenceless in a way that does not arise in other European economies.

Mr. David Shaw (Dover) *rose*—

Mr. Gould: I shall not give way again.

In the case of Rowntree, this decision means that the Government appear deliberately to have turned their back on their responsibility to protect British industry in this way. They have clearly declared that it is open season, that anything goes, that the "for sale" notice is up and that there is a price tag on everything.

The approach of 1992 makes it more likely that the combination of our own openness and the Government's dereliction of duty will mean that huge numbers of British companies will be at risk and that the predators from both within and outside the EC will be queuing up to take their chances. The pity of it is that it is the best and most successful British companies—the companies which have invested, which have good records, which have developed powerful brands in European markets and which are best able to take advantage of the opportunities of the internal market—which will be in the firing line and will be picked off, without the Government lifting a finger to help them.

The Government are bemused and obsessed by their ideological commitment to market forces and their loyalty to international capital. We in the Labour party and those who are concerned about British industry and the regional economy are left to express and fight the case for those interests because the Government clearly have no more concern or interest in such matters.

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle) *rose*—

Mr. Gould: No, I shall not give way; I am about to finish.

The worrying thing is that, behind Rowntree, comes Cadbury. I met the unions from Cadbury this morning. They know that the writing is on the wall. General Cinema already has a substantial shareholding and we cannot be sure what its intentions are. We know that predators will be sniffing around. Behind Cadbury are legions of other British companies, every one of which must now be frightened that the Government have abandoned them to their fate. That is the tragedy, the great weakness, the failure and the disappointment of the Secretary of State's decision.

With this debate and motion, we are providing an opportunity to say, "Enough is enough." Some limits must be established to protect British industry where it needs that protection and, above all, to encourage British industry where encouragement will open up the opportunities that we so desperately need. It may be unfashionable, but we shall say loud and clear from the Opposition Benches—we hope to hear some echo from Conservative Members—that there is still an identifiable British interest, which must be sustained, protected and encouraged.

We are not prepared to see British industry sold off to the highest bidder and to become simply a satellite economy with no power to control our own future or the development of our own economy. That is why we tabled the motion and why we believe that the Government's failure to refer the bid is a sign of so much worse to come and of such dereliction of duty. That is why we ask hon. Members of all parties to support the motion, in the interests of British industry and all those whose livelihoods depend on it.

4.12 pm

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister of Trade and Industry (Mr. Kenneth Clarke): I beg to move to leave out from "House" to the end of the Question and to add instead thereof:

'recognises the benefits which inward and outward investment have brought to the British economy: endorses the Government's merger policy as set out in the Department of Trade and Industry's paper on the policy and procedures of merger control published on 3rd March 1988; and supports the decision not to refer to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission Nestle's bid for Rowntree or Suchard's 29.9 per cent. holding in Rowntree, as being consistent with that policy.'

I enjoy being shadowed by the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) and am always interested in taking part in debates with him. However, I continue to be startled by the contrast that steadily emerges between the reputation of the hon. Gentleman outside the House for the views that he holds, and the views that he puts forward in the House on behalf of the Labour party. He is alleged and believed to be one of those in his party who is seeking to edge the Labour movement a little nearer to the days of a free market economy and an enterprise economy. Every time that he—*[Interruption.]* Well, I am probably doing a great deal of good for the hon. Gentleman's reputation in some quarters—*[Interruption.]* It is relevant. The fact is that every time that he speaks here on a particular issue he belies that reputation.

Insofar as the assertions that the hon. Gentleman has made today about monopolies and mergers policy in his approach to takeovers shed light on the policies of the Labour party, they take that party right back to where it was in the 1970s, if not before, and miles away from the present position.

Insofar as the hon. Gentleman's arguments led to any view of an overall approach to monopolies and mergers, they not only spoke strongly against any kind of foreign takeover of any British company because that would make us a satellite economy, but the hon. Gentleman was against most inward investment especially if the company had headquarters outside London. On the whole, the hon. Gentleman would rule out mergers that would have any effect on regional companies. By the time the hon. Gentleman finished, it was clear that in most instances he was against the free movement of capital, and against takeovers and mergers.

If the hon. Gentleman were to refer cases on the basis that he put forward, the Monopolies and Mergers Commission would have to acquire several tower blocks to

hold the staff to deal with the applications. The hon. Gentleman would also have to change the law dramatically to make the Monopolies and Mergers Commission recognise his view of economics, British public interest and industrial policy and to start turning down some mergers.

Mr. Gould: I enjoy shadowing the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, but I cannot let him get away with such a ridiculous failure to distinguish between inward investment and resisting a hostile bid. Will he now admit that such a distinction is important and does exist?

Mr. Clarke: Does it follow from that that the hon. Gentleman is saying that only friendly takeovers will be allowed? I suspect that, in the case of companies based outside London, only friendly takeovers from British companies would be allowed if a London-based company were trying to buy a regional one. Such an approach is wrong. It is important that we begin by clarifying our views on takeover policy and of the situation of one company bidding for another company if the recipient is unwilling to receive the bid——

Mr. Quentin Davies *rose——*

Mr. Clarke: I apologise to my hon. Friend, but I must try—as did the hon. Member for Dagenham—to resist interventions because otherwise I shall take too long.

The Conservative party believes that the greatest national public interest lies in allowing such things to take place within the market place. Such judgments are best taken by shareholders, who make a judgment about the likely performance of the companies in which they have a stake. The free flow of capital, both internally and internationally, leads to the best use of national resources in the longer term.

Regardless of the nationality or the location of the company, the very logic of a takeover bid, if one thinks it through, amounts to a bidder who believes that he can produce a better return than the so-called victim is producing under the existing management. The bidder puts up his own money, or that of his backers, to demonstrate his confidence in that judgment. It is the shareholder who makes the judgment about the prospects of the company in new hands. In a free market economy, and in the opinion of the Government, there is no need to stop that process in the vast majority of cases.

We all know that in almost every instance the management at the receiving end of the uncovenanted bid will not wish it to come in, and normally the work force will not either. We can all understand that if we put ourselves in the position, especially of the managers, but also of the work force of the company at the receiving end. It is disturbing to have such a bid. It is much more satisfactory to hope that it will not take place. However, we believe that that is one of the commercial pressures that managements of quoted companies should be under because it is a spur to efficiency and leads to the improved competitiveness of the economy.

We pay this country's top managers highly and we have reduced their taxation. In part the high remuneration that keeps such managers in this country is compensation for the risks that they run and for the day-to-day commercial pressures that I have described. Those in management in private industry are not entitled to look for jobs for life. They defend their jobs by retaining the confidence of their shareholders by demonstrating the good performance of their company. Everybody benefits if that is the case.

We must appreciate that such cases do not normally justify intervention. Any hon. Member who finds that a company in the locality of his constituency is affected by a takeover bid is usually approached by that company's managers and often by the work force and trade unions, seeking some political defence against the threat. The wariness of managers and their willingness to approach their Member of Parliament to tell the work force and to help them to defend the company has nothing to do with the nationality of the company making the hostile bid. The natural and instinctive reaction of companies at the receiving end of such bids is to resist them.

As the hon. Member for Dagenham said, what is required on the part of the Government is a consistent view of when it is necessary to regulate and to step in because the national interest is genuinely adversely affected by the proposal. That is why we have a clear competition law and the power to refer bids to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. That is why we take the objective advice of the Director General of Fair Trading. We have set out a policy because it is necessary to be consistent. It is in the Blue Paper to which the hon. Gentleman referred, which showed that he has read it at last. It was not debated seriously when we produced it. That is the consistent policy that we are applying.

All examinations of competition policy have found that, if one wishes to protect the genuine public interest, the key issue on which to concentrate is ensuring that one protects above all the consumer and the customer against monopoly and that one maintains a healthy state of competition in the economy. That is not the only reason. Wider powers are reserved for companies that have some strategic importance to the economy.

We have repeatedly made clear our consistent policy. It is wrong for the hon. Member for Dagenham to attack us for lack of clarity. The fact is that the Labour party has not thought through the issues that I have outlined about takeovers and mergers. It is reacting in a populist, ad hoc way wherever it sees political advantage in a particular town by arousing fears about a particular takeover. Let us imagine that we returned to the practices that were adopted at times by the previous Labour Government. Proposals such as the Rowntree takeover would be subjected to delay and scrutiny by politicians and their agencies. Whenever trade union, local or regional lobbies were established, great damage would be done to the free flow of investment in the economy as well as to the economy.

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South) *rose——*

Mr. Clarke: No, I shall not give way.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark *rose——*

Mr. Clarke: I always overrun my speeches because I give way too often. I shall follow the lead of the hon. Member for Dagenham and will resist interventions even from my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark), whom I respect so much.

The Government believe that the bid for Rowntree is a perfectly ordinary takeover. We agree with the Director General of Fair Trading that there is no reason for the

[Mr. Clarke]

Government to intervene and nothing to refer to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. I anticipate that the MMC would find nothing to question about the bid were it ever referred to it. It does not mean that the Government are taking any view about who should own Rowntree. We believe there is no public interest in the case which justifies any suggestion of overriding the judgment of the shareholders. They will determine where they believe the future of the company best lies.

Essentially our critics have made a great issue of this case for two reasons—and for the purpose of an analysis I am aware that I shall simplify the sophisticated arguments. The first reason is that the bid is a foreign one from a country outside the European Community. The hon. Member for Dagenham is always the voice of reason, but, however much he may deny it, if the bid was not a foreign one we should not be bothering with this debate. Chauvinism runs strongly throughout this issue. The second ingenious and interesting argument is that no reciprocal bid could be made by a British chocolate company should it wish to buy a company in Switzerland. I accept both those arguments. Unless the hon. Member for Dagenham is trying to widen this debate against all takeovers, all foreign bids and against the takeover of all regional companies, he is saying that because it is a Swiss bid and because there is no reciprocity it should be referred.

The hon. Member for Dagenham laid great stress on the British interest. I accept that there is enough national feeling in this country for caution to be aroused in the minds of many whenever a foreign bid is made. The British interest should govern what we do and should guide the House in reaching its decisions. I believe that undoubtedly it is in the British interest that we should have the freest possible movement of inward and outward investment. Britain must remain on the side of open international capital markets. In recent years it has become clear that, probably with the sole exception of the United States, we have the most open trading system. That system has worked overwhelmingly to the benefit of the British economy and of British workers.

If we suddenly start to adopt a "little Englander" approach, we shall put behind us recent events that have meant that, second only to the United States, the British are the main acquirers of companies throughout the world. We are the main overseas investors to the great benefit of the British economy. The total accumulated value of British direct investment overseas is double the value of all foreign direct investment in the United Kingdom. The Labour party, provoked by one of my hon. Friends, seems to be against such large-scale British investment overseas.

Let us consider our record. In 1986 the United Kingdom invested approximately £12 billion in overseas markets, making us the world's second largest investor after the United States. That brought total United Kingdom net assets overseas to about £90 billion, or 21 per cent. of our gross domestic product. In 1986 the United Kingdom earned a net £7·7 billion as a result of direct overseas investment. It is forecast that those earnings will increase to £10·8 billion for 1987. We are one of the great overseas investors and the British economy is benefiting greatly by the inward flow of earnings from such investment. Nationalism will, of course, produce retaliation.

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West): From time to time the right hon. and learned Gentleman gives advice that my constituents find unacceptable. He has done it again this afternoon when he talked about the "little Englander" approach. Is he aware that there are jobs outwith England? He gratuitously insulted management in various parts of the United Kingdom. Alas, some of them voted Conservative at the last election, including, unfortunately, some of my constituents. Those people have committed themselves to their industry. Does he believe it is right to deny them the opportunity to express a view about jobs? What is his view and the Government's view about future jobs in this country?

Mr. Clarke: The number of jobs being created in this country now exceeds that for the rest of western Europe. We have had the biggest single fall in unemployment in western Europe: unemployment has been falling at an amazing rate. That has happened because we are a successful free market economy operating an open trading system. The £10 billion in earnings from our overseas investments is contributing to the well-being of the economy. Inward investment brings jobs, and that is another great advantage of our open trading system.

We shall invite retaliation if we start suddenly to become nationalistic about takeovers. The hon. Member for Dagenham said that we run the risk of Britain becoming a satellite economy. The leader of the Labour party has said the same thing. He has said that Britain is for sale abroad and is becoming an offshoot of American and other foreign companies. The reverse is true. We are at the core of the international economy. There is no evidence that we are losing our dominant position. The idea that we are not in the big league is entirely wrong. Of the 500 largest non-oil companies in whe world, 23 are French, 38 are German and 53 are British. We are by no means a satellite economy. We are the major predator of overseas companies.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: I am following my right hon. and learned Friend's argument, with much of which I agree. We are an island with a progressive economy and we are taking over many overseas companies. We hold $98 billion worth of investment in America alone. Such investment strengthens our economy and that of the world.

It is important to consider, however, the problems of Rowntree and Cadbury. The other day my right hon. and learned Friend did not like me describing the old monopolies and mergers policy as a shambles, but does he not agree that under that policy Rowntree and Cadbury would never have got together because they would have held more than 50 per cent. of the United Kingdom confectionery industry? They would have been thrown into the hands of the MMC. That means that when Suchard, Nestlé, General Cinema or anyone else comes along our home industries compete with one hand tied behind their back while they are gripped warmly by the throat by foreign competitors. Is it not the job of the Government to say that we have one monopolies and mergers policy that applies to home and overseas takeovers so that British companies can compete on the same basis as foreign companies? That is all we ask.

Mr. Clarke: I shall come to the question of reciprocity in a moment. My hon. Friend slipped into somewhat dramatic language because of his local concern for one of the companies. His favourite solution of a merger between Cadbury and Rowntree has never been put to the test. I cannot envisage what would have been the advice of the Director General of Fair Trading or what the MMC would have said.

There is nothing wrong with a competition policy which put in the forefront the protection of the customer against the building of a strong monopoly position in the United Kingdom market, particularly if the commodity which is being traded is one for which there is a particular British taste. What the hon. Gentleman is advocating may protect the management of Cadbury and Rowntree from overseas bids, but if a merger between them were ever suggested we would have to judge whether it was in the national interest and what effect it would have on the customer. The fact that it would be a merger between two British companies rather than between a British and a Swiss company is irrelevant. The same tests apply to all: what is in the interests of the British economy, and what is the advantage to the customer?

In reply to the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke), may I say that we must not ignore the effects of inward investment. It is running at a much lower level than outward investment as we buy companies from abroad and it brings jobs. In the north-east of England, for example, there is no resistance to Japanese investment. In the past 15 years 80 Japanese companies have produced more than 25,000 jobs. We are not having our British industry taken over by foreigners on a grand scale. The proportion of our work force working for overseas-owned companies steadily drops because there has been an increase in British investment here. In 1979, 15 per cent. of our manufacturing work force worked for overseas-owned companies whereas by 1985 the figure had dropped to 14 per cent.

The nationality of companies is becoming increasingly irrelevant in modern trading conditions. We are obsessed with where companies have their headquarters and the corporate law under which they operate when that has ever less effect. The case was being based on the job consequences of having a company based perhaps in Zurich rather than York. Everybody knows that Nestlé employs more people here than in Switzerland. It has been established here for over 100 years and enjoys a great deal of support from the people in constituencies where it operates.

What is less well known is the position of Rowntree. It is being said that if the company is not based in York it will employ people abroad. Rowntree employs more people outside than inside the United Kingdom. It employs 15,500 people in the United Kingdom and 17,500 abroad. That position has undoubtedly been increased slightly by the acquisition of a French company, Candice Martial, at the end of last year. Therefore, the idea that a headquarters in York means that employment is secure in the East Riding is a mistake. To look at the alleged nationality of a company is chauvinistic nonsense.

Nestlé is described as a foreign predator and it is no use hon. Members denying their emphasis on the foreign aspect. My hon. Friend the Member for Selly Oak got carried away when talking about foreign companies with their hands around the throats of good little British companies.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: I was not having a go at Nestlé.

Mr. Clarke: I hope that my hon. Friend was not having a go at Nestlé. Not only has it been here for over 100 years but it makes good products such as Worcestershire sauce, Ashbourne water and Branston pickle as well as Nescafé. *[Interruption.]* Some Labour Members may deride all those products as foreign muck from now on and may organise a boycott of them in the Tea Room, but that will not be of much advantage to them.

I shall leave aside what I regard as nationalist nonsense and address the arguments about reciprocity. When this came to a head, the reciprocity issue caused considerable anxiety in the House. What is the position when a company is at the receiving end of a hostile bid but cannot make a counter-bid because of the capital structure of the company making the bid? That position is not confined to overseas companies. It has nothing to do with British and Swiss law, or anything of that nature.

Swiss law on the subject is similar to our law. Swiss Ministers have less power over these matters than British Ministers. No Swiss Minister can step in to stop a British bid as my right hon. Friend could if he thought that he was jusified in using his powers. It is Swiss practice which differs from ours, but only in degree. It is not unique to Switzerland and unknown in the United Kingdom. Countless British companies have a similar structure for one reason or another. Is anybody saying that no private company should ever be allowed to make an acquisition without a referral? What about Great Universal Stores, Trusthouse Forte, P and O and the National Freight Corporation? Their capital structure is such that, as with the Swiss, it protects them from bids.

What then is this argument that we should make a reference on the grounds of so-called reciprocity? Should we refer to the MMC any bid made by a company which is bid-proof? Does that include all those British companies? I have never heard that asserted, but it would be an interesting proposition and we shall hear whether any hon. Member advocates it. I do not think that that is being asserted. Some of my hon. Friends, understandably influenced by their Yorkshire or Birmingham connections, are saying, "You can't refer them all just because there is no counter-bid, but you should refer them when it is a foreign company that has this structure against which you cannot make a bid." I do not believe that that makes any sense or depicts a rational monopolies picture.

Even when my hon. Friends say, "Of course, we realise that it shouldn't be like that, but it would influence the Swiss position", I do not understand that. The desire to help the Swiss improve the undesirable nature of its stock exchange practice is deeply moving, but not the main motive of those who argue in that way. Underlying that is the belief that somehow we shall influence the Swiss to change their practice if we refer this bid for a chocolate company to the MMC. That rather assumes that if we refer the bid to the MMC it will find some ground for overruling the bid, but neither the director general nor the Government are clear what that would be. The argument is not sustainable when one thinks it through. To react in that way to this particular bid will not have the slightest effect on Swiss practice. It is an extraordinary way to try to go about altering Swiss practice. For those reasons, I do not believe that there is any serious point in reciprocity.

The final major point that will undoubtedly be raised is the European dimension to the problem. So far I have

[Mr. Clarke]

never understood clearly what people think that is. It is certainly true that the approach of 1992 combined with the booming state of our economy makes this look a good place to make money and is attracting inward investment. That is to be encouraged and it must be our aim to acquire a higher share of that than our European partners. It is also true that in the long run we shall no doubt look at a European-wide merger and competition policy as the new market develops. We are not ready for that yet, but we are taking part in the discussions on it.

I trust that no hon. Member will assert that the Common Market will be a protectionist Common Market or that the British should intervene on the European front, saying that non-EC bids should suddenly all be subject to some new restrictive EC policy. That would be a recipe for encouraging the decline of the European economy. We have a strong interest in maintaining and encouraging an open international flow of investment. 1992 will bring more of that to the United Kingdom. If our market is more open than that of the French, the Germans, the Belgians and so on, it will be an advantage to us.

Where does that leave us in this case? It is a straightforward takeover bid and it should be decided as all others are—by the shareholders considering the best interests of Rowntree. The fear that has been aroused among the work force is wholly misplaced. Some hon. Members have already intervened to point to the absurdity of claiming that a company will go to this length to acquire a major manufacturing base in the United Kingdom simply to close it down. The idea that rationalisation is more likely in the case of an acquisition by a foreign company that has rather different products, albeit chocolate, than by a British company operating in the same market with many more similar products is misplaced. All these are absurd arguments which are raising needless fears.

Earlier the hon. Member for Dagenham was not so certain. He asked why the bid should not have been referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission to be tested. That would have caused delay, uncertainty and rising alarm. At one point he was complaining about the effect of delay. He said that waiting for the advice of the director general allowed the share price to go up because people thought that there might be a reference to the MMC. Who raised the bogey of the reference to the MMC? It was being urged by Rowntree and by the Labour party. If it had the effect on the share price that the hon. Member for Dagenham claimed, it was caused by those like himself who were agitating for a reference to the MMC. To duck the issue and say that we should have referred the bid to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission just in case is absurd.

The advice of the hon. Member for Dagenham is not as bad as the appalling investment advice given by the leader of his party to Rowntree workers. It was unattractive that the Leader of the Opposition should lecture Rowntree workers about whether they should sell their shares. The reaction of the trade union and of the work force in York, Halifax and elsewhere has been more sensible than that of the Labour movement. The unions are discussing the matter seriously. They are putting their views to those making the bid and they are making representations to the shareholders. That is how the matter should be resolved. We should leave it to take its course. I do not believe that there is any case for taking a political decision to refer this to the MMC in the belief that a response to the kind of lobbying to which the hon. Member for Dagenham has been victim is a more sensible way of sorting out the problem.

4.40 pm

Mrs. Alice Mahon (Halifax): The rather arrogant contribution of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, which trivialised a serious debate affecting 3,000 of my constituents, exposed the Government's total lack of a coherent policy for industry. It equalled in callousness only the refusal of the Secretary of State to intervene or to do anything to allay the fears of people in my constituency. The message came across loud and clear that the Government could not care less about British industry and the people who work in it. The message has been clear —shareholders' greed and short-term interest rule. In the near future, we will see a repeat of what happened in the early 1980s, when in my constituency thousands and thousands of manufacturing jobs were thrown away.

I should like to take the Chancellor up on his latter remarks about the unions. The trade union members who decided to plead for a friendly takeover were doing so out of sheer desperation. They were not trying to accommodate the Government or big business.

The disgraceful statement by the unelected Secretary of State for Trade and Industry that he did not see any reason to be concerned about jobs will be long remembered. If that cannot be used as a criterion to protect jobs in all constituencies, I wonder what the Secretary of State thinks should be a criterion. It is ironic that just over 12 months ago I made my maiden speech on manufacturing. I pleaded with the Government to formulate a policy and to take a responsible attitude to the thousands of people who work in manufacturing. We have had the answer in recent weeks.

This is the tip of the iceberg. I am in the unfortunate position of representing a constituency where takeover and merger have already reared their heads. With respect to my hon. Friend the Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould), I cannot think too kindly of Sir Hector Laing and his utterances, because the events of recent weeks have shown that he is not a friend to industry. The Chancellor of the Duchy talked about inward investment. Sir Hector Laing and United Biscuits have singularly failed to make inward investment in Halifax. We are faced with the imminent closure of a factory and the loss of 1,000 jobs in KP Foods due directly to the fact that United Biscuits feels that because of 1992 it has to slim down to be more competitive. Yet the factory in Halifax increased its profits last year; it is a profitable factory and there is no good reason to close it.

However much the Chancellor of the Duchy trivalises the matter, from hard and bitter experience we are concerned when the headquarters of a company move out of the country. We know that, in any period of contraction, the so-called branch factories in other countries are the most vulnerable, and it becomes a case of out of sight, out of mind. The Chancellor of the Duchy should tell the House what his policies are for manufacturing.

Jobs will disappear not just in towns like Halifax, which the Government seem to have abandoned totally, but also

in the so-called golden triangle of the south-east, as 1992 approaches. The Minister should tell the House what he intends to do about it. It will cost him dearly because that is where much of the Government's majority comes from.

I have talked to trade unionists and to people who work in the industries which will be adversely affected. People are beginning to understand the shallowness of a Government who allow a free market to decide whether they will have a right to work or whether they and their families will have to exist on benefit, without the right to work in the foreseeable future.

Then there is the almost cavalier way in which the City talks about this devastating decision. The aggressive term "dawn raider" is understood now in Halifax, because two more companies will shortly be shedding labour. The Reliance hosiery factory, which is part of the Corah group, is holding its breath. In Leicester, 600 jobs are to go and there will be up to 60 more redundancies this summer in the factory in my constituency. Coloroll is breathing down the neck of one of the last carpet manufacturers in Halifax. This is all because of the merger madness of a few wealthy people who want to make a lot of money and who do not care about anyone else.

All this is happening in spite of the fact that Halifax tried to drag itself up. We have been held up by Conservative Members as a model of ingenuity and entrepreneurial spirit. The Prime Minister praised us to the hilt recently when she paid a visit—albeit a clandestine one—to Halifax. She did not inform anyone that she was coming, but sneaked in and out. She held up Halifax as the focus of the long-term partnership of business with the community, launched with royal patronage and embraced with enthusiasm by everyone. We feel betrayed. Some of us were not taken in, but the vast majority will not be taken in again by candyfloss schemes and people like Sir Hector Laing who profess to care about the community.

The Secretary of State and the Chancellor of the Duchy could have helped. They could have taken their responsibilities seriously. God knows, they are paid enough and they have enough privilege in their position. But they have decided not to do anything. The Chancellor of the Duchy has decided to abandon industry. He says that there is no hope. All he did this afternoon was try to score cheap party political points.

Mr. Bermingham: Does my hon. Friend agree also that the Chancellor of the Duchy was perhaps a little economical with the truth when, in outlining the openness of British policy, as well as not allowing anyone to intervene, he refused to explain why the Treasury Solicitor was briefed to try to warn off the trustees of the Rowntree trust who seemed to oppose the bid?

Mrs. Mahon: It seems to fall very much in line with everything that the Government do. I thank my hon. Friend for his intervention, which is now on the record.

In view of his performance in this debate, and because of his totally irresponsible attitude towards the work force, the Chancellor has forfeited any right to continue to hold his high office. He should do the honourable thing and resign.

4.50 pm

Mr. Conal Gregory (York): For several reasons, Rowntree is an important company. First, it is a vital part of the manufacturing base in York. About 5,500 people are employed there and that is one third of the city's manufacturing jobs. That is significant when one considers the reduction in jobs at British Rail Engineering Ltd. and the closure of Redfearn Glass in 1983, which once employed 1,000 people.

Secondly, Rowntree is important to the economy of Yorkshire. In that context, one looks not only at York but at Calderdale and Castleford. At Calderdale, 2,500 to 3,000 people are employed, depending on the season, and that represents an investment by Rowntree of over £20 million. Rowntree is the largest employer in Castleford, with 650 employees. The company has invested there in the largest chocolate-making factory in Europe and further development is likely.

Thirdly, the company makes an important contribution to the local economy. Rowntree has always encouraged its managers to participate in local affairs, whether in chambers of commerce, enterprise agencies or local schools. It maintains local charitable donations which are an example to any company. Specific examples could include the help for applied biology at York university and the Calderdale partnership of Business in the Community. Many examples could be given of Rowntree's commitment and philanthropy to the local community.

Fourthly, Rowntree has its world headquarters in the north of England and is one of six companies of similar size that are based there. Together, Rowntree and Cadbury account for just under 30 per cent. of world trade in confectionery. Finally and significantly, Rowntree employs just under 13,000 people in the United Kingdom confectionery industry. For those reasons if for no other, it is vital that we fully debate the Swiss bids for the company.

Referral of this case would have given a chance for these new issues, especially reciprocity and Rowntree's place in the market, to be given very careful thought. Secondly, it would have given time to review this test case on merger policy ahead of 1992, a matter to which my right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy has still not fully addressed his mind. It would have given the Government an opportunity to sign the EC directive on mergers. These public issues have been raised by some of my hon. Friends and especially by the Community Member for York, Edward McMillan Scott, who is an example to his colleagues in the European Assembly. The Government continue to shy away from these issues.

In the short time available to me, I should like to speak about mergers and reciprocity. This is the first case that shows the European Community's vulnerabilty in promoting 1992 before it has the necessary framework. I believe strongly in Europe and in Britain's place in it. It is an integrated trading bloc that is a natural market, and 1992 poses a challenge. Some British companies, such as Rowntree, are ready for it but some Governments are not. Britain has a useful strategy on mergers within the United Kingdom, but our nation has been slow in pushing for a European Community strategy.

If we are to remove the tariff barriers and other obstacles to free trade in the EC, our commitment must be mirrored by good bargaining. Aggressive bidders know that they are unlikely to succeed elsewhere in the European Community. The Swiss are particularly hostile because of their concern about exclusion from the Community. If we do not have a clearly defined policy on mergers that takes account of the size of companies, their share of the market and especially their potential for brands, then good

[Mr. Conal Gregory]

European companies will fall prey to further hostile Swiss bids. The picking off of a major confectionery company will be but the first of the British ripe cherries; pharmaceutical companies and others will follow suit. Today it is confectionery—the Polos and the Smarties—but tomorrow it will be pharmaceutical brands. Despite good brands and good staff and its enviable record on research and design, Rowntree has become vulnerable to the Swiss.

The answer to the problem lies partly in the European Community, which has a proposed regulation on mergers. It would require prior vetting of mergers where global turnover was in excess of £700 million and where the market share in the Community exceeded 20 per cent. Two states, Britain and France, have resisted that mergers policy. For five years, both have resisted a wider merger policy. If such a policy had been in place before these hostile bids occurred, the competition policy and reciprocity could have been examined by the Commission.

That brings me to the second vital area—reciprocity. Britain has a tradition of free and fair competition. We are a trading nation founded on free trade and not on one-sided cricket. We are still waiting to see examples of United Kingdom companies that have succeeded with a hostile bid in Switzerland. I would be quite happy to accept an intervention by my right hon. and learned Friend if he can give one example of a United Kingdom company that has succeeded with such a hostile bid. I shall be more generous and invite him to give an example of any European company that has succeeded with a hostile bid in Switzerland. I see that his special advisers are singularly unoccupied in scribbling an answer to that question, because there is no answer. They cannot find an example of a company that has succeeded in such a bid.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Would my hon. Friend say that any company which is proof against a hostile bid should not be allowed to take over another company? Would he apply that logic to companies such as Trusthouse Forte, P and O, Great Universal Stores and so on? Would he apply it to companies of any nationality? How does he imagine that the Monopolies and Mergers Commission would deal with the flood of work that would result from referring every such case?

Mr. Gregory: In cricket, there are certain rules and regulations which the two teams use when they go out to play. If my right hon. and learned Friend will bear with me, he will see that in this case we are playing with different rule books and are not comparing like with like. I can find no instances of such bids succeeding in Switzerland; that is partly because it is almost impossible for a United Kingdom bidder in Switzerland to have shares registered by the Swiss banking fraternity.

The Swiss have recognised their one-sidedness in this matter. To their embarrassment, they brought forward in February 1983—at about the time when we were looking at European merger policy—a Bill to restrict Swiss companies from blocking foreign shareholdings and hence foreign bids. That legislation is still lurking in the Swiss legislature. Why were these wider issues not considered by the Office of Fair Trading on the referral of the Nestlé bid for Rowntree?

I would be less than honest with the House if I did not address the question why the Labour party has tabled the motion. The Labour party has been diversive and unhelpful in this discussion, and I shall give two illustrations. The citizens of York have experienced the appalling effrontery of a Socialist Front-Bench spokesman coming to our city to urge Rowntree to throw in the towel. York needs no lectures from the Socialists. It was incredible that such a call should have been made, particularly when the work force were on holiday.

Furthermore, the Socialists in Europe chose to vote down a debate on Rowntree and instead discuss the subject of the middle east. That shows the polarity on this matter and shows that the Socialists are using the example of Rowntree, yet are not consistent in their arguments.

Mr. Eric Martlew (Carlisle) *rose*——

Mr. Gregory: Let me move to another issue that should be addressed, that of small shareholders, many of whom have inherited shares or earned them as a result of their work for Rowntree. I received a letter from Edinburgh which said:

> "A takeover will have . . . substantial effects on a family which we do not want and are not in a position to take planned action within normal tax legislation following the sale of shares i.e. liabilities to capital gains and subsequent inheritance tax. These arise because the main contenders are Swiss and are unable due to Swiss legislation to offer voting shares to the value of their offers. The cash received by my father on compulsory sale will therefore be liable to capital gains assessment and as a result of his age the remainder of the family will suffer by the imposition of inheritance tax as the added sale value arising from the bid increase may just take his estate above the exempt limits.
>
> It therefore appears to the family that the Government has a vested interest in the success of a bid from the Swiss in raising substantial amounts of additional taxation from long term pensioner interests. On a rough calculation, in my father's case, a bid of £10 could be worth as little as £6 a share. The Government taking £4."

Those remarks were made with some concerned detail about an individual pensioner on behalf of his family.

Finally, now that Suchard has made a bid for Rowntree, will the Government recognise the wider implications and refer the matter to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission? The breathing space would allow Britain to sort out its true mergers policy, its long-term considerations to the north of England as a site for manufacturing headquarters and its commitment to this country as the capital fount of major industry rather than to allow a major firm to become the satellite of a Swiss raider.

5.2 pm

Mr. Malcolm Bruce (Gordon): The hon. Member for York (Mr. Gregory) has put his finger on a number of pertinent issues relating to the bids for Rowntree. He, I and many others still find it incomprehensible that no reference has been made to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission so that the issues can be examined.

It is worth referring to the Blue Paper that the Chancellor is so proud of because it helps us to develop an argument as to why a referral should have been made. Under the Fair Trading Act 1973, the enhancement of market share by a takeover and merger is a factor. The paper specifically states:

"Actual or proposed mergers (including partial shareholdings) qualify for consideration under the Act if they create or enhance a 25 per cent. market share or if the value of the assets taken over exceeds £30 million".

Rowntree currently has 26 per cent. of the United Kingdom confectionery market, so it seems that there is justification for referring any bid by any other confectionery company based in the United Kingdom, the European Community or elsewhere. The Nestlé or the Suchard bid would raise the share of the combined company to between 28 per cent. and 29 per cent. of the United Kingdom market.

The hon. Member for York was right to point out that that is the only area in which the Government have an established policy. They have been trying to block any development of a European-wide mergers policy, while at the same time using an expensive advertising campaign to tell businesses to be ready for 1992, but not listening to their own propaganda. Clearly the Government have no intention of preparing a policy for 1992. If Suchard were to take over Rowntree, its combined share of the EC market would be 24 per cent. A merger with Nestlé would produce a share of 20 per cent. Both would be over the agreed limit for referral under the European rules, which the Government have refused to support. That is an immediate sign that under rules currently being discussed within the European Community that bid would be referred, yet the Government have refused to do so.

The Secretary of State cannot hide behind the fact that the Office of Fair Trading has no grounds for referral—as he has tried to do—because the legislation makes it absolutely clear that:

"The decision whether or not to refer a qualifying merger to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission for investigation is the Secretary of State's."

He does not have to take the advice of the Office of Fair Trading.

In the Blue Paper the Government stated that those people who believe that other issues such as employment, regional issues, research and development, highly leveraged bids and foreign takeovers including reciprocity should be taken into account should be heeded. Nevertheless, they concluded;

"Normally, therefore, the decision should be left to the market."

Clearly, that is the line that the Government are taking, as the Chancellor of the Duchy has told us today. When the Secretary of State announced that there would be no referral, he said that the shareholders should be left to decide the issues raised.

That position represents an abject surrender to the stock market, and a refusal by the Government to accept responsibility in such affairs. Shareholders cannot be expected to decide whether the headquarters of a company in York is a critical factor, nor can they be expected to decide about employment practices or any other factors. They are certainly not interested in whether the bid will be in the consumers' interest. Their interest is how much money they will make on the deal, and that is all they can be expected to consider. The Government are refusing to accept their responsibility and have shown a failure to understand that their commitment to free enterprise is not valid unless they are also committed to ensuring that it is fair.

Mr. Leigh: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that, with United Kingdom listed companies deriving some 45 per cent. of their profits from foreign operations, there is nothing for this country to gain by indulging in economic nationalism? If the answer to that is yes, how does the hon. Gentleman equate his comments with the traditional stance of the Liberal party on such matters?

Mr. Bruce: I believe that an open market is a desirable proposition that should be encouraged, but it is important that the same criteria apply to all the players in the market. The hon. Member for York made that point quite effectively. The argument that I shall develop is that equal opportunity to participate on the same basis is not available.

The next issue that must be tested is what motivates a takeover in the first place. The DTI's own paper shows that the motivation is very often that of unsuccessful large companies seeking to take over their irritatingly successful competitors, which are often smaller and more vulnerable. Submissions from Rowntree prove that point, as its brand shares are increasing and Nestlé's brand shares are declining dramatically within the United Kingdom market. There is plenty of evidence. Research carried out by the DTI reveals that, even in terms of improved profitability after merger, the general performance was poor. It makes the final point that that is

"a weak test of efficiency gains because mergers may produce higher profits through the exploitation of increased market power."

In other words, very often the attempt to secure a degree of monopoly is the prime motivation for mergers, and that is why a reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission is normally desirable for mergers on such a scale.

The DTI paper acknowledges one factor that is highly relevant in this case—the issue of reciprocity. The paper says:

"One consideration that may be relevant in some cases is the extent to which United Kingdom companies have reciprocal freedom to acquire companies based in the home country of the prospective acquirer."

The Chancellor of the Duchy and the Secretary of State have chosen to dismiss that argument as not proven and not even worth investigating. The Government stand indicted in that respect.

There is no doubt that Swiss companies are not open to hostile takeovers as are United Kingdom companies. The Chancellor of the Duchy acknowledged that the practice is different because the structure of the two economies is fundamentally different. Switzerland is outside the EC. It does not contribute to the EC, but it is anxious to participate in our single market after 1992. It operates a system that makes it extremely difficult for us to take a stake in its economy.

I shall quote somebody who may have more authority with the right hon. and learned Gentleman—Lord Plumb, the President of the European Parliament. He said:

"I met the chairman of Rowntree plc and I was most concerned by what he had to say. Trans-national mergers will become much more common in the next few years, a fact well recognised by Rowntree's directors, but it must be remembered that Switzerland is not part of the EC and does not itself entertain hostile bids from abroad for its companies."

It appears that the Government are at odds with Lord Plumb on this issue.

The House should dwell on the simple fact that Switzerland is essentially a banking economy. Manufacturing is not its life blood. It invests in overseas companies and uses the banking community. [HON. MEMBERS: "Provide evidence."] It is in the interests of the

[Mr. Bruce]

Swiss, having made such investments, to ensure that they are protected. That is why they restrict the voting rights on shares—it makes sense for them.

Because the Swiss attract so much in deposits from overseas, they have access to investment funding which is not so readily available to British or EC-based companies that must ensure that they have shares with which to raise money on the stock market. The two economies therefore follow divergent paths.

There may not be conclusive proof, but there is sufficient evidence to warrant closer investigation into the extent to which the partnership is equal. This affair, and one or two other recent ones, such as the merger of British Airways and British Caledonian, which was badly mishandled by the Government and disgracefully handled by the MMC, suggest that it is time that rather more thought was given to what criteria should be applied when takeovers are proposed.

The Department of Trade and Industry's evidence shows that the motivation for merger is often the desire to acquire insulation from competition, not the desire to exploit it. The criteria for a reference to the MMC should therefore be changed so that, when there is a hostile bid, the onus is on the bidder to prove that the merger is in the consumers' interest. At the moment, the company being bid for has to prove that the merger is anti-competitive. That is always much harder to prove.

The Chancellor of the Duchy dismissed regional considerations in a cavalier fashion, but they are important in United Kingdom and EC terms. The right hon. and learned Gentleman could at the very least acknowledge that, after referral, even if the bid goes ahead, it must do so on the basis of assurances about Rowntree retaining its corporate headquarters in York and substantial financial autonomy.

I find it extraordinary that, in this modern and diversified age, the Government still insist that the shareholder is sovereign. When a company of this size is involved, the work force should be taken into account. I have consistently argued that workers are entitled to be consulted on strategic considerations. If a company that wants to take them over cannot persuade them that there is an attractive and positive future, that should be taken into account.

The fact that the Swiss are making the bids and that they are outside the EC is relevant. It is not right that they should be able to sit behind the barricades and pick ripe cherries. By failing even to refer the matter so that it can be evaluated properly, the Government are advertising to the world the fact that there are ripe and juicy pickings in Britain just waiting to be plucked.

An open market brings benefits, but it is vital that stall holders and customers know that there are rules of fair competition and that they will be enforced effectively. Reciprocity must be comparable. The onus should be on the predator to prove that there is an advantage to the consumer from merger, and regional considerations and the rights of the work force should be taken into account. I am not saying that any one of those issues should block a bid, but they should be taken into account. The fact that the Government have brushed them all aside and are letting shareholders, the market, the City and institutions decide shows that they are unaware of their responsible role, which is to ensure that the market operates freely, fairly, honestly and openly.

5.15 pm

Mr. Michael Grylls (Surrey, North-West): I hope that hon. Members will not challenge my free market credentials. I do not want to waste the time of the House going through them, as this is a short debate.

We have to consider some of the wider issues and the paradox of how to regulate a market to ensure that, while it is not a total free-for-all, it is relatively free and fair. All Conservative Members believe ultimately in the free market, but we recognise that there has occasionally to be regulation, even when we are deregulating when regulation is unnecessary. It is a difficult hurdle, but we must cross it.

Few hon. Members would say that there should be a free-for-all and absolutely no regulation in competition policy. I hope, however, that we all agree that there should be a minimum of regulation to establish as fair a market as possible. That must apply to Britain and to the EC.

The debate is not about challenging international investment, which is clearly good for countries in the free enterprise system. As my right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy said, Britain has benefited enormously, is still benefiting and will continue to benefit from investments we have made in countries such as the United States and in Europe.

I hope that we are not challenging whether there should be foreign investment here. It is obvious that we have benefited from jobs and wealth creation which are the result of overseas firms investing here. Our firms have gone into Europe and created wealth and jobs.

My hon. Friend the Member for York (Mr. Gregory) has understandably put up an honourable defence of an important company in his constituency. Few hon. Members who try to look after what they perceive to be the interests of their constituents would criticise him for that. Nevertheless, I must say with the greatest possible respect that, bearing in mind the wider interests, the issue of Rowntree is not really about regional policy or even about creating jobs, because one can make a strong case, on the basis of Nestlé's record, suggesting that jobs in York will not be damaged.

My right hon. and learned Friend said that ultimately the issue was competition. It is the duty of a Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to consider the effect of any proposed merger on competition in a market. That must be the balance of his judgment. On the facts presented to him, it probably was not possible to make a sound case for referring the merger of Nestlé and Rowntree, as it had such a minimal effect on the increased concentration of the confectionery market in Britain.

We should be thinking about how we deal with concentration in the EC market, consistent with wanting, encouraging and believing in foreign investment. The United States has an anti-trust policy. Many of our companies wishing to invest in the United States have had to get round it. Many have failed because, under the anti-trust legislation, the Americans have said no to British or foreign investment that was against the interests of competition policy.

The Japanese have no tradition of company takeovers. There have been few examples of overseas firms buying into Japan, but no doubt that will happen in the future and

Japan will have to consider its competition policy. The third industrial bloc in the world, the EC, will, as we approach the magic date of 1992, have to think about concentration in each of its market sectors. We cannot buck that issue.

My hon. Friend the Member for Amber Valley (Mr. Oppenheim) has mentioned 1992 and the fact that we are now in the Common Market. We must try to ensure that each market sector is not so dominated by giants that it becomes difficult for new entrants to keep the market sector alive.

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim (Amber Valley): I realise that the mere mention of 1992 elicits knowing nods from everyone, but I do not see what it has to do with the Rowntree takeover. Surely the European confectionery market has been liberal and relatively free for some time. One does not have to acquire an EC confectionery company to gain access to EC markets.

Mr. Grylls: I do not necessarily disagree with my hon. Friend. I was trying to broaden the debate—the terms of the motion are fairly broad—into competition policy of the EC as a whole and what we must do in each market sector.

The confectionery sector in the EC is already fairly concentrated. Six major firms—three from Great Britain and three from the continent—control 70 per cent. of the confectionery market. I am not saying whether that is right or wrong, but there is room for judgment whether six companies controlling 70 per cent. of the market is excessive concentration. We shall have to think about that matter in future, as mergers take place. If the Rowntree merger takes place, there will be not six but five firms controlling 70 per cent. of the market. We must ask, should that be allowed?

Ministers will have to consider a merger directive when they attend a meeting of the Council of Ministers on 22 June. I detect—I congratulate the Government on this—a movement from the rather negative attitude that earlier British Governments, including this one in their early years of office, took to the merger directive. They said, "We want to run it our way and do not want anything to do with a European directive." That change of attitude is welcome and sensible.

The Economic and Social Committee of the European Community has given its opinion of the latest edition of the merger directive that has been laid by Mr. Peter Sutherland. I shall quote from it because it clearly spells out what we must consider if we are to maximise competition and achieve success in the market. The opinion of the Economic and Social Committee says:

"In the Community itself the interdependence of economies which has developed makes it necessary at least to consider the European dimension of markets in assessing planned concentrations. In its Opinion on the Commission's 15th Report on Competition Policy the Committee stated that 'The continued existence of national economic areas is an anachronism when it comes to achieving a sufficient degree of real competitiveness'. The Committee continued: 'The smallest possible geographical yardstick is now the Community, and even then the world dimension cannot be disregarded.'"

I passionately believe that there must be maximum competition in the different sectors of the EC in which our businesses operate. Indeed, it is vital to the success of the European Community as a market that that should happen. We should not allow over-concentration in any market sector.

If I might be so bold as to leave my right hon. and learned Friend with a message, it is that we must consider this matter in a European way. We must consider each market sector and avoid excessive concentration. If not, it will militate directly against the successful work that the Government, above all, have done in encouraging the creation of new businesses and jobs. If the market is over-concentrated, new businesses will not start up. That is not only my view but that of most people in the European Community.

The economies that have been most successful in the past, such as Germany and France, have been conscious of avoiding over-concentration. Germany, partly because of her history, took a strong view after the war that she did not want concentration of her industry. Since the war, Britain has seemed to go the other way. We have allowed growth by acquisition rather than organic internal growth in our companies. I hope that that will change, but we must watch it and consider every market sector.

If economic progress is anything, it is surely the process of selection from alternatives. We must ensure that there are sufficient alternatives in each market for the public to have a choice. I hope that, when our Ministers attend the Council of Ministers' meeting on 22 June, they will have an open and constructive mind and try to agree a merger directive. It is no good going to the meeting half-heartedly and saying, "We want what we have always had in this country." That will not do. We must look anew at the Community as a market and ask how we can maximise competition. If Ministers do that, we shall achieve the right directive and strengthen the European Community business market for the good of future generations.

5.28 pm

Mr. Doug Henderson (Newcastle upon Tyne, North): I am grateful for the opportunity to take part in the debate. I have a strong constituency, union and, I confess, consumer interest in this matter.

Other Labour Members have referred to reciprocity and competition, so I shall not say anything further about them. I should like to discuss employment. When we initially debated this issue on 25 May, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster said there were no employment grounds that justified a reference in this case. He has repeated that today. It is disingenuous of the Chancellor to argue that case because, in answer to the private notice question on 25 May, he said that open markets were best. I put it to the Chancellor—I think that some of his colleagues have already started to put it to him—that the real position of the Government is that they believe that there are no employment grounds in any case that would justify a reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

If the right hon. and learned Gentleman believed that the implications for employment were a legitimate reason for a reference, he would recognise that there are 13,000 jobs at risk in the industry, mainly in the north of England. There are 1,000 people in my constituency, managers and workers alike, who believe that the takeover bid by Suchard or Nestlé would put their jobs at risk. The right hon. and learned Gentleman would also recognise that all those people have been left out in the cold.

[Mr. Doug Henderson]

I can clarify the latest union position. The main union, the General and Municipal Boilermakers and Allied Trades Union, and the union in Halifax, the Transport and General Workers Union, take the same view. They want Rowntree to run its existing production plants in the United Kingdom. They feel that they have been sold down the river by the Government. They have an obligation as a trade union negotiating committee to continue to discuss and negotiate with every potential buyer of the company. That has not changed in the past week, and it has been the union position throughout. All the potential bidders have been asked whether they can guarantee the jobs and a headquarters in the north of England. Those bidders have not been able to give such a guarantee.

I hope that the Chancellor will recognise the importance of a reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. He said that there is no need to refer the issue, because the decision of the commission would be to endorse a possible takeover. He should put that to the test. All the workers in the industry want that to be put to the test.

Mr. Keith Vaz (Leicester, East): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Henderson: I cannot give way to my hon. Friends, because I do not intend to give way to Conservative Members. I must be fair.

Surely the workers have a right to put their case. Is it not their efforts, skill and expertise that have made Rowntree plc a strong company, with strong products, high productivity and improving profitability? It has doubled the profits in Europe in the past year and is now a sitting duck for all foreign predators. Workpeople in manufacturing companies up and down the country must be wondering whether it is their turn next. We need new legislation to give workpeople a say.

Clearly the threat to competition from increasing monopoly does not count with the Secretary of State. The same is clearly true in relation to the asset value, mentioned by the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce). Where either of those conditions are met, in relation to the proportion of market share or in relation to asset value, the workers should have additional rights. Workpeople should be able to initiate a ballot among themselves to decide whether they should have a chance to have their case heard by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. If it is good enough for workpeople to be compelled to have a ballot when industrial action is contemplated, it is good enough for workpeople to have a ballot when capital action is threatened, as in this case.

I want to make it clear that I am not arguing a syndicalist case. It is not a question of the workers having a right to determine what happens ultimately, but their case should be heard.

There is no doubt that the Government have misjudged public feeling. The workpeople are against the takeover. The president of the Confederation of British Industry, Mr. Banham, has stated publicly that he believes that there is a need for an investigation so that all parties can put their case. Consumers, in their correspondence to local newspapers up and down the country, are clearly in favour of a reference so that the arguments about competition may be heard. Also, 60 Conservative Members have signed an early-day motion saying that they believe that there is a need to have all the arguments out in the open.

I urge the Government to bury their dogma, recognise the depth of opposition to what they are doing and give all parties a chance to put their case to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

5.35 pm

Mr. Neil Hamilton (Tatton): I listened with care to the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) when he opened the debate. Unfortunately, he has just nipped out for a Kit Kat but I am sure that as soon as he sees my name on the screen he will be back. He had quite a nerve to castigate the Government for a lack of clarity in their competition policy. We had no guidance from him as to what criteria the Labour party, if in government, would employ in deciding whether to refer a case to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. We know that the hon. Member for Dagenham is the architect of the perestroika within the Labour party at present and the only certainty about its policy is that what was policy yesterday is not necessarily policy today and what is policy today may not be policy tomorrow.

The hon. Gentleman is desperate to create a voter-friendly Labour party to bring it back into government. We know that there is a sort of Boston tea party of dogmas being ditched overboard. Before the previous election the Labour party had to accept that it would still have to support the sale of council houses. There were certain trade union reforms that it could not repeal and it had to accept that nationalisation was a dead letter. I believe that it has now announced that our tax cuts will not be substantially reversed and that its unilateral policy has been dumped. Also, in spite of the hon. Member for Dagenham's remarks about British sovereignty being lost, the Labour party has now been forced to accept that we will remain within the EEC. Who knows? It may come to believe in a free movement of capital and inward investment, like the Labour party in New Zealand.

The hon. Member for Dagenham is in a slightly delicate position. He based his speech on the complaint of foreigners coming to Britain to take over cherished national institutions. It so happens that the hon. Gentleman was born far from these shores and I believe that he may have some designs on taking over the Labour party. He certainly wants to try to improve its performance and make its product more saleable. The list of changes in policy that I have just given shows the benefit of the hon. Gentleman to the Labour party in the intellectual free flow of capital. That is exactly the sort of argument we are employing in relation to this bid and the policy in regard to takeovers by foreign companies. I doubt whether the hon. Member for Dagenham could make the Labour party as palatable to the British electorate as Rowntree's products are to me.

I wholly endorse the decision of my right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor not to refer the proposed takeover to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. That decision is a welcome stand against arbitrary political interference in industry for chauvinistic reasons. I welcome the emphasis on competition that has now succeeded in our merger policy. It is certainly a great change from the disasters we have seen in the past. It is not long ago that Labour Members were doing everything they could to

encourage mergers and industrial reorganisation, co-operation and so on during the 1960s. Big was certainly better in those days. We learned something from our disastrous experience then. It is equally wrong for the Labour party to take the dogmatic view that it now takes.

The Government have been quite correct to listen to the Director General of Fair Trading, Sir Gordon Borrie, who is certainly not one of our friends in the City or a political confederate of this Government. Indeed, Sir Gordon Borrie is on record as saying that he doubts the value of mergers in the first place because they do not

"necessarily bring about the most efficient deployment of and development of the assets which . . . shares represent."

In spite of Sir Gordon's political views, which may be different from ours for all I know, and in spite of his doubts, he has not seen fit to advise the Secretary of State to refer the proposed merger to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

As has been announced, there are no competition grounds for referring the bid. The hon. Member for Dagenham was quite wrong to say that Nestlé sought to eliminate a powerful rival in confectionery. The figures belie that assertion. Cadbury has 30 per cent. of the market, Rowntree 26 per cent., Nestlé only 3 per cent. and Suchard only 2 per cent. How can Nestlé's 3 per cent. constitute a powerful threat to Rowntree or vice versa? Of the 40 leading brands of chocolate and confectionery, Rowntree has 11 and Nestlé and Suchard have only one each. Given those figures, how can the powerful rivalry referred to by the hon. Member for Dagenham arise?

The truth is that Nestlé is a broadly based food product company whereas Rowntree is principally a confectionery company. Those two elements—to some extent contrasting elements—fit neatly together. I express no views on the likelihood of the merger taking place or as to whether it would be good or bad for the shareholders or employees of the company because I do not know enough about it. I would merely say that the Nestlé company has been in this country for about 120 years and operates with considerable responsibility. It employs 10,000 people in this country—some of them, I believe, in the constituency of the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell), who is sitting on the Opposition Front Bench.

Let us consider the regional argument. I understand that Nestlé has just over 4,000 employees in the south, nearly 4,000 in the north and more than 1,000 in Scotland, so the majority of Nestlé's employees are not in the south but in the north. Why should we fear for jobs if Nestlé is successful in its takeover bid? As an hon. Member representing a constituency in the north-west, I have no fear of multinational companies. Thousands of new jobs have been created in the north-west—in the county of Cheshire in particular—with Marks and Spencer, Shell and Barclays bank all coming to our part of the world because they know that the quality of life is better and that one can have a higher standard of living because one does not have to spend so much on property.

The brands that Nestlé sells in this country are well known to everyone, although people may not know that Nestlé owns them. Findus, Crosse and Blackwell, Sarson's, Libby's and Carnation are all well-known brands. On the basis of Nestlé's experience in this country, there is no reason to believe that if it succeeded in taking over Rowntree it would close down operations or move factories and products elsewhere. Being one of the most advanced and successful capitalist economies in the world, Switzerland has very little unemployment. Therefore, I fail to see how one can argue that jobs would move to Switzerland; there are no unemployed people to take on the new jobs. I hope that in due course we shall overtake Switzerland as one of the most advanced capitalist economies in the world.

If hon. Members had to choose a drinking water to consume, would they choose Perrier or Ashbourne? If one took the chauvinist view of Opposition Members, one would choose Perrier because Perrier is owned by a British company. One would not choose Ashbourne water because, with due respect to my hon. Friend the Member for Amber Valley (Mr. Oppenheim), it is owned by a foreign company, Nestlé. That shows the absurdity of Labour Members' chauvinist arguments.

As for the argument about reciprocity, we know very well that Ministers in Switzerland do not have the powers that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has to block mergers and prevent takeovers. It is true, as a matter of practicality, that companies in Switzerland by and large protect themselves against hostile takeover bids. Most European countries erect barriers against hostile and unwelcome takeover bids. I believe that the Leader of the Opposition is erecting barriers against unwelcome and hostile takeover bids at the moment. I believe that shortly one will have to have 25 per cent. of the voting shares in the Labour party in this House before one can have the temerity to stand in an election for the leadership. That shows the hypocrisy of Labour Members.

Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones (Vice-Chancellor of Her Majesty's Household): He is foreign.

Mr. Hamilton: My hon. Friend the Member for Watford (Mr. Garel-Jones) points out that the Leader of the Opposition is foreign but, as we are all three Welshmen, we all suffer from that disability.

Takeovers and the threat of takeovers are a vital part of the competitive process and can be a significant part of the engine of growth of a capitalist economy. We have been seduced by the arguments that came out of the Cambridge school of economics in the 1930s about perfect competition and the static equilibrium analysis. We have been led up a blind alley by that. Markets are a dynamic discovery process, as Professor Hayek and the Austrian school have pointed out. If monopoly profits exist, they are essentially temporary because if there are no legal barriers to entry into the market there is a stimulus to imitation and improvement. The threat of takeover, even if it is not realised, is another discipline leading to efficiency. Nearly all companies, regardless of their size, are susceptible to takeover bids, except perhaps the big oil companies or companies of the size of British Telecom. With reverse takeovers, even the large companies are no longer immune to the threat of being taken over.

I know that the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce) speaks with some feeling about mergers and brings to the House a special and rather painful experience. In his experience, not all mergers are successful; they do not all live up to the prospects held out for them. I do not dissent from that. The hon. Member for Dagenham devoted considerable time to that point in his speech. He observed that not all takeovers increase efficiency and drew attention to a number of academic analyses to prove it. But that is not the point. Most important are the unobservable and immeasurable gains that come from the

[Mr. Hamilton]

threat of takeover as a spur to efficiency—the submerged iceberg of generalised efficiency gains in companies kept up to the mark by the existence of takeover bids.

In conclusion, I make three brief points. First, in competition policy generally, we should move away—I say this with respect to my hon. Friend the Member for Surrey, North-West (Mr. Grylls)—from the rather crude indicator of size of market and size of company towards a system that reflects the European practice of cracking down on an abuse of a dominant position rather than simply objecting to that dominant position. The use made of power rather than the nature of the power itself is the essential element on which we should concentrate.

Secondly, I believe that the Government in general are incompetent to devise—[HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] Labour Members had considerable experience of incompetent Governments when they were in office. Things have changed somewhat since. We recognise our limitations and, as Labour Members know, we are trying, so far as possible, to abolish government.

The Government are incompetent to devise a correct market structure for successful business. Markets are not perfect but they are less imperfect as controlling forces than government. Markets correct more reliably the imperfections in the economy. There is no evidence of which I am aware that the Office of Fair Trading, the Monopolies and Mergers Commission or the Government generally have made better decisions than would have been made if matters had been left to the market. We have had a huge collection of changing criteria underlying monopoly policy over the years. One minute the criterion is competition, the next it is reciprocity, then it is a regional consideration. Sometimes the criterion has to do with the person taking over. I object to people like Robert Maxwell, who is not averse to setting up barriers to taking over his company, which is based not even in Switzerland but in Liechtenstein. I do not hear much criticism of that from Labour Members.

My third and last point—[HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] I am listening to myself and I like what I hear, which is more than I can say when Opposition Members are on their feet. Notwithstanding the general point about the value of the threat of a takeover, companies should be allowed to defend themselves against takeover if the shareholders are willing to pay the price—something that happens in Switzerland. My hon. Friend the Member for Surrey, North-West made a good point about that the other day when my right hon. and learned Friend the Minister of Trade and Industry made his statement.

There can be a problem when a short-term drop in profits results from investment in research and development and in improving organisation and efficiency, the rewards of which may not be felt until some future time. At that stage, it is possible for a predatory takeover and the rewards of effort and entrepreneurship may not fall to those who deserve them. All manner of exotic devices have been invented to avoid that—golden parachutes, shark repellent, pacmac defences, greenmail and so on. I do not have time to explain that, but shall leave it to my hon. Friend the Member for Darlington (Mr. Fallon) who is more of a details man than I am.

Companies are restricted by the takeover code during the bid period. The inhibitions upon the takeover mechanisms have some cost to society and to the economy in general, although that is justifiable. Contracts providing for substantial delayed compensation for managers are very much the vogue, which has been hugely to the advantage of Britain. People such as Sir Ralph Halpern can earn enormous amounts of money on the back of creating vast amounts of wealth to be generally distributed throughout the country. Indeed, I see a large number of Burton suits on Opposition Members. It would be wrong for such rewards to be seized by predators. If shareholders are willing to pay the price, we must ensure that uncertainty does not reduce the incentives.

The Government have made a correct decision. The concentration on competition is the essence of the case and the Government are absolutely right to reject the hysteria, chauvinism and xenophobia of the Opposition's economic criticisms.

5.52 pm

Mr. Denis Howell (Birmingham, Small Heath): I shall not attempt to follow the speech of the hon. Member for Tatton (Mr. Hamilton), who was extremely selfish in the amount of time that he took.

I wish to declare a few interests because each of them is an aspect of the Rowntree case. I am a trade union-sponsored Member of APEX. All the staff of Rowntree and Cadbury Schweppes are members of that union, of which I was president for 12 years. Continuing consequences of great importance for Cadbury Schweppes arise from the debate that we are supposed to be having about Rowntree, but to which few hon. Members have addressed themselves. I am president of the European Movement and chairman of the Labour Movement for Europe. Serious criticisms of the Government can be made from that standpoint, although many of my hon. Friends will not share my enthusiasm for the European cause.

The Minister's speech was one of the most disappointing that I have heard for a long time. I can best describe it as a speech with a hole in the middle—the hole in the middle where we should have heard all the considerations that we expected him to deal with, but which he singularly failed to address. Other than financial considerations, he had nothing to say about the interests of the work force, the consumers or the national interest generally. He actually had the impertinence to say that the Labour party was taking the country back into the last century and, by implication, that the Government were concerned with the wider interests. In fact, the opposite is true.

A century ago, all that mattered in industry was the ability to make a profit, and everything was judged by that criterion. Over the intervening 100 years, Parliament has had to decide, in almost every conceivable way, that the interests of the work force should be protected by legislation and that it would be fundamentally wrong to allow the interests of the shareholders unrestricted dominance over the interests of the work force. Many of those who have held office in the trade union movement tried to achieve a partnership between the interests of capital and the interests of the work force. Those who invest their working lives in industry are as important as those who invest their capital.

The Prime Minister, on one of her high moral days, tried to tell us that the ability to create wealth was most important. Wealth is created by the work force applying

themselves to the tasks that they are employed to carry out. I do not object to the Prime Minister's comments, because I know that it is the working people who create the wealth, and they have done so for as long as most of us can remember.

The protective legislation that I mentioned must be examined during any takeover bid. Section 309(1) of the Companies Act 1985 states:

"The matters to which the directors of a company are to have regard in the performance of their functions include the interests of the company's employees in general, as well as the interests of its members."

The Government appear to be saying that during no part of the takeover process should someone have to prove that he intends to abide by the legislation of the land. The Terms and Conditions of Employment Regulations 1981 make it clear, especially in regulation 10, that there is a clear duty to protect the interests of working people during a transfer or takeover. I am not suggesting that Nestlé or any other company will not do that, but it must show that it intends to do so before any takeover is allowed.

I accept that the Monopolies and Mergers Commission might not be the appropriate body to examine the takeover —that is certainly the Government's case. However, they cannot simply say that the considerations of the work force and the consumers cannot be examined by the MMC and will not be the subject of any statement or consideration by the Government. Their attitude is that the only criterion to be considered is the sale or the transfer of shares. I understand that, on the continent, takeovers do not arise from the transfer or sale of shares—the purchase of the company is the essence of continental legislation. That is much more sensible than the Government's policy. It recognises wider issues than simply the sale of shares. As the hon. Member for Surrey, North-West (Mr. Grylls) said, competition policy is important and we should know what is happening.

Speaking as a long-committed European, I have some prejudice against Switzerland or any other country outside the EC trying to obtain the best of both worlds. They are trying to have it both ways, which is fundamentally wrong and something to which I object. It is the Government's dury to address that question.

I know all about 1992, and I share the Government's view of getting ourselves geared up for the single market. However, I am totally opposed to gearing ourselves up to compete in Europe in 1992 by allowing countries which will not accept the obligation of EC membership all the advantages of membership from a trading point of view. Yet that is the very situation which the Government appear to be allowing in this instance.

Many other Governments would not allow such a thing to happen. This morning, I was told by Mr. Dominic Cadbury, chief executive of Cadbury Schweppes, that when his company recently bought a firm in France, Cadbury was subjected to considerable questioning as to whether it would, as a British company, remain in membership of the EC. The French were concerned about the hostile bid to which Cadbury had been subjected succeeding, the point being that if the control of Cadbury Schweppes were to move from this country, as a member of the EC, to the United States, the French Government would have intervened in order to protect European interests. That is something our Government have not even considered, and of which they do not take great account. The Minister's statement on the question of reciprocity was almost irresponsible, so far as British interests are concerned.

It is essential that the takeover be referred to someone, to examine the situation in this country in respect of mergers, monopolies, and hostile bids within the scope of expanding European policies, 1992, and world competition policy; as we know, the world is, from a business point of view, shrinking all the time.

The Minister has said nothing about Rowntree. It is entitled to an explanation. Rowntree is a special kind of company. Over the years, it has given over much of its profit to the social benefit of the local community. Will that practice be continued? Are the Government saying that they will not consider even that aspect? If so, it is incredible and disgraceful.

I refer also to Cadbury. The hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) has, as is often the case, made common cause with hon. Members for Birmingham constituencies on this side of the House, in the interests of that city. The money from the Bourneville Trust, as with Rowntree, has been controlled by people who have looked beyond their own self-interest to the local community and to society as a whole. That is a major factor and one that ought to be exercising our minds. However, it has not been mentioned once by the Minister today. Apparently, he does not consider it to be of any importance how Rowntree's profits are distributed and what relationship it has with the local community and the wider world.

The chairman of Cadbury Schweppes has told me, as he has no doubt told other hon. Members, that if the Government permit Nestlé's takeover of Rowntree, Cadbury will then be the only major confectionery company remaining open to acquisition by anybody. All the others are under private control or enjoy protection by virtue of the legislation in their own countries. Britain, which provides no such protection, risks losing the ownership of almost its entire chocolate confectionery industry and the No. 1 soft drinks company in the United Kingdom, which is the No. 3 company worldwide. No other Government would allow such a sacrifice without an investigation, without some reference being made, and without the predator being asked to give guarantees. The Government are behaving in a blatantly irresponsible and disgraceful manner.

The Government are in this instance operating a something-for-nothing policy. When it comes to defence matters, the Government say that we should never give up anything unless we can be sure of getting something in exchange. However, when it comes to industry takeovers, the Government are standing their own philosophy and policy on their heads.

The Minister claimed that the Labour party is making a political football out of this matter. I am against that happening, but if the Government refuse to offer any protection to the legitimate interests of British industry, the Labour party will not only be right but will have a bounden duty to make that a political issue in the next general election in 1990 or 1991. It will go to the country with the issues of poll tax, the National Health Service and social security, and will also say, "Vote Conservative and you will lose all your protection and your basic industries." When the Prime Minister visited Cadbury Schweppes in the course of the last election to see what was happening there and to win votes, she did not say then to

[Mr. Denis Howell]

the work force, "If there is an offer for this company, I will allow it to go ahead without protecting your legitimate interests." If the Government do not come to their senses, it will be the duty of the Labour party to raise the issue nationwide at the next general election.

6.6 pm

Mr. John Greenway (Ryedale): I confess to mixed feelings in approaching this debate. I am glad that the House is again being given an opportunity to consider the future of Rowntree. The House may recall that I initiated an Adjournment debate on this matter shortly before the House rose for the Whitsun recess. In the event, it did not begin until about 5.30 in the morning. I am pleased that on this occasion we are debating the matter at a more sociable hour, and I am sure that my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs endorses that remark.

I have mixed feelings because of my deep distrust of the motives of the Labour party in bringing this issue before the House today. It is noticeable that, since my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry announced that he did not intend to refer the Rowntree bid .to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, what had been a matter of all-party consensus developed into a major party political argument. This debate is not about Rowntree and its future but gives an opportunity to the Opposition to attack the Government—*[Interruption.]* I have listened to this debate from the start and it has provided plenty of evidence to support that remark.

We have also seen Labour party heavyweights coming into the York area to make their views known.

Mr. Denis Howell: Who are they?

Mr. Greenway: I shall mention their names in a moment.

At first glance, the motion expresses many of the points which Government Members have made. But we all know, and the comments that we have heard today prove conclusively, that that is not what the Labour party really believes. Behind that is a much more sinister motive, and comments made in York over the past week confirm it.

First, the shadow Leader of the House, the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson), came to York to complain of institutions making use of northerners' savings. I was not sure from the comments reported in the paper what the hon. Gentleman meant, but the implication is clear: it suggests the direction of investment strategy that any future Labour Government would put in place. When the hon. Gentleman talks about northerners' savings and complains about institutions, he forgets that many institutional firms in Great Britain are managed from the north and from Scotland.

Then the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) came to York, and talked about proof of a public-interest requirement for mergers and a social ownership policy. That underlies what any future Labour Government would do, and there is no doubt that it would be damaging and unhelpful to our economy. I regret to say that the Labour party has attacked my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister for her attitude to the north. Such attacks are disgraceful and entirely unjustified, given my right hon. Friend's concern and her commitment to inner-city action and, particularly in the north—not far from my constituency—the personal interest that she has taken in the Teesside development corporation.

The motion talks of adopting policies, but what policies would Labour advocate? It is significant that the motion fails to address the most important aspect, to which hon. Members have referred in the debate—the future of the draft European Community directive. Labour Members now say, thanks to some persuasion by the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould), that they need to be European—but they do not think European. Their policies would have obstructed Rowntree in the European investment that it has already made. The hon. Member for Dagenham, I believe, referred to the factory in Hamburg purchased by Rowntree. There is no doubt that Rowntree, as a multinational company, is much fitter and better able to compete in the world because of its investments overseas.

I cannot escape the conclusion that the Rowntree issue will spur member states to ratify the European Commission directive with far more urgency than they might have if the issue had not come before us in the past six weeks. We debated reciprocity in my Adjournment debate. Before I forget, I must say to my right hon. and learned Friend that I do not feel that the answers that he has given today entirely address the problem. Leaving that aside, however, I believe that the European Commission directive is the real reason why the bid should have been referred. I cannot but feel that because of what has happened there will be a ratification, and a policy from which companies such as Rowntree may be able to benefit, in the not-too-distant future. In my view, the Government could have been a little more devious in helping to protect Rowntree's interests.

It is debatable whether at this late stage Rowntree's future as an independent company can be saved, and whether there may be a political solution. My hon. Friend the Member for York (Mr. Gregory) referred to the initiatives of our friend the Member of the European Parliament for York, Mr. Edward McMillan Scott, to persuade the French and German Governments to consider the implications of the Nestlé and Suchard bids for Rowntree. I feel, however, that it would be far better if in the time left tonight we looked at the future and tried to address some of the lessons that Parliament, we as politicians and the community at large may be able to learn from what has happened.

The main reason why I object so strongly to what Labour Members have said today is their attempt to apportion all the blame for Rowntree's position to the Government.

Mr. Geoffrey Lofthouse (Pontefract and Castleford): It is true.

Mr. Greenway: If the hon. Gentleman will listen, he will realise that it is patently obvious that that is not the case. I believe that both the management of the company and the institutions must share some of the responsibility. Suchard first made approaches to Rowntree some four years ago, at the time of the publication of the Nestlé offer document. It was made clear at the press conference that Suchard had approached Rowntree a year ago, and the company did not appear to respond to those approaches.

A certain feeling is emerging among the work force in the constituency of York and in my constituency. While I have responsibility for a large rural part of north Yorkshire, part of the Rowntree factory complex is in my constituency, along with many hundreds, if not thousands, of the work force. I feel that the company could have been more ready to respond to the bids that have been made. I am slightly mystified about why the defence from Rowntree was not published as soon as possible after the publication of the Nestlé offer document, rather than Rowntree's waiting to see whether the bid was referred.

As for the institutions, I think that they could have had much more discussion with the management about how they saw the company's future. This is a slightly offensive point, but we have heard some implied criticism of the stand that we have taken, as though this were just a little local difficulty. That is not the case: it is an important national issue. It highlights the fear that some of our better businesses will fall to predators outside the European Community. As local politicians we certainly should not interfere, but recognising what has happened to Rowntree we should perhaps take more of an interest.

As I have said, I feel that the Government could have been more devious. They could have helped Rowntree by referring the bid and giving a spur to the debate which must come in the next two weeks, on 22 June, to ratify the European Commission directive. The people of York feel that the Government have let them down, and I must respect that view by abstaining in the vote tonight.

6.20 pm

Mr. Geoffrey Lofthouse (Pontefract and Castleford): I agree with many of the points that have been made by the hon. Member for York (Mr. Gregory). The Government should have given serious consideration to the possible spin-off of job losses as a result of this takeover bid. They have the power to do so, regardless of Sir Gordon Borrie's recommendations. It is obvious that the Government are not giving sufficient protection to British industry, especially when the companies concerned are based in the north. In my area, Rowntree is a well-respected company, where the work force is happy and proud to work. Six hundred and fifty employees are based in the Castleford area, where during the past four or five years the Government have deliberately run down the job opportunities. Recently in a meeting in this place, the chairman of Nestlé could give no guarantee whatsoever that there would be no job losses arising out of this takeover.

Mr. Vaz: My hon. Friend the Member for Pontefract and Castleford (Mr. Lofthouse) has mentioned the possibility of job losses in the north. I hope that he will note that there is a Rowntree factory in Leicester. It is a Fox's Glacier Mint factory. When I visited the factory last week, there was widespread anxiety shown by the work force, especially as this is the third takeover that it has been subjected to in the past 10 years. Will he agree that nothing that the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster has said will reassure those workers in Leicester about potential job losses?

Mr. Lofthouse: I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Vaz). We can expect job losses if we take into account the track record of previous takeover bids. However, I sincerely hope that my interpretation is wrong.

I feel that the Government should have had the bid investigated. There is more to it than strict rigid guidelines for the Secretary of State and, indeed, Sir Gordon Borrie. If they are so rigidly bound to the guidelines, I suggest that the law needs changing. I would hope that any Government—where there is a threat to jobs at major British companies and takeover bids resulting in British companies being controlled by foreign companies—would always be keen to conduct a thorough investigation of the social and job loss consequences.

I am not surprised at the treatment that many parts of the north have received. I disagree with the hon. Member for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway) who said that the Government had not disregarded many areas of the north. If the hon. Gentleman lived in my area where the Rowntree factory is situated, he would have a different opinion.

I am sorry that the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster has left, because I have some messages for him. In four years, 10,000 jobs have been lost arising out of direct Government action. His own Department has not done one stroke to encourage further industry in that area. I am now talking about the small area that includes the town of Castleford.

After persistent pressure, meetings with Ministers, speeches in the House and correspondence, we have still not convinced the Minister that there should be some assistance for the north. Many of my constituents who work at the Rowntree factory are the wives of the miners who have been thrown out of work, and will probably never work again. Do Conservative Members not think that there is anxiety in the area? Do Conservative Members not think that the bid should have been investigated thoroughly to ascertain what might be the social consequences? I think that any really responsible Government would have wanted that.

It appears to me that all that the Government want to do is continue their policy of sending our companies abroad at the expense of the British workers. When I visited the Rowntree factory the workers were 100 per cent. against this takeover bid. They do not want to be working for some faceless people in Europe. They trust and respect the people that they work for now. Have we no pride left? Should not the Government assist locally and nationally established companies with a major success record like Rowntree? I hope that any Government would do so. I believe that the Government have an obligation to refer this takeover bid even at this late stage. I hope that they will.

6.27 pm

Mr. Graham Riddick (Colne Valley): One of the matters that has most concerned me about his whole issue is the way in which many fears have been generated in towns like York and Halifax. Those are fears which I regard as unnecessary. There are fears that jobs will be lost and that factories will be run down. Those points of view, mainly of the Opposition, will, I fear, lead to the general opinion that it is bad to have foreign investment and that foreign takeovers are bad for Britain. That is a general premise that I challenge from my own experience.

[Mr. Graham Riddick]

Before I became a Member of the House, I was in industry. I worked for an American company; I worked for a British company; I worked for a British company that was taken over by an American company; and I worked for an American company that went into partnership with a British company. Having worked for companies which were owned by foreign companies, I would say that, generally speaking, they are a force for economic good. Their investment in this country has contributed significantly to prosperity and jobs.

I was hoping to have time to go through some of the machinations which went on during my time in those companies, but time is short. The last thing that I or my company would have wanted would have been to have the Government interfering and trying to alter the decisions that needed to be taken. Overseas investment and takeovers are part and parcel of an open world trading. We cannot pick and choose which ones we approve of and which we do not. With our now thriving exporting companies and exporting tradition, we are the last country that should be stifling free international trade. We should not be erecting barriers of any kind, be it in trade or investment. As we know, internal investment in the United Kingdom from overseas is good for Britain. It is part of the exchange of ideas and approaches. It brings expertise, investment, jobs and prosperity into the United Kingdom.

We should not forget that Britain, too, is playing its role. In the first four months of this year, British companies have made takeover bids for about 68 companies in Europe. However, the most certain way for public companies to protect themselves against unwelcome takeover bids is to ensure maximum efficiency, maximum competitiveness and continuous investment and planning.

Mr. Lofthouse: Is the hon. Gentleman saying that Rowntree has not done that?

Mr. Riddick: I am saying that the premium that the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) says can be squeezed out after takeover bids is not there. Therefore, it is up to British companies to ensure their competitiveness. If British companies do that, their share prices will reflect all those factors and their shareholders will be satisfied. It would make it far more difficult for outside companies to mount successful takeover bids. One need consider only companies such as ICI, Marks and Spencer and Trusthouse Forte, which have not been on the end of takeover bids.

The hon. Members for Dagenham and for Halifax (Mrs. Mahon) both referred to the employment implications of the takeover bid and suggested that the Swiss predator would threaten employment prospects at Rowntree. I do not know whether that is true, but I think that Opposition Members would be quite happy if a British company were making a bid for Rowntree. If, say, Hanson Trust, which has a reputation for squeezing every last ounce of efficiency out of every company, were making a bid for Rowntree, fears for jobs might be far greater.

I regret that I have not had the time to develop those points as I would have wished. We, in this country and in this Government, cannot afford to risk the inward and outward investment which has served this country extremely well over the past eight years and which has brought increasing prosperity and jobs to this country. That is why I shall vote against the motion.

6.31 pm

Mr. John Garrett (Norwich, South): In my constituency there is a Rowntree factory which employs about 1,100 workers. It is a long-established employer in a city that has lost much of its manufacturing industry during the past decade. The business was founded in 1883 by Albert Caley. It was taken over by Mackintosh in 1932, and Mackintosh merged with Rowntree in 1969.

We have no illusions in Norwich about Rowntree, but we have even fewer illusions about outside predators which appear to be proof against takeovers. When the Norwich factory was taken over by Rowntree, it employed 2,000 workers. We have had major redundancies in 1981, 1984, 1986 and 1988 and there has been much concern about its rundown. Two important lines were closed this year, although we understand that new products are to be brought forward in the factory. The company has issued a statement committing itself to its existing manufacturing plant. It is a modern, efficient and profitable plant and its return on assets is as good as that of any other plant in the group.

Mr. Tom Clarke: In relation to my hon. Friend's point about manufacturing, does he accept that in Scotland in the three major locations of the industry, in Glasgow, Girvan and Coatbridge, the work force and the management are arguing that the company's policy on investment, training and development has meant that less capital has been available and, because the shares are therefore not valued as highly as they might otherwise have been, they are being penalised for that investment?

Mr. Garrett: I hope to come to that point in the remaining few minutes available to me. However, I thank my hon. Friend for his useful intervention.

Our motion simply condemns the Government for their failure to refer the bid to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission and calls for a policy on monopolies and mergers. From the attack on chauvinism and xenophobia from the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, one would never have known that that was all that we were asking. Our point about referral relates not so much to this case as to the principles involved. Referral would have committed an informed analysis and a public debate about the national interest in such bids because several questions of national interest are raised by it.

Lord Young seemed to show remarkable naivety when he said that a foreign bidder would not acquire Rowntree simply to close substantial parts of it. Rowntree was valued at about £4 per share before the bid—the latest offer is £9·50. What accounts for the difference? It is the valuation that the Swiss place on the decades of investment by that company and on brand names, but brand names hardly show up in the balance sheet. Therefore, Rowntree's vulnerability has nothing to do with economic performance, but relates to the kind of business that it is and the short-termism of the City which persistently undervalues that kind of investment.

Brand names are portable. Years ago I worked as a consultant for the Rowntree group when it was producing a famous brand of foreign chocolate. A successful bidder could produce products with the same labels anywhere.

Employment is not necessarily tied to the product. Without an undertaking to maintain employment in Rowntree plants in Britain, a successful bidder could well transfer production and act significantly against the national interest. Why do not the Government seek an undertaking from the bidders about their plans for future employment? A company which is paying £10 or more per share for a company with assets of under £4 per share is likely to want to cut costs and to realise assets.

A reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission would also enable some thought to be given to the single market in 1992. We have heard a lot about reciprocity so far as the Swiss are concerned, but, of course, it applies also to the West Germans. While the shares of British companies are freely traded and are largely held by institutions which have no conception of the national interest, British firms will be sitting ducks for takeovers. We can see from the development of monopolies and mergers policy in the EEC that the likelihood is that EEC law will embody an EEC preference if it is not to give an open door to predators from outside the EEC or require some kind of reciprocity on the part of companies that are outside the EEC. There is no evidence that the Government have considered that problem.

Conservative Members have made great defences of Nestlé and of its investment in Britain. Nestlé has bought several brands in Britain, but in the past six years its share of the market has halved in the cases of Findus and Ashbourne and more than halved in the cases of Crosse and Blackwell and Libby. The company has substantially cut its employment in Britain. If we apply that record to Rowntree's success the outlook is not very encouraging. Nestlé has been widely criticised worldwide for selling its milk products in the Third world. It is constantly a target for boycotts. It would be ironic if Rowntree, with its history of social conscience, were at the receiving end of boycotts as a result of being tied to Nestlé's policy of selling milk in Africa.

Rowntree is a victim of short-termism and of no thought being paid to the national interest. The Government have no concern for the matter. The people of Norwich will know who to blame if there are job losses. They will blame Lord Young and his finger puppet, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

6.36 pm

Sir Giles Shaw (Pudsey): I shall take up only a few seconds of the House's time but I should like to put three brief points to my right hon. and hon. Friends on the Front Bench.

First, when my right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster opened the debate for the Government, he once again made it clear that he was not prepared to consider issues such as the European dimension as suitable to be referred to the MMC in the context of the Rowntree-Nestlé case. It is ludcrous for his Department to send out various signals, including those in the Secretary of State's interview on "The Money Programme" on BBC2 and in *The Observer* on 8 May, when he referred to the possibility of changes, including the possibility of larger conglomerations in the United Kingdom market, if at the same time he is not prepared even to consider that such issues deserve three weeks' or even three months' examination by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. That is absurd. We must have a clear signal about what the future will hold.

Secondly, this issue is not about competition. It is about the acquisition by two Swiss companies of a major confectionery company holding a major slice of the European market. Rowntree plus Nestlé would have a 27 per cent. share of the French market. Is that or is that not a competitive matter? It should be, in relation to the EC. Those issues must be addressed.

Thirdly and finally, the interest, anxiety and commitment shown by all the people who are associated with the Rowntree company suggest that that company, which for between 50 and 100 years has established millions of satisfied consumers with its brands and which has rates of sale running at millions per week, is a company to be proud of, and that we should seek to assist it.

6.38 pm

Mr. Tony Blair (Sedgefield): This has been a short but important debate. Two weeks ago, the Government had a choice. They could refer Nestlé's bid for Rowntree to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission for objective scrutiny as to whether the bid was in the public interest, or they could leave the issue of Rowntree's independence solely to the subjective assessment of its day-to-day shareholders. The Government chose the latter. We believe that decision to have been wrong for Rowntree but, moreover, we believe that it will have the most profound and adverse consequences for all United Kingdom industry. In advance of 1992 and the single European market, it will signal that Britain, uniquely among EC countries, is prepared to put its industrial future in the hands of market forces. As the slogan says, history may be in the making, but it will be made by the whim of the market rather than the will of the people.

There are several obvious reasons for a reference and much has been said in favour of them today. There is, of course, the interest of the work force. I find extraordinary the degree to which the Government are prepared to put faith in the institutional shareholders to come to a rational decision about the company's future, but they seem to count for nothing the views of the work force. Those workers have been employed by the company for years and have created the profit upon which the institutional shareholders depend.

Mr. Martlew: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for giving way and I am sorry that I was not called to speak because I was a manager for Nestlé and worked for that company for 21 years.

My hon. Friends the Members for Pontefract and Castleford (Mr. Lofthouse) and for Newcastle upon Tyne, North (Mr. Henderson) mentioned a meeting we had with the managing director of Nestlé, Mr. Maucher, in the House on 9 May. My hon. Friends are right to say that no assurance was given at that meeting about employment. I am sure that my hon. Friends will recall, however, that I asked the managing director whether the company would keep the headquarters in York. Mr. Maucher said that the company would not be subservient to Croydon, but would be answerable to Switzerland. That decision will not only save the jobs at the York headquarters, but will save the jobs of the sales force and those in distribution, about which my hon. Friends expressed concern.

[Mr. Martlew]

I accept that assurance on the basis of my experience of takeovers carried out by Nestlé. If Nestlé had decided to amalgamate the companies and move the headquarters to Croydon, all the jobs would have been lost. If I was the mayor of York I would have the *Hansard* record of this assurance blown up and put in the council chamber to remind Nestlé of the assurance that their managing director gave hon. Members in this House.

Mr. Blair: That is one reason why it is absolutely right to refer the bid to the MMC, so that that undertaking can be properly tested.

The second obvious reason for reference is the importance of the industry to the region. The third obvious reason is that we cannot look at Rowntree without considering the fate of Cadbury. The two are linked because, the day after Nestlé launched its bid for Rowntree, General Cinema said that it would no longer remain a passive investor in Cadbury, and that it had set aside $1 billion for acquisitions. There is an obvious risk that that company will make a bid for Cadbury and, if successful, will sell off the confectionery part of Cadbury to whoever loses the bid for Rowntree.

In this debate we are talking about not just the 12,000 jobs at Rowntree or about the importance of Rowntree to the region, but the importance of an entire manufacturing sector to the United Kingdom. Those reasons alone would have justified reference to the MMC.

We have heard a great deal about reciprocity, but it is worth reminding hon. Members that the word came from the mergers document published by the Government in March. The Government have put reciprocity on the agenda. The reason why the Government believe that reciprocity should be a factor—they are right to think it—is not due to some tit-for-tat retaliation against firms that do not offer reciprocal facilities, but because lack of reciprocity is an element in unfair competition.

Ministers may say that there is no formal legislative bar on British companies taking over Swiss companies, but by the operation of the commercial code in Switzerland and as a result of the recommendations of its largest self-regulating financial body, the Bankers Association, no hostile bid by our companies or any other company could be mounted in Switzerland. I will give way to the Minister if he can tell me when such a hostile bid has been made. The truth is that no hostile bids are possible. If that is the case, it is clearly a further factor that should be considered.

When I first considered this matter, I thought that Switzerland was perhaps in a unique position vis-a-vis other EEC countries and that it had unique barriers against hostile takeover bids. It is Britain, however, that is in the unique position, because it has an open season for foreign hostile bids. In case anyone believes that that is not important, it is clear as we approach 1992 and the single European market that cross-border merger activity will increase. In 1987 there were more than 1,000 such acquisitions and that, excluding United States companies, represented an increase of almost 40 per cent.

The Minister said that the United Kingdom has made acquisitions in Europe, and in 1987 the United Kingdom made 134 such acquisitions. The total value of those acquisitions, however, comes to less than half the value of the Nestlé and Suchard bid for Rowntree. That puts such acquisitions in context. More importantly, in the research that I have made I have been unable to discover a single hostile bid from the United Kingdom—I shall gladly give way to the Minister if that is not the case. They were all agreed bids.

The Minister has said that 1992 is relevant, but I believe that difficulties lie ahead. We know that cross-border activity is on the increase. We also know that Britain has a unique open system that is not available in the rest of Europe whether that is West Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands or even outside the EC in Japan. All those countries have effective financial and corporate structures that prevent hostile takeover bids. When corporate activity increases, foreign predators will look for an outlet in the EC. They shall decide what companies they seek to acquire. The danger is that, if they are prevented from taking over companies elsewhere in the EC, they will come to Britain. The danger for Britain is that it will become uniquely open for predators.

It simply will not do to say that reciprocity is simply about Switzerland or about some type of nationalist protection. I do not believe that Ministers have understood the case that has been made by British industry. British industry is not asking for special favours, it is not asking for unfair protection or for the playing field to be sloped in its direction. It is asking for a level playing field. It is asking for our Government to do no more in relation to our industry than other EC Governments do in relation to theirs. If the Government fail to act, Britain will have a uniquely open system. When Britain's doors are open for business, the doors of other EC countries will be closed, and therefore the queue will come to our door.

Perhaps the Government think that that threat can be taken lightly. In the past few weeks I have scoured the financial pages to discover the types of company that the financial press now believe will be put into play as a result of the Rowntree decision. It is not the Labour party that has said this, but the financial press, and it has been confirmed by the article by Sir Hector Laing to which reference has already been made. We already know about Cadbury, but the other companies at risk are United Biscuits, Tate and Lyle, Rank Hovis McDougall, Allied Lyons, Dalgety, Unigate, Northern Foods, Boots, Reckitt and Colman, Fisons, and Beecham Group. [AN HON. MEMBER: "So what?"] I will tell the hon. Gentleman so what. If the entire structure for decision-making within United Kingdom industry passes outside United Kingdom control in the aftermath of 1992 there will be no guarantee that we shall control our industrial future. Conservative Members may say that that is an unreal fear, but the country must decide whom to believe. Do they believe the representatives of industry and the CBI? Do they believe the Sir Hector Laings of this world who support the Conservative party, or do they believe Conservative Members? The truth is that the Government have decided simply to leave these matters to market forces. Who are these great rational decision-makers in the market? Who are these people in whom the Government put such touching faith as coming to decisions in the interests of British industry?

My hon. Friend the Member for Dagenham described exactly what will happen to the share price of Rowntree during the last few weeks. Is it seriously being suggested that all institutional shareholders are considering what is in the long-term interests of Rowntree employees, the company and the region? Are they sitting wondering how United Kingdom manufacturing industry will fare under

this new regime? They are interested only in the share price, and that is not a temptation but a duty. When the Government say that this is all about a view of the long-term performance of the industry, they are talking nonsense. Shareholders are merely seeing what the day-to-day share price is; when it doubles in more than two months, naturally they will feel obliged to sell. We are saying that we cannot allow decisions of this importance simply to be left in the hands of those institutional shareholders.

In their merger policy published in March, the Government said that there were public interest matters that had to be taken into account; some of the issues mentioned were employment, regional economic development, research and development, and even foreign takeovers. They went on to say:

"The Government's view is that none of the matters mentioned . . . is one where the public interest typically diverges from the interests of private sector decision-makers."

That is the theology that says that the private market and the public good naturally coincide, but the Rowntree issue has proved that that view is wholly out of date. This Government have turned their back on industry and it must now look to Labour.

6.51 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs (Mr. Francis Maude): These debates that we have from time to time about specific mergers and merger policy allow us to discuss important fundamental issues, and the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) has touched on some of them. But they all boil down to the fact that the Opposition have a deep hatred and fear of the free enterprise system. Mergers, essentially contested mergers, are the most obvious manifestation of the free enterprise system which they hate and fear. That is why they use these debates to mount an attack on the system. If there is one thing that they hate and fear more than United Kingdom free enterprise it is foreign free enterprise, and a great deal of this debate has been about good old-fashioned chauvinism wrapped up in a disreputable fig leaf. Many of their arguments have been disreputable and have done them no credit.

Any hostile or resisted bid for a well-known local company arouses anxieties in the region, and it is bound to. It is unsettling and no one knows what the future will hold, so it is natural that those involved should make representations to their local Members of Parliament. I know well the genuine anxieties of some of my right hon. and hon. Friends about this. They, properly, consider it their duty to make representations on behalf of those local interests. When something causes anxiety in this way politicians seek to take action and the only action available to them or the Government is to seek a reference to the MMC. That is what my hon. Friends have properly done. The Government took the view that in this case a reference was an inappropriate use of that instrument of Government policy for reasons which I shall come to.

I resent assertions from Labour Members that our merger policy is in some way unclear. We state clearly in the document from which the hon. Gentleman quoted that competition is the principal consideration, and nothing could be clearer than that. What emerges from the debate is that the Opposition want our policy to be less clear, and want many other considerations also to be taken into account. They want us, in unknown and unstated mergers, to give way to employment and regional considerations, and nothing could be less clear than that. That would be to muddy the waters and make it less easy for those who seek to know exactly what our policy is.

The hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, North (Mr. Henderson) and others said that employment should be a consideration, and that no guarantee of job security has been given by the bidders. No guarantee of job security exists under the present management, nor could it possibly do so. There is not a single company in the country under public sector, private sector, United Kingdom or foreign ownership which can give an absolute guarantee of job security. The complaint that a bid is made without any absolute guarantee of job security is absurd and the hon. Gentleman must know that. There is absolutely no reason to suppose that jobs are any more at risk under Nestlé and Suchard than under the present management. Suchard has said in terms that if it were successful—I have no idea whether it will be—it will move its headquarters of the whole confectionery business to York.

Our policy is clear, consistent, fair and as apt to deal with the considerations of the single market in Europe as with purely United Kingdom mergers. The underlying complaint seems to be that the policy is not slanted to protect United Kingdom companies from foreign takeover. We believe that open markets and the freedom of money and investment to move across frontiers has been beneficial to the United Kingdom, and that flow has been predominantly by United Kingdom companies making investments overseas. There is now twice as much United Kingdom investment overseas as foreign investment in the United Kingdom. The policy of open markets has benefited us and we propose to continue with it.

Labour Members seem to think that it is bad news when foreign companies invest in the United Kingdom and equally when British companies invest overseas. They want an old-fashioned siege economy. They do not understand that times have moved on. We now live in an age of the international economy. No single economy can exist on its own. There will be cross-investment. The whole concept of a national company does not exist.

Mr. Blair *rose*——

Mr. Maude: I shall not give way because we are short of time and I have a few further points to make.

My hon. Friend the Member for Surrey, North-West (Mr. Grylls) asked about a draft EC mergers regulation. It is thought that some sort of mergers regime will automatically solve all the problems, but there are different and conflicting concerns, and a single draft mergers regulation cannot resolve them all. I assure him that on 22 June when this is discussed at the Council of Ministers we shall approach this positively and consider carefully how to take it forward. But we do not now know how the draft regulation will end up. Many matters remain unclear—not just drafting problems, but fundamentals. There remain several alternative formulations within the draft and the wording is by no means clear. Several of the fundamentals are left unsettled. Certainly we are not saying that we are against this but we want to make sure that the form in which it emerges is suitable.

Shareholders are best placed to make the decisions. There have been some unsavoury remarks during the debate about the institutional shareholders who have to make some of the decisions. Institutional shareholders are

[Mr. Maude]

not for the most part holding the shares on their own account. They are running pension funds, and they have a moral and legal obligation to pay pensions and to ensure that investors get a proper return on their money. So they have to ensure that they make the right decisions on behalf of the individuals who have entrusted their money to them. The upshot of the Opposition's remarks is that individuals who have invested money in pension funds would be short-changed by Government intervention, causing the return on their investment to be reduced. It is as simple as that. A pension fund, which has to provide pensions in future, has, above all institutional investors, an obligation to look to the long term. Institutional investors do not deal simply with short-term interest.

The time has gone when it is appropriate for companies resisting bids to look to the Government as their first line of defence. It is for them to persuade shareholders that their management offers the best hope. So I have no hesitation in commending to my right hon. and hon. Friends the Government's amendment and in urging them to reject the Opposition motion.

Question put, That the original words stand part of the Question:—

The House divided: Ayes 203, Noes 301.

Division No. 343] **[7.01 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Grocott, Bruce
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McGrady, Eddie
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
Maclennan, Robert
McTaggart, Bob
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Ken Eastham.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas

Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cartwright, John
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
McCrindle, Robert
McCusker, Harold
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Mallins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

Question accordingly negatived.

Question, That the proposed words be there added, *put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 30 (Questions on amendments), and agreed to.*

Mr. Speaker *forthwith declared the main Question, as amended, to be agreed to.*

Resolved,

That this House recognises the benefits which inward and outward investment have brought to the British economy; endorses the Government's merger policy as set out in the Department of Trade and Industry's paper on the policy and procedures of merger control published on 3rd March 1988; and supports the decision not to refer to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission Nestle's bid for Rowntree or Suchard's 29·9 per cent. holding in Rowntree, as being consistent with that policy.

7.13 pm

Mr. Nigel Griffiths (Edinburgh, South): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. You may be aware that today the South African authorities attacked the British Broadcasting Corporation and its coverage of events in

[Mr. Nigel Griffiths]

South Africa. They have done so in writing. Is it not in order for the Home Secretary to repudiate this unwarranted interference in the affairs of the BBC and to come to the House and explain his and the Government's response?

Mr. Speaker: That is not a point of order. I am sure that what the hon. Gentleman has said has been heard by Ministers on the Front Bench.

Mr. Paul Boateng (Brent, South): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker——

Mr. Speaker: It was not a point of order. This matter could properly be raised tomorrow.

Rover Group

Mr. Speaker: We now come to the debate on the British Aerospace bid for the Rover Group. I must tell the House that I have selected the amendment in the name of the Prime Minister.

7.14 pm

Mr. Bryan Gould (Dagenham): I beg to move,

That this House believes that the recent improvement in Rover Group's performance owes much to the efforts of the workforce and demonstrates what can be achieved by long term investment and public ownership; sees no real industrial logic in the proposed takeover of Rover by British Aerospace; deplores the give-away terms on which Rover is to be disposed of; demands assurances that the investment will be made in a new model range in order to provide the essential guarantee for Rover to remain a volume car manufacturer; and calls upon the Government to manifest its belief in the need to maintain British volume car manufacture by retaining Rover in public ownership and ensuring that the necessary investment is made.

We debated the proposed takeover by British Aerospace of Rover just five weeks ago, but I make no apology for returning to the subject because today we at least have a chance to vote on our motion. Five weeks have elapsed and we now have the opportunity to ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and his ministerial colleagues about the developments during that time. We also have a renewed chance to express our grave concern about the future of British volume car manufacturing.

In recent months we have debated and considered a whole range of different industrial questions. We have debated British Steel and British Shipbuilders and we looked at the Girobank only yesterday. Earlier today we considered Rowntree. In each of those cases the circumstances have been different. The issues have also been a little different but in each case the Government's attitude has been the same. They have made it perfectly clear that they will accept no responsibility whatever for the future fortunes of British industry.

I am reminded of the debate that we had towards, I think, the end of 1986 when the Chancellor of the Exchequer, confronted with the fact that British manufacturing industry had seen a deterioration in its trading performance since 1979 of £13 billion—the figure is now £17 billion—said that that was neither here nor there. That epitomises the Government's attitude to our manufacturing industry.

In this instance we see the Government's determination to wash their hands, on ideological grounds, of any part of British industry that happens to be in public ownership. Their prime concern, indeed their only concern, is to sell where possible at whatever price they can get. If they cannot get any price at all they will give whatever it may be away for nothing. That is true of the Govan shipyards and of the Rover Group.

When asked about jobs, about what happens to our strategic capacity in some of these important industries and about national interests, the Government are all too keen to say that from the moment privatisation is contemplated they cease to have any responsibility. They say that only the market prevails and that only the market must decide. Nowhere is this attitude more clearly demonstrated than in the British Aerospace bid for Rover, and nowhere is it more acutely important than in this case.

As I said on 4 May, we are talking about the future, indeed the survival, of the one remaining indigenously owned and controlled volume car manufacturer in Britain.

If, as a consequence of the Government's manoeuvring, and as a consequence of the British Aerospace takeover, Rover Group should go out of business after five years, and we should no longer have a volume car manufacturer in this country under British ownership, from that moment we would become the one advanced industrial country to have given up that capacity. Already, we are at the bottom of the league of the G7 countries. We have already been overtaken by Spain in terms of car production. If we were to lose the Rover Group as the last British-controlled volume car manufacturer, we would be left without any capacity whatsoever in that crucial sector of our economy. We would have departed from a major technology and we would be unable to control the future direction of what traditionally, and for very good reason, has been regarded as the linchpin of a modern industrialised economy.

Mr. Roger King (Birmingham, Northfield): Rubbish.

Mr. Gould: I invite the hon. Gentleman to intervene. From a sedentary position he comments that that is rubbish Perhaps he can explain, if we retain no indigenous capacity whatsoever and if our car manufacturing is entirely that of a branch production line, and a satellite economy, how from the national viewpoint we will control that new technology, new capacity and the whole hinterland of industrial activity that depends on motor car manufacture.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Gould: Yes, by all means. Of course I was not referring to the hon. Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) a moment ago, but if he wishes to rush to the defence of his hon. Friend I am delighted to allow him to do so.

Mr. Marlow: I am doubly grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his courtesy. Does he consider that to stop what he would consider terrible things taking place, with which he is trying to frighten us at the moment, the next Labour Government, which he believes might come to pass, would immediately renationalise the Rover Group?

Mr. Gould: I can do better than that. I can tell the hon. Gentleman our response to a real and actual situation. We believe that there is absolutely no case for changing the ownership of the Rover Group. Evidence shows, and the record shows, that it has failed under private ownership and prospered as a consequence of taxpayers' investment under public ownership, and very grave risks are being taken quite unnecessarily and quite unjustifiably in disturbing its present ownership.

It is all too obvious that none of that matters to the present Government. I am not surprised that they are unwilling to be challenged on this point. They are concerned only with their ideology. If the worst comes to the worst they want to say that it is not their responsibility. Their sole concern is to get shot of that industry and to offload Rover Group so that they can say in future that it is entirely a matter of market forces and commercial considerations as to whether that indigenous industry survives.

It so happens that I have been passed a confidential document produced by the Conservative research department. It is a long document and is rather boring and uninformative, but it begins with a very interesting statement which I shall read to the House:

"The takeover of Rover by British Aerospace offers a quick and attractive way of fulfilling the Government's commitment of returning the Group to the private sector."

I invite the House to notice the word "quick". That immediately and accurately sums up the flavour of what the Government are about. They are looking for speed, ease and lack of responsibility. It reinforces my contention that they are concerned simply with getting shot of the industry irrespective of the possible consequences to our economy.

Let me make it clear that we are committed to the future of the industry. We believe that it is important that this major industry should remain in British hands. We believe that, notwithstanding the remark of the hon. Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King), it is important to our industrial future, that we should retain that industrial capacity. I am astonished that anyone representing a midlands constituency should argue otherwise. No Government can escape their responsibilities for protecting and preserving that industry and giving it the chance to prosper and survive. The Government have a responsibility not to ensure profitability of a given company in a given year, but at least to ensure that we retain an essential industrial capacity. If that industrial capacity did not survive, it would have to be regarded as a failure of Government policy.

Mr. Roger King: I have been listening to the hon. Gentleman with keen interest and I have yet to hear an argument why we should not privatise the existing Rover Group. If we consider the examples of privatisation within the car industry—Jaguar is a fine example—we can see exactly the benefits of privatisation. Nothing except taxpayers' money has helped Rover Group since it was nationalised. It has not developed in the way in which Jaguar has developed in the private sector. Presumably the hon. Gentleman would condemn the privatisation of Jaguar as a complete failure.

Mr. Gould: Anyone looking at the record in that sector of British industry would be bound to conclude that under private ownership it would have foundered, and it very nearly did founder. Public ownership came to its rescue and public ownership has maintained that industrial capacity. The last time that we debated these matters, my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) pointed out that if we are to go through a catalogue of the privatisation of various parts of British Leyland, or whatever it may have been called at the time, we have to consider Coventry Climax, Alvis and Self-Changing Gears. Those companies have disappeared and if we are not very careful exactly the same fate awaits Rover Group. Opposition Members want to make it very clear that it is the Government's responsibility to avoid that. In proposing to change the ownership of Rover Group for reasons of dogma alone they are taking a quite unjustified risk with the future of that industry.

Mr. Robert Hayward (Kingswood): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Gould: No. I have a feeling that the hon. Gentleman is going to return to an arid issue which concerns some hypothetical question, when what we are intent on debating is the future, in hard practical terms——

Mr. Hayward: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Gould: No. I wish to press on with my speech.

There is no case for changing the ownership of Rover Group. As I said on 4 May, given the likelihood that it will happen, Opposition Members are realists and do not wish to do or say anything that would jeopardise the future of that group, and particularly of the industrial capacity and employment it provides. But we have the right to put to the Minister the legitimate concerns that we feel and that are shared by many others beyond this Chamber as to whether the deal provides the assurances that we think are necessary if the future of the Rover Group is to be guaranteed.

We are unimpressed, as are most of the experts who have commented on the matter, by the arguments about synergy. As I said on 4 May, we think that that is an attractive and fashionable term which no doubt comes out well in glossy television advertisements, but if one talks to the production engineers and the experts in the industry, they will confirm that synergy is an extremely elusive advantage. Let us set aside as being mere adman's babble the notion of synergy. No case in industrial logic has been made for the takeover. Let us now consider a much more important question.

We should consider whether the deal, if it goes through, will provide the investment that the Rover Group will need desperately if it is to survive as a volume car manufacturer. The best estimate is that it will need about £1 billion during the next four or five years. We are entitled to ask where the money is to come from. Where will that investment be generated?

When Roland Smith and others from British Aerospace said that they believe that the investment will be generated by Rover, they were living in cloud-cuckoo-land. Rover may have moved briefly into profit—that is a considerable achievement that owes a great deal not so much to the highly lauded Graham Day as to an excellent and dedicated work force who have put in a great effort for a long time—but the profit was about £27 million. There is little guarantee, for reasons that I shall come to, that even that level of profitability can be guaranteed, and it is inadequate to generate anything like the investment that will be needed if Rover is to develop the new model lines that will maintain it as a volume car manufacturer.

I suspect that when the attempt is made to convince us and others that the deal will provide the necessary investment, given its implausibility, what we shall really be told is that the deal is not intended to produce a continuing capacity in volume car manufacturing. That is what I think is in the mind of British Aerospace and of Graham Day, and it is what we are intended to assume from these highly incredible assumptions. Rover, with 15 per cent. of the market, is too small and not profitable enough to generate its own investment for the time being.

Mr. Roger King: What about exports?

Mr. Gould: We should consider what is likely to happen to our ability to compete in international markets. Like British Aerospace, Rover is directly affected by movements in the exchange rate. Indeed, Rover is much more sensitive and vulnerable to movements against the deutschmark than is British Aerospace, which is much more concerned with movements against the dollar.

Rover's ability to compete, and its profitability, will be and are being gravely affected by the pound rising against the deutschmark. There can be no doubt about that, and any Industry Minister worth his salt would be the first to say so and to argue, against his Treasury colleagues, that the rise in the exchange rate is doing great damage to important British industries.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): Is my hon. Friend aware, as I am, that British Aerospace has in the past few weeks had to set aside £320 million to combat the effects of the changing value of the pound against the dollar? Since our debates on this topic on 4 and 12 May, British Aerospace has announced 1,100 redundancies at Filton in Bristol, so when it comes to investment and job security, aerospace and car workers are fearful and apprehensive about this privatisation, sell-off and false merger.

Mr. Gould: My hon. Friend is quite right. I shall come back to British Aerospace in a moment. We ought to be clear, however, that Rover is being adversely affected by exchange rate movements.

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim (Amber Valley): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Gould: No. I have given way quite a lot already.

There are other developments in the pipeline that are equally worrying for Rover's profitability. If, for example, EC standards on exhaust emissions are adopted—I recognise that the Government have done all they can to resist them, but I suspect that it is in the nature of things that we shall get them in the end—Rover's profitability will disappear in a puff of exhaust smoke as it will find it expensive and difficult to convert its present model range to meet the new standards. [HON. MEMBERS: "That is nonsense."]

The hon. Member for Northfield asked about Rover's performance in international markets. The British market is very important to Rover. It has only 15 per cent., but it is by far its biggest market. After a welcome improvement which led to the share of imports in the British market dropping—miraculously one might say—to 49·5 per cent. last year, it is running at 54·5 per cent. this year. Last year was the first time for many years that imports fell below 50 per cent. of the market. Import penetration this year, however, is on the way up again and will cost us £1·4 billion on our balance of payments. That is the effect of the exchange rate on Rover and its profitability.

I shall return to the central question with which I wish to confront the Chancellor of the Duchy. If Rover needs, as it clearly does, substantial investment during the next four of five years to stay in business as a volume car manufacturer, where is the money to come from? It will certainly not come from Rover. Is it to come from British Aerospace? It too is most certainly unable to provide the investment. It has its own problems.

Last week, I visited the excellent British Aerospace plant at Chester. I saw the wonderful work that is being done there. Great investment has been made in Airbus wings and on the HS125. It is a most impressive plant. It was impressed on me—quite innocently, as my hosts were not to know that we would debate these matters in the next

few days—that the development and the investment were immensely expensive. Millions of pounds are being invested in new equipment which was being installed even while I visited the factory.

That investment has embarrassed British Aerospace in terms of its cash flow. It cannot generate anything like the investment needed for Rover. Indeed, it probably cannot generate any investment as it needs help itself. I am sure that the Chancellor of the Duchy will confirm that it has been to the Government to ask for help to cover for losses now staring it in the face on its Airbus work.

The losses have arisen for exactly the same reason as Rover and every other sector of British manufacturing industry has been embarrassed recently—the exchange rate has made the Airbus and work on it extremely unprofitable. It is not just Airbus that is affected. British Aerospace is clear that if it is to sell civil aircraft such as the HS125 or the HS146, it can do so at a profit only if the pound stays at $1·70 or lower.

British Aerospace is having to make cuts, to seek Government help and to send hundreds of millions of pounds' worth of Airbus development on sub-contract to the United States to escape the exchange rate trap. It is short of cash, it is involved in a massive capital investment programme—for which it deserves great credit—and it has very little to sell in the short term. What does it do? It looks to somebody who at least has something to sell. Whatever its other weaknesses in the market, Rover has cars in the showroom. At the taxpayers' expense, Rover has made a great deal of the required expenditure.

We covered this ground when we last debated the subject. The likelihood—indeed, it is almost a certainty—is not that the takeover, or merger, between British Aerospace and Rover will generate a flow of cash or of investment capital from British Aerospace to Rover, for it will certainly not be anything like the volume needed to meet Rover's need for investment. The virtual certainty is that any flow will be in the reverse direction. It will occur for four or five years, which is the extent of the legal undertakings given by British Aerospace.

The £800 million of taxpayers' money which is to be given away to British Aerospace will finance the process. Far from guaranteeing any investment or any future for Rover, we find a prospect of Rover and those who work in it being guaranteed a future lasting five years, financed by the taxpayer, during which they will be milked for cash.

British Aerospace will then say that it finds it difficult to maintain volume car manufacturing, that it is happy to keep the odd bit, that it has always been interested in Land Rover and that it might be able to make a go of it—that was what it wanted in the first place—but although it was offered such an attractive deal with so much cash in hand to keep the volume car business going for a short time, it is no longer viable. Thus, the Rover Group and volume car manufacturing in this country will come to an end.

What will the Government say, if they are still in power, and I pray that they will not be? They will say, "It is all to do with commercial considerations and market forces. If we lose that important industrial capacity"—and one or two midlands Conservative Members of Parliament at the same time—"that will be something over which we shall have no control." That is what is in prospect and is the logic of the position. We shall listen to the Chancellor with interest and see what logic he advances.

That is our persuasive interpretation of the position. We are entitled to ask the Chancellor what difference the past five weeks have made. What further can he say to allay our fears?

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister of Trade and Industry (Mr. Kenneth Clarke): Nothing.

Mr. Gould: That is extremely depressing news. On 4 May the right hon. and learned Gentleman failed to give any assurances about investment and the future of the industry. Notably, he failed to give any assurances—he repeated this performance before the Select Committee—about employment.

Those who work for the Rover Group are, with good reason, extremely concerned about their jobs. They know that, for the reasons that I have outlined, the possibility of British Aerospace remaining committed to car manufacturing is slight. They know that British Aerospace, which has no commitment to the car business, is likely to find major assets such as the site at south Cowley, which could be realised at a substantial profit, very tempting. That is the immediate danger, which is why those workers are right to be worried that they have not been given any assurances by British Aerospace or the Government.

It is generally agreed that the immediate future of the Rover Group depends to a large degree on its relationship with Honda. So far we have heard nothing more than bland and vacuous assurances about how benignly Honda looks on this arrangement. I hope that the Minister will say more about what Honda has in mind for continuing collaboration.

What about the problems that have arisen with the EC? The Minister will concede that he will have a substantial argument on his hands if he is to persuade Commissioner Sutherland that £800 million of taxpayers' money is not a hidden subsidy. It may be one thing to write off debts, but, as the Rover Group's indebtedness amounts to no more than £560 million, the Minister will have the awkward task of explaining what the other £240 million represents. We therefore need to know what will happen if Commissioner Sutherland chooses to exercise powers under the treaty of Rome and says "No. I am not having the £800 million. I may accept £500 million or, if I am feeling generous, £600 million."

What will happen if the deal does not turn out as Professor Smith has been selling it to his shareholders? What will happen if the cash on the table is not £800 million but a substantially smaller sum? Will the deal be called off? Will Professor Smith be able to sell it to his shareholders? If the British Aerospace deal falls down because it is vetoed by the EC, or because in a form approved by the EC it is unsaleable to British Aerospace shareholders, what will be the Government's fall-back position? What guarantee will they give that the Rover Group will stay in business? What are its other prospects? Who else has been interested? What other bids are likely to come forward, and how serious are they?

We need to know the answers to those questions because the Government have unwisely put all their eggs in the British Aerospace basket. To listen to Government Ministers one would think that there is no future for the Rover Group other than with British Aerospace. If British Aerospace departs the scene for any reason, we need to know—as does the Rover Group and its employees—where the Government will stand. Will they give a

[Mr. Gould]

continuing commitment to invest in the Rover Group as a public sector car manufacturing company, or is there another bidder in the offing, who has been kept at arm's length so far? If so, who is it?

The Government are always interested in the Labour party's plans. They are obliged to say what is their contingency plan. If we do not receive answers to our questions, it will be perfectly clear that the charge that I levelled at the Government—that they have no interest or commitment to the maintenance of the industry—will be proved to the hilt.

We must not forget that British Aerospace is at risk as a consequence of this deal. It may be dragged down, as have others in the past, by its association with the less profitable parts of the British car industry. Those who work for the Rover Group and British Aerospace are concerned about their future.

Mr. Hal Miller (Bromsgrove): The hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) is not backing Britain.

Mr. Gould: I am backing Britain, but I want assurances, guarantees and some evidence of commitment from the Government to the maintenance of the industry. I want the issues to be debated properly and developed. We have not been given any commitment, assurance or guarantee but a solution that, in the words of the Conservative party's research department, is a "quick" one, a quick fix. It may be attractive to the Conservative party, but it is not to those who want a flourishing British car industry or those whose livelihoods depend on its existence.

7.46 pm

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister of Trade and Industry (Mr. Kenneth Clarke): I beg to move to leave out from 'House' to the end of the Question and to add instead thereof:

'believes that the recent improvement in Rover Group's performance owes much to the efforts of the workforce and management combined, that further improvement can best be achieved by returning the business to full private ownership, that the proposed takeover by British Aerospace is to be warmly welcomed and is in the interests of Rover Group's employees as well as those of its suppliers and dealer network, that future investment should be a matter for the management of the business and the prospective new owners, and that the overall terms of the sale agreement are in the interests not only of the companies but also of the taxpayer.'

This is an Opposition Supply day and they have chosen the subject for debate.

The hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) began by giving a brief explanation of why we are again discussing the Rover Group. We had a full debate five weeks ago about the agreement between British Aerospace and the Rover Group which is conditional on the conclusion of negotiations with the European Commission. Subsequently it will go to an extraordinary general meeting of British Aerospace shareholders.

The hon. Gentleman asked me to update the House about the events of the past five weeks, but there have not been any; we are having the same debate as we had five weeks ago. As we made clear at that time, we trust that discussions with the Commission will be concluded before the summer. As yet, they have not been, so there is little point in my again explaining the terms of the agreement, which I believe I explained to the satisfaction of most hon. Members in the previous debate.

A wide range of subjects could have been chosen if the Opposition had wished to continue their ideological obsession with the nationalisation of large parts of British industry and their objections to privatisation. At present, we are returning to the private sector the Rover Group, the British Steel Corporation, most British shipyards and Girobank. By returning to the agreement with British Aerospace, the Opposition have returned to the most popular and least controversial of our proposals. Contrary to the description that the hon. Member for Dagenham seemed to be giving, British Aerospace is a popular and successful company. I believe that there has been a widespread welcome for our proposals.

We are able to return those companies to the private sector because of the general well-being of the British economy and because the Government have given the managements of most of those companies their head and allowed them to apply commercial judgments to succeed in the market place. Those companies are now in a position to return to a booming and successful private sector economy.

The hon. Member for Dagenham said that he had returned to the subject of the car industry for this nationalisation versus privatisation debate because of his concern about this sector of the economy in general. He earlier expressed a fear about the chocolate-making industry and said that we are becoming a branch-line economy and moving out of the mainstream of important manufacturing industries. It is singularly ill-timed for him to make comments of that sort about the United Kingdom vehicle industry, into which the Rover Group is about to return as a private sector company. We have had a good time in the United Kingdom vehicle industry over the past year or two. The outlook for all our companies is better than it has been for a long time.

Let us look at the last complete year, 1987, to see what sort of environment British Aerospace is seeking to buy into. In 1987 we saw the highest production of cars in the United Kingdom for nearly a decade. Productivity in the vehicle industry has increased by almost 7 per cent. each year during the 1980s. That compares with the impressive enough record of nearly 5·5 per cent. a year in manufacturing as a whole. Import penetration continues to decline.

The hon. Member for Dagenham is concerned about short-term fluctuations in the exchange rate and the strike at Ford. Those issues have been the basis of his concern over the past couple of months. More new United Kingdom-built cars were registered in 1987 than in any year since 1973. Seventy per cent. of Ford's and Vauxhall's United Kingdom car sales last year were sourced from United Kingdom factories. Our export markets are being regained. In 1987, the value of United Kingdom car exports increased by 45 per cent. over 1986. There is a general rise in industry's profitability and we are in the splendid position—one in which we have not found ourselves for a long time—that all our major vehicle manufacturers are now in profit. It has been a long time since any Minister has been able to say that to the House.

Mr. Oppenheim: If the British car industry is so successful and if, as we have been told ad infinitum, we are great believers in the rather well-worn level playing field,

and if the Government believe in the free market, why do we maintain the ludicrous so-called gentleman's agreement that puts an import quota on Japanese cars when it indirectly benefits the Japanese car industry by giving it a high-priced, cosy and uncompetitive market to sell into, when it compounds the inefficiencies that remain in the British car industry and when it costs consumers dear?

Mr. Clarke: That, as the saying goes, is a very interesting question. I would welcome the opportunity on a more suitable occasion to discuss the balance of argument between those who believe that the agreement protects the British car industry and those who believe that it gives the Japanese a rather easy way of making money. I agree with my hon. Friend that it is an interesting debate, but it is outside the scope of the Opposition Supply day.

Mr. Gould: I hope to put a question to the Chancellor that he will find easier to answer. When we debated this matter on 4 May, the right hon. and learned Gentleman made the unwise claim that Rover had secured record exports. It then emerged that he was claiming that that was true in money value. That it hardly a reliable basis. Will he now confirm that on the only basis that matters, which is the number of vehicles, he was wrong?

Mr. Clarke: The hon. Member does not have a very good record on answering questions. It is true that I was talking in value terms, and it was a record year in value terms. In one previous year it was better in terms of the number of vehicles. Nevertheless, the export record of the Rover Group now is very good and is going very well. As I have said, the export performance of the British vehicle industry is very good.

The background for privatisation is propitious. It is not a quick dash, at an ill-judged moment, for the Government to decide that this is the time to conclude a reasonable deal with a good British company—British Aerospace—which is interested in acquiring the Rover Group.

The only thing on which I agree with the hon. Gentleman is the congratulations he gave to all those responsible for the improvement in the performance of the Rover Group that has brought us to this stage. We all welcome that. It has been achieved not simply because the company is nationalised but largely because, although it is nationalised, the Government gave the management the freedom to run its own business without political intervention of the sort it had experienced in the past and enabled it to embark upon the major restructuring and fundamental reappraisal of the company's position that was necessary to return it to health and to provide what the customer wants. I am happy to join everybody in the House in commending the work force as well as the management of the Rover Group on the progress that has been made in order to reach the position that enables us to take the next step towards privatisation.

The Labour party's motion and the views of the hon. Member for Dagenham, apart from implying that the Labour party would prefer to return to the nationalisation of the past, present a number of other myths about the present state of the Rover Group, what its strategy should be and where it is going. The Social and Liberal Democratic party's motion is more accurate than the Labour party's. It appears to accept the repeatedly stated strategy of the company, which is that the Rover Group is not now and never will be a stand-alone volume car manufacturer along the lines of the six major European producers. Unlike the Rover Group, with its 500,000 or so vehicles a year production, the other six each turn out over twice that number of cars. Those firms enjoy economies of scale that are not available to the Rover Group and it is not open to the Rover Group to try to replicate their market strategies. That was a false analogy made by the hon. Member for Dagenham.

Under Graham Day's leadership, the Rover Group is pursuing an extremely good alternative strategy that is not based on running down the business. It is using progressive evolution of the product plan to take the business up-market and into specialist niches. It is building on the vital collaborative relationship with Honda. It is true that Honda has confirmed that it welcomes the continuity of management that the deal with British Aerospace represents. It is content with what is proposed. Also, the Rover Group is seeking further to improve its quality compared with other manufacturers. It has to win back its reputation for quality and reliability, and I am sure that we are all confident that it will do so.

Mr. Nellist: The Minister and I agree on one thing and that is that he has accurately stated Graham Day's position. I do not expect the right hon. and learned Gentleman to read the entire report of the Adjournment debate that his colleague the Minister and I had on 12 May. However, in that debate, I quoted Mr. Day as saying:

> "We want to make money. People keep talking of market share, but the objective is to become profitable."—[*Official Report*, 12 May 1988; Vol. 133. c.578.]

As my hon. Friend the Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) said, it is not about continuing volume car production, which is the only safe guarantee of the jobs of car workers.—*[Interruption.]*

When the right hon. and learned Gentleman gives figures about exports for the British car industry over the past couple of years, he is basing those figures on the artificial boom that we have had in the past couple of years in the British economy and on a specific set of exchange rates between sterling and the dollar. Given that Land Rover, Range Rover and Jaguar—*[Interruption.]* I can do without any more interruptions. Given that Land Rover, Range Rover and Jaguar export between 50 per cent. and 60 per cent. of their production, will the right hon. and learned Gentleman make the same boast for the next two years and say that the Japanese investment in America, Europe and Britain will not mean retrenchment in the volume of production and the jobs in the British car industry?

Mr. Clarke: The hon. Member for Dagenham made it clear that he was pessimistic about the prospects of the Rover Group being profitable. He seemed to think that that was a temporary aberration. The hon. Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) does not even want Rover Group to aim to be profitable. He dismisses the strategy set out by Graham Day which aims to enhance its profitability. He obviously contemplates volume car production regardless of profitability and joins his hon. Friend the Member for Dagenham in the most dire forecast. I am not sure whether either of the hon. Members is converted to joining the European monetary system for exchange rate stability of the sort they talk about. It would be extremely unlikely in the case of either hon. Member. However, the future of the business depends on

[Mr. Clarke]

successfully carrying through a strategy aimed at profitability and selling into a part of the market place in which the Rover Group has a realistic chance of surviving. That is what Graham Day has done.

Jaguar was a bad example. The hon. Member for Coventry, South-East objected to Jaguar being privatised. Since privatisation, Jaguar's production and sales records have been broken repeatedly. It has introduced successful new models such as the XJ6 and the convertible XJS and employment has increased by 2,500. Productivity has risen threefold since the early 1980s. As the hon. Gentleman knows, it has recently opened its own engineering centre. In the face of that experience, it is no good saying that we have been through a temporary boom and that we will return to a state of decline soon. That may be what he wishes for political reasons, but it is not what is happening now.

Mr. Nellist: I am grateful to the Minister for allowing me a final question. What price is he prepared to pay for those figures from Jaguar? Does he have the same attitude as the hon. Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King)? In a six-week period at the end of 1987, 17 track workers at Jaguar in Coventry died of strokes and stress-related illnesses because of the speed-up on the production line, which has since been exacerbated by Jaguar management to compensate for the worsening relationship between the dollar and sterling. Is that the price that he is prepared to pay for profit—that magical word?

Mr. Clarke: Death from a stroke or heart disease is a serious matter, so I shall not make the flippant reply that I am tempted to make. In fact, the performance of Jaguar has increased employment in the company by 2,500. I know that the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East believes that one should increase employment in manufacturing industry by getting everyone to work less —either by working shorter hours or retiring earlier or by slowing down the track so that extra workers need to be taken on.

Mr. Nellist *indicated assent.*

Mr. Clarke: The hon. Gentleman agrees. That is not the future for British industry. It is a crazy way of trying to create jobs and we have found a better way, which is to put vehicle manufacture in private hands in thriving market conditions.

If we follow successfully the strategy upon which Graham Day has embarked—that will depend on markets and the company's performance in those markets—the company should and will prosper. It is not a strategy for contraction. High specification vehicles give more opportunity for added value by the assembler. In addition —this is extremely important for the midlands—they give more opportunities for the component suppliers which are also major employers and which, I may add, are major supporters of the proposed agreement with British Aerospace.

The Opposition's other serious concern, referred to in the motion, is the future of Rover's model range and investment. I do not propose to join the hon. Member for Dagenham in speculating about capital investment in future years. Our whole point is that Ministers should not be laying out their stall on such matters, and I shall certainly not give information relating to the nationalised company that would help Rover Group's competitors. However, if hon. Members seek reassurance about the product range and investment I can point to the facts now.

Rover has recently added to its investment in the executive sector with the launch of the new fastback range derived from the Rover 800 saloon. Rover is building on the welcome collaboration with Honda with the development of a new mid-range car, the production of which will significantly increase employment at Longbridge as Mr. Day announced two weeks ago—no doubt to the delight of all the hon. Members, especially my hon. Friend the Member for Northfield, who have an interest in the success of the motor industry and Longbridge in particular.

Rover Group is following up its major engine investment in the 2-litre sector. As we all know, its M16 engine is an award-winning engine. It is used in the 820 range, and has just won the added distinction of being selected for the Morgan sports car. In addition, the Rover Group is developing a new high economy small engine, the K series, which will strengthen Rover Group's presence in the small car market. Those examples—I deliberately cite only information so far made public by the company—highlight the major investment programme that is under way in the Rover Group.

The tenor of the Opposition's case is to denigrate all that. They say, "It is a temporary achievement. The company has got so far only because it happens to be in public hands. Only in public hands can we achieve even temporary improvement and the outlook now is extremely gloomy and difficult." In fact, the present strategy is being backed by the proposed purchasers. British Aerospace has made public its general support for the future plans of Rover Group under Graham Day. On the information that I have, I do not expect fundamental changes in either the magnitude or the broad direction of Rover Group's investment following the change of ownership. However, those decisions on investment must be for the management of the business and the prospective new owners of the company to determine. Market changes will dictate some changes of emphasis from time to time, as they have in the past. It is precisely to give the company flexibility to respond to the market that we want it to get away from the rigidity of public ownership. We think that the industry will benefit from that.

Now that we have returned the motor industry to reasonably good health, it is most important to build upon that by setting it free from Whitehall and Westminster and removing it from the political limelight. If we possibly can, we want to avoid a return to the public sector ownership and state-directed investment that we had in the 1970s. If that was really the answer—as Opposition Members clearly believe it is—we should not now be living with the sorry fact that £2·9 billion-worth of public money, which is more than £50 for every man, woman and child in the country, has had to be put into the business since the mid-1970s. That kept the company going through the losses incurred during nationalisation until we began the process of getting the company ready to return to the private sector. We are determined to put that history behind us completely and we believe that the deal negotiated with British Aerospace gives us that opportunity.

I am not quite sure of the Opposition's view of the agreement with British Aerospace. At one point the hon. Member for Dagenham realistically accepted that the deal was likely to go ahead and that Rover is likely to be privatised. He disputed the idea that there was synergy with British Aerospace. At least he does not accuse British Aerospace of being foreign, so we have not quite gone back to the chocolates debate. What kind of company would he prefer us to be dealing with? Does he have a view on foreign car companies that might have synergy with Rover being interested in taking over the company? He claims that he is worried about the company's cash flow and the future need for capital. That rather contradicts what he says about the financial agreement with British Aerospace. Does he, or does he not, think that it is a good thing that £800 million should be used to pay off the likely indebtedness at the time of the completion of the sale? He argues that that £800 million is too much and should be reduced. That is not altogether consistent with his argument about the imminent cash-flow problems of the newly merged company and the need for a proper balance sheet for the future.

It is important—and it should be important to the Opposition—that we make it clear to the European Commission that the deal has been arrived at on a reasonable basis. I shall not go over the terms again because the debate is short and I gave a full explanation when we last discussed the matter. However, when evaluating the financial arrangements, it is important to remember two things that demonstrate the bargain from the taxpayer's point of view, as the taxpayer has had to stand all the losses in the past. First, we achieve the prospective elimination of the contingent liability represented by the Varley-Marshall assurances—£1·6 billion-worth of contingent debt that still faces the taxpayer. Secondly, we eliminate the excessive carry-over of tax losses. After the previous debate I hope that we have helped hon. Members who had difficulty in understanding that extinguishing a tax loss is a benefit to the Exchequer and not a benefit to the company, which would otherwise carry the benefit of those past tax losses.

The Government remain clear—as we were five weeks ago—that the deal should bear examination by anyone. At this stage, we think that the deal should be allowed to continue and that the Rover Group should certainly not risk damage from ill-informed public comment and speculation of the kind in which the hon. Member for Dagenham wanted me to engage. It is in the interests of the company for the agreement to be concluded and for Rover Group to go into the private sector and to continue the strategy that it has set itself, which we trust will enable it to be successful in the market place, as it has been over the past year or two.

As I said at the outset, this is the most popular and welcome of our privatisation proposals. It arouses the least controversy with the work force and, indeed, anyone else. I cannot understand how the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East can think that a large number of Rover Group's workers are hostile. To the dealers, the agreement is welcome as compared with the speculations of the past. The component suppliers welcome the agreement, as does most of the work force. The principal trade unions involved with Rover Group have made clear their fundamental wish to make the deal work, and that should be the aim of all of us now. The Labour party remains almost isolated in its completely negative attitude to the idea of returning companies to the private sector. It is very out of touch on this subject, and I believe that now that it has given us the opportunity to vote the House will support the Government's amendment.

8.10 pm

Mr. Ken Eastham (Manchester, Blackley): The Minister said that the debate was ill-timed. I appreciate that the Government are embarrassed that the Opposition have chosen to use a Supply day to debate such issues because they would like the deals to go through in stockinged feet. They do not want public accountability. They would prefer the Opposition to say nothing so that they can carry on with their little deals with various organisations.

The Minister said that he did not believe in planning. The Government often refer to the success of Japan, yet anyone who has visited that country knows that it believes in planning the economy. That has been the root of its success and is a serious problem for its competitors.

People seem to talk only about high finance, and this debate is no exception. I remind the House that behind any company are the workers. They are not simply pushing around money and exchanging pieces of paper; they are investing their lives. Any major changes in their companies affect not only them but their families. Any changes in the motor industry affect thousands of families, because it is one of Britain's most important industries.

I declare an interest, as I worked in the engineering industry throughout my life before I entered Parliament. I am a member of the AEU and secretary of the parliamentary group. A great number of our members depend on the industry for their livelihoods. It would be interesting and refreshing if, for a change, the Government showed a little more sympathy to those who create our wealth. I remind the Minister that most of the wealth in Britain has been contributed by the engineering industry —power engineering, the aircraft, shipbuilding and motor industries and numerous other industries. Engineers have paid a high price and made a great contribution to the wealth and the profits of this nation.

The Opposition are concerned not only with money but with the future of industry. The Minister's statement a few weeks ago highlighted a great lack of consultation. When making their little deals, the last people whom the Government consider are the workers. Their contempt for them is percolating through the system and there is no longer any respect for the work force or for the trade unions. Yet when the Government find themselves in difficulties, they want trade union organisers to bring sense and stability into industry.

There was no consultation about the sale of the Rover Group. The Minister said that the work force wanted it, but how does he know that? How does he know that, to a man, the work force want a takeover—[HON. MEMBERS: "Or do not want it."] Indeed. I am sure that the Opposition have more information on that than the Government have because we talk to our members.

When television interviewers take cameras to the factory gates, they ensure that they speak to two in favour and two against, so that all those watching television think that the views are equally balanced. However, the interviewers often have great difficulty finding anyone sympathetic to the Government's policy. They present a distorted view.

[Mr. Ken Eastham]

There were moves to sell Land Rover to General Motors about two years ago, but there was a public outcry and great indignation about the proposed sale. It was also feared that Austin Rover would be sold to Ford or some other foreign company. The Government finally had cold feet in the face of that public outcry, and they backed off. Since then, they have been seeking other ways to achieve their objectives.

If the company is to be sold to British Aerospace, what guarantees will there be that British Aerospace will not suddenly decide to sell it into foreign ownership? The Government will say, "It is nothing to do with us; we do not own the company; we have no influence over it; it is market forces." What the Government were seeking to achieve two years ago may well happen when the company has been privatised, and the work force is entitled to know about that.

During the past nine years it has been noticeable that the Government have never thought the producers of our wealth to be important. They glorify the buyers and the sellers who produce nothing, who simply push around pieces of paper and sell stocks and shares. It is yuppie land. The Government glorify money. They think that that can continue for ever, even though they had a shock last October when there was a sudden realisation that those pieces of paper had to be backed by production. We must manufacture goods. This country is dependent upon engineers, not people in the stock exchange pushing around pieces of paper with little thought for the future.

Thanks to the Government, this country now imports far more than it exports. That is a direct consequence of the Government's empty policy that is passed from one Minister to another. They always put off the ultimate. The future of British wealth lies in production, and investment is an important aspect of that. The Minister made snide remarks about £50 per head of investment in the industry, but he would not dare tell us how many billions has been put into farming—into food which we cannot consume and which is sold abroad, such as cheap butter to Russia. It is a rather jaundiced comparison. The Government say that the engineering industry is too expensive, but they dare not say that about keeping the farmers on their Back Benches fat. It is simply a matter of personal interest that should be exposed.

Perhaps the Minister would ask one of his staff to find out the extent of the subsidies paid to farming. I dare him to give us the figures tonight. He may smile, but I know that he dare not tell us. Perhaps he would like me to go to the Library to get the figures for him, but will he repeat them? I know that he will not. He wants only to talk about some massive subsidy to the engineering industry, yet it is only chickenfeed. We should be investing more in that industry, like our major competitors, the Japanese.

The workers are entitled to a decent deal and to full consultation. It is about time that there was less contempt for the work force and some recognition of the valuable contribution they have made and could continue to make to Britain's future wealth.

8.19 pm

Mr. James Cran (Beverley): This debate graphically illustrates why we should get as many companies as possible out of the public sector. When Mr. Graham Day gave evidence to the Select Committee on Trade and Industry he alluded to the point that any company in the public sector—and I know that my right hon. and learned Friend will understand this comment—is lectured by Ministers and by civil servants. Here we are having a debate in the House. At the end of the day, it will not add much to the sum of knowledge as to what we should do with the company.

This debate is unfortunate, as was that in the Select Committee. The Rover company historically has been susceptible to uncertainty about its future. It is not just me who says that. In 1986, when there was speculation of a bid by Ford—and there have been a few rumours generated this evening by Opposition Front Bench spokesmen—£250 million of sales were lost and were gone for ever. The company also lost 2 per cent. of its market share and only now, two years later, is it beginning to get it back. That is exactly what we should try to avoid in debating this matter in the House—which proposition has not been accepted in the speeches made by Opposition Members thus far.

The Government could have invited bidders for the company in the same way that they have in respect of Girobank. However, that in itself would have resulted in exactly the kind of uncertainty to which I have just referred and which arose in 1986. In that regard, the advice of Mr. Graham Day, Rover's chief operating officer, was fairly crucial. If the Government had ignored his advice, that would have jeopardised the future of a great company which everyone wants to see rejuventated, and which is partly on the road to rejuvenisation. I cannot imagine that any hon. Member wants to see the status quo continued, and so we must consider the three alternatives left to the Government.

The first was acquisition by a competitor. That could have given rise to the 1986 situation, which no one in the House would want to see happen. The second was placement or flotation. There is no doubt but that that could have been possible. However, it must be remembered that Opposition Members would then have to deal with a factor which none of them mentioned: the company's accumulated historical debt would have to be written off. That was perfectly clear to the Government and would have been to any Government. The third alternative was acquisition by a non-competitor. That is what Graham Day and his board—and this was said in the Select Committee—recommended to the Government. If the men whose hands are on the tiller of the company, and who have worked wonders with it, make that recommendation, the Government would need an extremely strong argument against doing exactly that. In my judgment, the Government were perfectly correct in giving exclusive rights to British Aerospace.

Rover could operate as an independent company, but it was made clear to the Select Committee that there were a number of advantages in going in with British Aerospace. I will not indulge in a discussion about synergy; that is an argument which has been the subject of far too much hot air. If one considers the businesses within British Aerospace, there is not necessarily a great deal of synergy among some of their component activities. However, if one takes them altogether, they add strength to the total business as it is today.

I have not heard controverted the advantages described to the Select Committee. The first was that of size. Anybody who operates in the international engineering business knows that size is extremely important. We are

meeting that requirement by bringing together large, multinational companies which, although they are in different businesses, and operate within different business cycles, will ultimately strengthen the overall group. I have heard nothing from the Opposition which controverts that suggestion.

Much has been said on the subject of investment. I will not say that if the company goes into the private sector, everything will be guaranteed for years hence. However, it was made very clear by Professor Roland Smith that his board accepted the five-year corporate plan. He did not evade it. That plan, as anybody who has studied this matter knows, involves investment of £1 billion over the next four of five years. Professor Smith did not evade that responsibility but clearly acknowledged it.

At the end of the day, Rover is being taken over by a British company. Of course there can be no guarantees for years hence, but as matters stand Rover is being taken over by a British company. By golly!—I can imagine the outcry there would have been from the Opposition if the Government had come forward with a takeover proposition from a foreign company. I would not have been one of those arguing in support of that proposition, but there is in the British takeover a benefit that the Opposition have not recognised.

I wish to re-emphasise a point made by my right hon. and learned Friend when he commented that the response to the proposed takeover has been positive all round, except from the Oppposition. Perhaps that is predictable because Oppositions have to oppose, and that is exactly what they are doing. That is why we should all discount what the Opposition have to say on the matter. As was said by my right hon. and learned Friend, the dealer network is extremely pleased with the proposal that has been put before it. The network employs 31,000 people, many of whom are in the constituencies of Opposition Members who are opposing the takeover. The turnover of those dealers totals a massive £4 billion plus. That is the importance of the dealer network, which is delighted with the arrangement worked out between British Aerospace and Rover.

I have also taken the trouble to speak to many of the 1,600 suppliers, who are also delighted at the arrangement. I remind the Opposition that those suppliers enjoy orders of £1·6 billion. Again, many of them may be in the constituencies of Opposition Members. I refer also to Honda, about which we have heard nothing this evening from the Opposition. Honda has a collaborative agreement with Rover, which it could have severed as a result of the takeover. Has it done so? Of course not. In the Select 'Committee, Professor Smith stated that in conversations with Mr. Kume, Honda's chairman, he said that he was delighted with the arrangement and is prepared

"to go forward step by step"

with Rover. That shows a level of confidence in the company that is not shared by the amateurs on the Opposition Benches—although I accept that there are amateurs on the Conservative Benches as well, which is precisely why company business should be debated in board rooms rather than in the House.

I strongly believe that the taxpayer should also be delighted at the arrangement. Opposition Members have said that 2·7p per share is not much, and indeed it is not a very high price. But those of us who remember Austin Rover a year or two ago will recall that the shares were worthless: they were paper money. Opposition Members who have suggested, not here but elsewhere, that the shares have been traded on the open market at 55p to 60p —and indeed they have—should remember that the board of directors has repeatedly pointed out to shareholders that the underlying asset value did not support that price. The board went out of its way time without number to say that. Given the historical circumstances—the debt and the underlying asset value—I believe that the price is right.

I shall not blush when explaining to my constituents or anyone else that the Government are having to put a cash injection of £800 million into British Aerospace. Those who argue the proposition have conveniently forgotten about the company's accumulated historical debt. That debt is pretty massive, and the company would not have been a marketable proposition unless the Government had been prepared to cover it. This is not working capital, as has been suggested on other occasions by some Opposition Members. It is to pay off a historical debt. No other circumstances would have been possible, whichever Government had decided the future of the company and whichever disposal option had been chosen.

As my right hon. and learned Friend has mentioned, the taxpayer benefits from the £1·1 billion accumulated trading losses surrendered by British Aerospace. Who on the Opposition Benches, or anywhere else, will say that this great company is not capable of making the profits that it should make in the future? I believe that it can, because of the design and type of vehicle that it is now producing, which strikes me as what everyone wants to buy. And if the company makes profits, the taxpayer stands to save £400 million in the coming years. That too has been conveniently forgotten by the Opposition, but not by Conservative Members or, I suspect, by the taxpayer.

The Varley assurances meant a Government standing behind a company, prepared to pay for all its losses whatever the circumstances. How can Opposition Members possibly defend such a position, which allows a company—board of directors, management and work force—to care nothing about efficiency in the market place because Government and taxpayer stand guarantor to every penny that it loses? That is a heinous arrangement, and I applaud the Government's package, which ensures that such obligations will cease.

Mr. Roy Hughes (Newport, East): Does the hon. Gentleman agree that there is an omission from his speech? He has not mentioned the people employed in the industry. Moreover, consultation has been negligible. The hon. Gentleman also seemed to deny the right of hon. Members to debate these matters in the House. Will he not take into consideration the fact that where public money is involved it is up to hon. Members to ensure that it is properly accounted for?

Mr. Cran: I am extremely grateful for that intervention. I concede to the hon. Gentleman that I had forgotten to mention, as I meant to at the beginning of my speech, that the one part of the motion with which I agree is the statement that

"Rover Group's performance owes much to the efforts of the workforce".

With that proposition I entirely concur, and I am very grateful to the hon. Gentleman for giving me the opportunity to say so.

[Mr. Cran]

The question of job guarantees arose during the Select Committee hearings, but Mr. Day said that no one in the market place was prepared to guarantee to buy Rover cars. That is the case with any car company, indeed any company. If there is no guarantee of purchase, there can, perforce, be no guarantee of employment. The hon. Member for Newport, East (Mr. Hughes) may be interested to learn that Professor Smith gave the Select Committee a guarantee—and he did not do so lightly; I am sure that the hon. Gentleman knows the powers of a Select Committee—that there would be no redundancies as a direct result of the merger. That does not cover the possibility that in future the public may stop buying Rover cars, but it is none the less a guarantee.

When hon. Members vote later this evening, they must not ignore what the Rover board has said. The board has said that it believes the merger to be in the interests of not only the company, the shareholders and the employees, but the creditors. Opposition Members who vote for the motion must tell us what alternative they would choose.

Mr. Austin Mitchell (Great Grimsby): Keep it.

Mr. Cran: I have heard no alternatives being suggested. It is all debate and no answers.

Mr. Mitchell: Keep it!

Mr. Cran: What this arrangement gives the company is stability. For far too long, the company has been susceptible to debates of this kind in the House and to snide comments from Opposition Members and many others. What it needs now is to be left alone, like the divine Greta Garbo, to get on with the job that it has set out to do. I believe that it will do that, not only because it is Britain's biggest vehicle manufacturer but also—this too is forgotten by many—because of the £4·27 billion that it puts into not only the south and west midlands and Wales but the rest of the United Kingdom. That is another reason why it is important to ensure that the company survives.

For all those reasons, we must be very careful about the signals that we send out from the House tonight. The signals that we should send out, not only to the Community but to the EC Commission, are positive signals, showing that we believe in this proposition. If we give the opposite signal, the result will be merely a return to the uncertainty of which I have spoken, and which I cannot believe that any hon. Member wishes to see again.

8.38 pm

Mr. Matthew Taylor (Truro): It came as something of a surprise, although a welcome one, to be congratulated by the Minister on the quality of our amendment—not least because he rather ignored some of the important points in it. He failed to explain why no alternative bidders were considered, and why the deal is being done on what Lord Bruce-Gardyne has described as "golden giveaway terms".

I desperately hope that, if the deal goes through, it is a success. There is no question about that. There is no point in hoping for failure from the Government's decisions. Having said that, there must be serious worries about whether it will do so and whether the Government have given the company the best possible chance of continuing the success which has been built up by the work force, management, and the suppliers, who have also put in hard work and sacrificed in order to achieve the turnaround that the company has itself achieved.

I agree with the Government that one of the things from which this industry has suffered, not just since Rover and its predecessors were rescued, but way before that, was Government neglect, and especially Government interference. However, one of the problems with this deal, and the basis on which it is launched, is that it shows every sign of being another Government political manoeuvre and not one of industrial logic within the industry. The Government are not looking at the needs of the Rover Group as a car manufacturer and as an industry.

The Government say that this deal is all about taking the car industry out of politics. However, the nature of the agreement which we embarked upon is essentially a political one. It is one of ideology, with the Government trying to make their own political escape from a prison which they built themselves by their commitment. The Government made it clear that their intention was to privatise the Rover Group before the next election. It was a commitment that they were unlikely to want to go back on. However, as has been made equally clear by those involved in the industry, and by the comments of the Secretary of State, there was no chance at all of a successful flotation of the Rover Group as an independent entity before the next general election. They ruled out any possibility of that.

Those involved have said that, at the very least, four to five years' profits would be needed to establish the profit record of the company were it to be successfully floated, and that takes us beyond the next general election. Therefore, the Government, whatever they might have said previously, cannot ever have had any intention of a flotation. Equally, they were not prepared to take the political flak from a sale to a foreign bidder. Thank goodness for that. That was their motive, because they had discussed it previously with Ford, but had been forced out of agreeing to that purchase by the political flak that they had run into. They could not take that option, so they had to find a British buyer if they were to stand by their commitment.

It is no wonder that, when BAe came along, the Government threw up their arms in joy, rolled over onto their back and let BAe tickle them into giving it those golden giveaway terms. That is why the *Financial Times* editorial on 30 March said:

"the real objection to the proposal continues to be that the bases on which the Government has chosen to negotiate appear more designed to save political face than to protect the taxpayers' interest."

That was the starting point of the entire problem. That is the first anxiety that we must address. The Government have not embarked on this matter as they claim to have done. However, perhaps they could have come up with a successful deal. It was an unusual route, but they could have come up with a deal that gives security to integrated motor manufacturing in this country, security that will ensure the success of the Rover Group.

The giveaway terms of the deal with BAe have nothing to do with industrial logic. That is not why BAe is happy about this deal. It is not synergy, but the commercial money gain that the Government are giving them. It is "monergy", not synergy, that this deal is all about. That is why BAe is so happy with the deal. I have no doubt that BAe has the best of intentions for the group. I have no

doubt that it will do what it can to see that the Rover Group is a success. However, that is not why it feels that it has a good deal. It is not that it feels that it has gained the synergy in industrial logic. It is because it has made a guaranteed commercial gain. It cannot lose.

The elements of the deal clearly spell that out. BAe is to pay £150 million for 99·9 per cent. of Rover, while the Goverament give Rover's debtors £800 million in cash. Thus, £1·1 billion of Rover's tax losses will effectively be eliminated. The remaining £500 million is to be set against Rover's profits—of course, not against those of the rest of BAe. Finally, the Government eliminate for themselves their guarantee through the Varley-Marshall-Joseph parliamentary assurances on the £1·6 billion of Rover debts. That is why Lord Bruce-Gardyne described the proposal as being on "golden giveaway terms".

One only has to go back a couple of years to the debate on the possible sale of Land Rover to General Motors to see that it is a golden giveaway. At that stage, Land Rover by itself was valued at £250 million. Therefore, somewhere along the line the taxpayer appears to have made a loss. One can see that reflected in the value of 2·7p that the Government have put on the shares of the Rover Group. The hon. Member for Beverley (Mr. Cran) said that the shares were priced at market value. Of course, that is the value that the market chooses to put on them. However, he also said that they had been worth nothing previously. I have looked at the history of these shares and I cannot find a time when they went down to 2·7p. They have not reached that level since the introduction of the investment programme or during the 1980s. They have been down to 15p, or 12p, but that is several times the value that the Government are prepared to put on the shares at present.

If BAe cannot lose, and if the Government feel that it cannot lose, it appears to be always at the expense of the taxpayer. However, will it be to the advantage of either Rover or British Aerospace? Again, the evidence casts doubt on that. I hope that it will be to their advantage. However, the evidence does not support the idea that this deal, in terms of the industrial success of those two companies, is giving anything like guarantees or even the best possible launch for the companies.

Again, the *Financial Times* editorial of 30 March 1988 rightly said:

"Past experience, especially in the British motor industry, suggests that putting together two sets of problems can simply create a new problem even greater than the sum of the problematic parts."

Considering the difficulties that both companies face, because of the nature of the industries in which they work, one has to say that that appears to be true. Against the background of the history of the British motor industry, it appears even more true. One has only to go back to the much-heralded merger between BMC and Leyland to see that all that happened was successful Leyland was brought down by transfers of cash to ailing BMC. That is a past example of Government interference causing problems. That was the Government acting for political reasons rather than on the industrial logic of the companies concerned.

By combining these different companies, we potentially jeopardise both of them. We do not know which way the scales will fall, but the likely benefits are minimal. Aircraft manufacture is based on high-cost, low-volume production, with design engineering coming to the fore, whereas car manufacture is high-volume vehicle manufacture, with high sales and production engineering. Aerospace products are marketed on the basis of long-drawn-out negotiations, often between Governments—certainly with few potential customers—while vehicles are sold continuously. In other words, vehicles are sold direct to the consumer with a mass-marketing campaign.

Of course, BAe was originally interested in Land Rover. Perhaps Rover Group sales are more like those that British Aerospace is involved in. We know, from what Graham Day has said, that he wants to take Land Rover out of the mass market, away from competing with the Japanese, and into military, governmental and similar markets.

There is no guarantee whatsoever that after five years assets will not be stripped or that the company will not be sold as a whole to a foreign bidder. In the meantime, there is nothing in what the Government have said to stop a distress sale. I cannot believe that, if the joint company gets into difficulties, the Government will say, "If you save yourself, we want the benefits of your saving yourself and to put you back into the difficulties that you were in before you sold off the Rover Group."

The truth is that, if the company gets into difficulties and feels that the best way out of them is to sell the Rover Group, there is absolutely nothing that the Government —or any Government in those circumstances—can do to stop it. Different Governments might take different attitudes to what happens on the Rover side of things, but surely they will not demand that the company goes under just for the sake of honouring agreements made now. The truth is that the guarantees are not worth the paper they are written on.

Why BAe of all companies? The Government have still not told us whether another suitable bidder emerged after the original approaches from BAe were announced in the House. We know that there were four bidders and that some were from other car manufacturers, probably foreign, but we do not know whether any British-owned company was in the bidding or whether any non-manufacturing company was in the running. We also know that, in saying what it would do with the company, BAe has not come up with any new marketing ideas or any dramatic change of direction. It has not come up with a phenomenal plan to change everything that has been happening, turn the company round, or massively increase productivity.

All that BAe has said is that it will follow the same corporate strategy that the Rover Group already has in place. This takeover adds only a political gain for the Government, not the chance of industrial benefit for the Rover Group. Confident that the EC will accept the proposals, the Government will not tell us what will happen if the company really runs into difficulties or what their view will be. If the EC throws out the proposal, will the Government just wash their hands and let the whole thing fall? That is why we are worried about it.

The Government are very fly with the figures about taxpayers' benefits, but their claim that, for an injection of £800 million—less the £150 million that BAe is paying—the Varley-Marshall-Joseph guarantees of £1·6 billion are being wiped out ignores the simple fact that the guarantees will be called in only if the Rover Group goes under; and the Government seem convinced that it will not. Moreover, if it did, assets would be realised which would have largely compensated for that, if the Government had

[Mr. Matthew Taylor]

not already chosen to sell it off to some other car manufacturer. So the Government's claims that the taxpayer has been compensated look weak.

The Government are inclined to paint this issue entirely in terms of those who are for nationalisation and those who are for privatisation. Too much of this and the previous debate have focused on that. Hon. Members should turn their minds to whether there will be an industrial long-term benefit from this particular sale, carried out in this particular way, at this great cost to taxpayers in terms of their previous investments.

Of the motions and amendments on the Order Paper, ours is the only one to consider the issue in this light. The Government's answers give us no confidence. If the deal goes ahead, I give my best wishes to all those involved —the work force, the management and the suppliers—but my confidence in their success is certainly no greater than it was before, when the company was state-run; in many respects it is less. Given that the House is unlikely to vote on our amendment tonight, I shall support the Labour motion—not for what it says about state industries, but because the self-congratulatory attitudes of the Government inspire no confidence that they have any real idea of the needs of the Rover Group or British Aerospace. That issue should be addressed by the House and by the Government.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. I see six hon. Members seeking to catch my eye. This is a short debate and, unless speeches are shorter, some hon. Members will be disappointed.

8.53 pm

Mr. Hal Miller (Bromsgrove): I shall do my best to be brief, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I cannot say that we were surprised to hear that the Liberal Members would support the Opposition. The hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Taylor) addressed all his remarks to the Opposition. The only surprise is that he has declared so early which side of the leadership battle in his party he is on. He is obviously not after replacing the Labour party.

The hon. Member for Truro appears to misunderstand —perhaps deliberately, but perhaps by innocence—the fact that it has been the declared policy of the Rover board since the last election—not since Mr. Day, but going right back—that the company should be returned to the private sector as soon as possible. Therefore, this is no great Government machination, no great political intrigue and no great wedding to ideology. It is, in fact, freeing the company to pursue what the company's own board wants. The hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) made absolutely no attempt to deal with that point, nor did he say what he would do if, by some mistake, his party should have to deal with the problem. How would he tackle the company's board? Obviously he would fly in its face.

I learned of this debate with some expectation. After all, the Opposition have made such a salad of the original statement that we had to have a debate four weeks after that. They lost the argument on that occasion, so I thought that this afternoon we would get something new.

I parted company with my right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he said that nothing has happened since the last debate on this issue. Well, I have some good news for him. Lots of things have happened. There has been an announcement of another 1,500 jobs at Longbridge on the R8. Sales for the first five months of this year are 6,000 ahead of any previous figure. The 800 fastback has been launched. Land Rover and Range Rover report record sales for May. In the case of Land Rover, they are the best for 11 years. Exports are the best ever. The build increased by nearly 200—that is quite an astonishing record. Production has increased on the Sherpa vans and there are plans for further increases. Exports of that vehicle have again increased. A lot has been happening.

Mr. Terry Davis (Birmingham, Hodge Hill) *rose*——

Mr. Miller: I am sorry, I shall not give way because time is short. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will forgive me.

My right hon. and learned Friend appears to have overlooked the fact that a leadership election is developing in the Labour party. Perhaps that has something to do both with the recurrence of this motion and the attitude taken by the hon. Member for Dagenham. Did we get any glasnost or perestroika? Not at all—it was back to the hard line. I noted that the hon. Member for Dagenham carefully said that there is no case for changing the present ownership. There was no mention of social ownership. The hon. Gentleman has been hauled back into line for the politics of the internal Labour party elections.

I half expected to hear that wonderful chatterer the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) talking on the water as he crossed the Humber to offer his support to the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) in those elections about bringing him a successful debate on the Rover sale. Dearie me—if it were not so serious, it would be quite a comedy. I was almost anticipating "The Two Ronnies". Perhaps we would have had the revelation that Mr. Ron Todd would offer Rover the Dundee electronics plant, without commitment, as an earnest of commitment to the success of the motor industry in this country and to the updated, high-value, high-technology industry in which Opposition Members keep asking us to invest. The Opposition have not spoken about how they destroyed that investment. But, I thought, perhaps there is time for repentance. Perhaps we could have heard from the other Ronnie, the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Leith (Mr. Brown). Incidentally, I never thought of the showers in the House of Commons as sin bins. Perhaps he had intended to offer to place orders from Afghanistan for Sherpa vans or Land Rovers for Libya to reconquer Chad. I had hoped for great things from this debate.

Mr. Roy Hughes: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The hon. Member for Bromsgrove (Mr. Miller) is the joint chairman of the all-party motor industry group. I believe that his contribution to this debate is simply a disgrace and certainly out of order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I do not believe that I can rule the speech of the hon. Member for Bromsgrove (Mr. Miller) out of order, but I hope that he will have regard to what has been said and the fact that other hon. Members are seeking to speak in the debate.

Mr. Miller: I promise to be brief, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was discussing public ownership, which is one of the main planks in the Opposition's motion.

The Opposition have also talked about a give-away, but I believe that they have given away what is going on in the Labour party and the reason for this debate. It is nonsense for the Opposition to complain about Government support for the company and at the same time to complain that the Government are not giving enough support to the company. The Opposition must make up their minds as to which way they want to go.

Finally, heeding your advice, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to discuss investment. We heard the hon. Member for Dagenham—the so-called "new wave" of the Labour party—go back to talking about throwing money at the problem. The hon. Gentleman ignored the fact that the Rover Group plan, with its investment connotations, had been accepted by British Aerospace—a point made in the powerful speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Beverley (Mr. Cran).

The hon. Member for Dagenham appeared to go back to the days of the Ryder plan and spoke about a volume car producer, ignoring the fact that currently, unfortunately, Rover is not a volume car producer. His solution offered no prospect of the company becoming such a producer.

The hon. Member for Dagenham, never mind ignoring the lessons of the Ryder plan, suggested that a lot more investment and technology would produce results. On the last occasion that we discussed this matter, I said that there had been too great a reliance upon a strategy for technology. In that context I mentioned Professor Battachatiya, who is one of the most plausible and persuasive advocates of such a policy. He offers a technological short-cut for dealing with the problems of Rover. I am afraid that that spirit is still alive and well despite the Japanese experience. In our last debate I quoted the experience of Toyota. This week I made inquiries in Japan about Honda. That company is extremely concerned at the line that has been taken by Professor Battachatiya and his reliance on technology rather than dealing with the problems of leading, managing and co-operating with the work force. I am sure that Labour Members would agree that they are the most important ingredients for the success of a company.

I found the Opposition's case most disappointing. There was no advance, but a retreat from the glimpses of the change we have had. That is why they are the real conservative party because they are unable to meet the challenge of change. They have retreated from any suggestion of perestroika or glasnost. I am afraid that we have nothing to look forward to from the Labour party and nor has the work force. The Labour and Liberal parties expressly keep on referring to the problems. They have done everything to undermine confidence in and run down the achievements and potential of two fine British companies.

9.3 pm

Mr. Terry Davis (Birmingham, Hodge Hill): I shall not respond to the speech of the hon. Member for Bromsgrove (Mr. Miller), who, for most of the time, indulged in a knockabout speech that dealt with personalities and made partisan points that had nothing to do with the debate. I do not intend to demean myself by following him into that gutter.

I wish to refer to the speech of the hon. Member for Beverley (Mr. Cran), which was based on his experience in the west midlands and concentrated upon the issue facing the House tonight, the gift of the Rover Group to British Aerospace. The hon. Gentleman is absolutely right to express concern about the effect of the present uncertainty on the prospects for the Rover Group. He was right to draw attention to the effects of that uncertainty on sales. If it continues, those sales will be greatly affected. The hon. Gentleman is wrong, however, to say that this debate is responsible for that uncertainty. This debate is the result of the Government's proposals.

The hon. Gentleman was right to say that we should let Rover Group get on with the job. I agree with him that we should leave it alone and not disturb it, and in one way I agree with him that we should not be having this debate tonight. We are having the debate only because the Government have destabilised the position. It is the Government's proposals that we are debating. They have introduced uncertainty by wanting to give Rover Group to British Aerospace. The hon. Gentleman must place the blame where it rests—on the Government.

The hon. Gentleman resented the debate for another reason—because we should not debate the future of the motor industry in general, or Rover Group in particular. I disagree with him on that point. He said that the debate should take place in the board room. We think that it should take place in public, not behind closed doors, because we are debating the future employment of thousands of people and the means of living of thousands of families. Therefore, the debate should take place in public where the public and those who work in the industry can make up their minds on the arguments expressed. I disagree with the hon. Gentleman's wish, which is shared by the Minister, to keep this private.

The Minister seemed to be equivocal and ambiguous about whether the past investment of £2·9 billion by Governments of both parties was good or bad. He seemed to regret it. I do not. That investment has saved Rover Group. Without it we would not be having this debate and the Government would not be giving Rover Group to British Aerospace. There would not have been a Rover Group. In fact, it would have gone out of existence 14 years ago if the Conservative party had had its way because it opposed the rescue, perhaps for the reason that the hon. Member for Beverley adduced—that it is for the Opposition to oppose. We would not have had this debate, a Rover Group or a British motor industry to debate, either in private or in public on that basis.

There are two crucial issues. The first relates to the strategy which is appropriate to the Rover Group. The Minister seemed to think that the Social and Liberal Democratic party agreed with him on that, but I am not sure. When I read the terms of its amendment I thought that it did, but the hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Taylor), did not agree with the Government. The Minister made the Government's position clear. They want the Rover Group to have higher profits as a result of lower sales of high value cars. They want lower volume sales.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Robert Atkins): No.

Mr. Davis: The Minister says no. I am afraid that there is another division among the Government, but I shall not pursue that.

We on the Labour Benches are united in saying that we want a Rover Group with the ambition, objective and

[Mr. Davis]

target of higher sales. We want it to return to being a volume car manufacturer with higher sales and higher volume and more jobs. That is the crucial point.

The argument is not about whether the motor industry and Rover Group should be profitable. It is about how those profits should be earned, whether from low volume sales of high value cars or from high volume sales of cars which generate, not only high profits but more jobs. We are fearful that the Rover Group's strategy will lead to fewer jobs for our constituents, albeit with higher profits. We want higher profits from higher sales, so more jobs. When the Minister talks about going up-market he only confirms our suspicion that he is going up-market for cars and customers but down-market for jobs for our constituents.

The second crucial issue is whether Rover Group should remain in public ownership or be sold. During the previous debate we went into the terms of sale in detail. The hon. Member for Beverley did not seem to be aware of that, but we discussed the terms of the proposed sale, or the gift as we see it, in great detail. This debate has concentrated rightly on whether the Rover Group should remain in public ownership or be given away. We are clear that it should continue in public ownership. The Minister said that we had an ideological obsession with nationalisation. However, at the centre of the debate is the Government's ideological obsession with private ownership. I have not heard any justification for the Government's belief that in some way private ownership would be beneficial for this section of the motor industry which failed before under private ownership. The only reason that it was taken into public ownership was to rescue it and to allow it to survive. The Government provided the investment which was needed to save jobs.

Mr. Eastham: Does my hon. Friend recall that only a few years ago there was a serious failure in engineering at Rolls-Royce and that the Conservative Government decided in a matter of days to nationalise Rolls-Royce, otherwise there would have been no industry?

Mr. Davis: My hon. Friend is correct. I was a Member at the time and we supported the Government. I regret that only a few months afterwards the Conservative party, hell-bent on opposition, decided to vote against the salvation of the Rover Group. Tonight we see the result of that change in the Conservative approach. We are debating the ideological obsession of the Conservatives and their doctrinaire, dogmatic hostility to public ownership. They are politically hostile to the public ownership of the Rover Group precisely because it is successful.

One of the few constructive parts of the speech of the hon. Member for Bromsgrove was his reference to the recent good news from the Rover Group. Of course, that was good news from the Rover Group in public ownership. Let it be said that the 1,500 extra jobs at Longbridge are being provided by a publicly owned company. Such good news will not continue in future.

The Minister referred also to the success of Jaguar in recent years. That company is successful, again because it was saved by a Labour Government. It, too, would have closed 14 years ago—*[Interruption]*. In an intervention from a sedentary position the Minister has said that it was saved from Geoffrey Robinson. That is rubbish. Geoffrey Robinson was the managing director of Jaguar for a time and he helped to save the company. I give credit to him, just as I give credit to John Egan and other people who played their part, and I am sorry that the Minister chooses to make that petty, spiteful comment from a sedentary position; it demeans the Dispatch Box.

One reason why Jaguar has been more successful in recent years is that Geoffrey Robinson, among others, helped to lay the foundation of better quality cars. There was also a drastic change in the exchange rate. I am referring not to recent changes but to the decline in the pound against the dollar. That is the real secret of the success of Jaguar. It did not have anything to do with private ownership. Jaguar was successful under public ownership in the same way as the Rover Group has been successful under public ownership. The success has been the result of 14 years of hard work and investment by the taxpayer. The Government resent the success precisely because it has happened under public ownership.

My hon. Friend the Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) was unnecessarily kind to the Minister when he said that the future was guaranteed for five years for people who work in the Rover Group. That is not correct. The Government have had a guarantee that the Rover Group will not be sold by British Aerospace within five years without the money being returned to the Government. That is not the same as saying that the jobs are guaranteed for five years.

I listened carefully to the hon. Member for Beverley. He said that the chairman, Graham Day, had given a guarantee to the Select Committee on Trade and Industry that the jobs would be guaranteed insofar as they could be. We understand the exigencies of the market place but the hon. Gentleman told us that British Aerospace has said that there are no plans to declare redundancies. We will put that guarantee in the bank. I hope, for the sake of my constituents, that I do not have to take it out and show it to the hon. Member for Beverley within the next five years. My information is that British Aerospace will declare redundancies in the Rover Group in the same way as that company has declared not once but several times, not hundreds but thousands of redundancies, not only among AEU members, to whom my hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Blackley (Mr. Eastham) referred, but among all levels of staff and employees at British Aerospace. As a result of so-called rationalisation there will almost certainly be redundancies at the Rover Group under British Aerospace.

The Minister gave the game away when he said that the Government were taking this opportunity to return the Rover Group to the private sector because of the general well-being of the economy "at the moment". He said that it was propitious to return the group to the private sector "at the moment". What happens when the moment passes and the economy runs into difficulties? What happens when it becomes more difficult to sell cars abroad because of the exchange rate? By that time the Government will be able to avoid any responsibility for redundancies or for the future of the Rover Group.

The group should remain in British public ownership. It is important for the future livelihood of my constituents and for the livelihood of thousands of people in the west midlands who depend not only on the Rover Group but on its suppliers and dealers. It is vital that that heart of the motor industry remains in existence. If it does not, other

jobs will be lost. The only way in which we can give a guarantee to the people who work in the Rover Group and to the people who depend on it is to say that the group will survive. The only way it can survive is by being kept in public ownership and that is the alternative the hon. Member for Beverley asked for.

9.17 pm

Mr. Roger King (Birmingham, Northfield): The hon. Member for Birmingham, Hodge Hill (Mr. Davis) and many other Opposition Members have said that the Rover Group should remain in state ownership because it is only state ownership that has saved our car industry. We shall never know that because if instead of being brought into state or public ownership 14 years ago it had been allowed to go into liquidation it is highly possible that today we would have a motor industry of greater volume than we have at the moment.

The history of the British motor industry is of companies going out of business or being taken over by other businesses. Daimler, Singer, Standard and Wolseley come immediately to mind. They fell on hard times and went bankrupt. People picked up the pieces and made a success of them, but then they faded from the industrial scene as they were merged into bigger companies. We shall never know whether state ownership could have saved the car industry. However, we do know that, as a result of state ownership, our motor industry is nothing like as big as it was. It has been reduced and it is only by separating the units and by privatising companies such as Jaguar that future success and prosperity can be guaranteed. There are now more people working for Jaguar than worked for it when it was state-owned and included companies such as Alvis and Self-Changing Gears. Jaguar is successful and it has maintained that success and built on it because it knows that if it does not succeed it will go out of business and there will be nobody to provide a blank cheque.

The Rover Group wants to be privatised to get out from underneath the state company. I know that because I live among the work force, as does my hon. Friend the Member for Bromsgrove (Mr. Miller). We live and work among the people of Birmingham and we know that they are sick and tired of being the subject of public debate year in and year out. They are subjected to that by the Opposition who are anxious to point the finger and say that Rover is a failing company. They try to run it down and to do a hatchet job on it, and that is what they have been trying to do in this debate.

The Opposition talk about the survival of the business, say that it cannot provide the investment and that it will go out of business. They are saying that at a time when the group is fighting for all the sales and registrations that it can get in August. The Opposition are anxious to convey the message to the public not to buy Rover cars because they can have no faith or confidence in the company and that it will go out of business as a result of what the company—not the Government—wants to do. It is not the Government who are seeking to privatise the business. The managing director and the chief executive of Rover and British Aerospace got together and said that they have some degree of rapport because they are both in highly technical engineering.

Britain has many companies making all kinds of things and with all sorts of subsidiaries. Vickers is a classic case. It makes Rolls-Royce cars and lithographic plates. There is no direct synergy between the companies but the same disciplines, corporate investment, opportunities and facilities are at head office for use by all the subsidiary companies. I am confident that under the new arrangement the Rover Group in partnership with British Aerospace will prosper.

Of course there is a cost element involved, but there is absolutely no doubt that the Rover Group could maintain its present financial position as a state company. Somewhere along the line the debts have to be written off and the Government have to restructure the company financially. By assisting in its restructuring and allowing it to go into the private sector, they are getting a remarkably good deal for the country and for the company.

The hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould), who represents a Ford constituency, made great play about lack of investment in the Rover Group if it goes into private hands. He said that it will be knocked apart by exhaust emission controls and has no hope of being able to surmount that. That is an insult to the engineers and to the company. Of course it can surmount that. New engines and new cars are on the way. It already has new engines running, and of course it sells cars to the United States of America where exhaust emissions are of paramount importance.

It is a fallacious argument and a wicked one to boot. It says that if Rover fails we shall become a branch line in engineering. Obviously, the hon. Member has no idea at all about engineering in the motor industry today, because Rover Group is in partnership with Honda in gearbox assembly and the use of engines. It is in partnership with Volkswagen over gearboxes and it will soon be in partnership with PSA/Peugot-Citroen for the manufacture of gearboxes. That is the name of the game in the British motor industry and in the world car industry. For years the Rover Group has been buying automatic gearboxes from General Motors, and from Carysler before then, for certain up-market cars. That is the name of the game. It is not branch-line engineering; it is making the best use of the available products in the market place and that is as it should be.

I have spoken to the work force and I know that the workers look forward to the new arrangement because it solves the problem that they know the company has to address. Will it find its future in the state sector where it becomes a subject of public debate and abuse, or can it get into the private sector, free from the shackles of Government controls, constraints, debates and interference and be allowed to prosper on its own? Having spoken to many of the employees in Birmingham, and I am sure that the same could be said for those in Cowley, I have absolutely no doubt that they know that their future lies in the private sector and they have but one thing to say to the Labour Opposition, and to those who insist on debating the future of the company, and that is, "Lay off it."

9.21 pm

Mr. John Hughes (Coventry, North-East): I have listened to many speeches tonight, and I have little affinity with them, especially with those of the Bernard Mannings on the Conservative Benches who treat this very important subject and people's jobs in a jocular manner.

I have listened to the statisticians in the debate. That was an unexpected ploy from the Government Benches, but it bears little resemblance to the physical realities of

[Mr. John Hughes]

people. The British people know that Rolls-Royce, British Telecom, BP, British Gas—and Rover, if it happens—have been stolen from them. They have lost out in those deals in an inhumane way. The revenue from those companies which originally went to the Treasury bought hip joints for the elderly, provided dialysis machines for renal cases, provided wheelchairs for the disabled and operations for cardiac patients in the Birmingham children's hospital. That is what the revenue from British Leyland meant, and you ignore that.

Mr. Speaker: Order—not me.

Mr. Hughes: It would have continued to meet that very humane need but for the obscene greed of the Government which has diverted revenue from humane needs into the well-lined pockets of the shareholders. In the case of Jaguar, 50 per cent. of the shareholders are American.

Anyone who has been employed in the car industry must view the Government's latest proposals with deep apprehension. They have suffered horrendously from the Government's strategies. Government appointees—so-called experts—had a brief to make Leyland as competitive as the Japanese manufacturers. The product of their pruning and slashing is the equivalent of a Japanese bonsai tree. It is stunted and fragmented. Indeed, the industry is so small that only the sweat and skill of the workers have prevented it from going to the wall.

I have experienced the effects of these industrial entrepreuneurs. Morris Engines, where I worked, provided homes, and clothed and fed families. It was reduced to rubble by Government appointees. Coventry car manufacturers, who were of world repute, were wiped off the map. Coventry was blighted, and it has yet to recover. That is what threatens workers who will be affected by these proposals.

I can only hope that the European Commission will not permit the merger. If the deal is permitted, I can only say that, if it were made outside the House, it would put the perpetrators in gaol. It is the result of connivance by a Government who lack humanity and refuse to fund the Birmingham children's hospital adequately. They are prepared to jeopardise the lives of children who suffer from major cardiac complaints. You should be standing up and talking about the child who has died in your constituency because you have argued for revenue——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I remind the hon. Gentleman that he must put his speech in the third person.

Mr. Hughes: Revenue from the company will be handed over dishonestly to shareholders. It will line the pockets of shareholders of British Aerospace if the privatisation goes ahead.

9.27 pm

Mr. Robert Hayward (Kingswood): I represent a primarily British Aerospace constituency, but I was astonished by what the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) said. I have listened to him in Committee for many hours, and it was unfortunate that his speech tonight in no way matched speeches that I have heard him make on many other occasions.

I have rarely listened to so much criticism, complaint and denigration of the prospects for British industry. Everything that has gone wrong he blamed on the Government and on private industry; everything that has gone right has been claimed as a success either of public financing or of a change in the exchange rate. I find that amazing. The hon. Gentleman made not one reference to the achievements of the Rover Group or of British Aerospace. All we heard about was failure, failure, failure.

I was fascinated, but not surprised of course, to hear no reference to the debate on 11 March 1987 about Leyland—DAF and the general state of what was then the Austin Rover Group. It was all doom, gloom and despondency. We were told that Leyland Trucks would disappear. What has happened? The latest figures show that Leyland Trucks' sales have increased because it has had access to the dealer network throughout Europe provided by DAF. That is precisely what Conservative Members said 15 months ago, especially my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Industry, who was then on the Back Benches. We heard constant carping about the state of British Aerospace and its capacity to cope with the intake of a major motor manufacturer. British Aerospace faces difficulties with airframe manufacture and the exchange rate is causing further difficulties. Opposition Members fail to recognise that two years ago the exchange rate, instead of being £3·10p to the deutschmark, was £4 to the deutschmark. It has increased and decreased, and somebody must say whether that benefits the aerospace and motor industries.

Rationalisation in the aerospace and motor industries has cost jobs. It has not cost 1,100 redundancies at Filton, as the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) suggested. I should know because I represent the area; he does not.

We are debating the proposed merger between British Aerospace and the Rover Group. Significantly, we have not heard one serious alternative proposal from the Opposition. The hon. Member for Dagenham referred over and over again to an indigenous motor manufacturer. Is it indigenous with a link with Honda? If it is to be purely indigenous, would the hon. Gentleman drop the link with Honda or would he extend it and allow it to operate?

If the Opposition are saying that the merger with British Aerospace should not go ahead, they must say what they would do with the Rover Group. I was surprised that, in denigrating the two companies, no Opposition Member referred to the massive funding given to Renault. The hon. Member for Coventry, South-East suggested that the European Community should refuse to allow the merger to take place. What is the alternative? Is it merely to pour in more money? The amount involved in the merger is insignificant compared to the amount given to Renault. The deal is good for both companies, and it is about time that the matter was resolved, cleared off the decks and both companies became one.

9.31 pm

Mr. Andrew Smith (Oxford, East): The hon. Member for Kingswood (Mr. Hayward) needs to learn the important difference between a link and complete absorption. The Labour party recognises and values more than anyone else the importance of the link with Honda. If British Aerospace had something to add, and it may have something to add, there would be no reason why a link should not be established. Complete takeover is a different matter.

The takeover is clearly motivated by the Government's pathological hatred of the public sector and, I suspect, by the fact that they will not recognise the importance of the public-sector contribution to the many achievements that the Minister rightly mentioned earlier.

The critical question for the future is from where the capital will come. It is no good saying that undertakings have been given, that money may be available from British Aerospace or that the takeover will depend simply on the market. What we are being offered depends not only on the car market—to which the Rover Group's work force and all the other companies involved have been gearing their efforts—but on the aviation market, which is very uncertain. We have not been given any guarantees that capital investment will be made available in the future, which is the major worry that the workers at Cowley have expressed to me in recent months. I agree wholeheartedly with one comment that was made by the hon. Member for Bromsgrove (Mr. Miller). He said that a lesson that must be learnt from the Japanese is how to co-operate with and motivate the work force.

The best signal that could be given to the public and Rover Group's work force—especially at Cowley, where my constituency responsibility lies—is an announcement about the forthcoming model range. The lack of a new model for Cowley is of major concern. I shall not rest until I have been given undertakings that the future of the work force will be secured.

A question has to be put to the Government. If the deal goes ahead and they have shrugged off their responsibility and washed their hands of this vital strategic industry, what happens if it goes wrong?

9.34 pm

Mr. Austin Mitchell (Great Grimsby): This debate has been a fascinating exercise; it has made me realise that, having failed the viva we gave the Government on 4 May, all the opportunities for revision, all the hard work done by Central Office and all the advice of the Civil Service have not produced in tonight's re-examination any better arguments than they had before. Essentially, the Government's only argument throughout the debate, which has been echoed by every Conservative Member who has spoken, is, private good, public bad; private good, public bad. They have chanted that like Orwell's pigs as if it was the key to economic regeneration.

It has been a sad spectacle watching hon. Members whose constituencies are affected by the exercise having to whistle in the wind because they do not have the guts to speak up for jobs, the integrity of the industry, investment or the new models and because they do not have the intelligence to see what is happening to the industry and what is implicit in the deal. All they have been able to do is reiterate the chant. Greater love hath no man than that he lay down his constituency and his industry for his leader's prejudices. It certainly helps in that process if one does not understand what is going on. We shall see the consequences of that.

As our motion states, no good will come of the merger. It has no logic. It helps neither company and contains the danger that it could harm both. That is a real probability. The Government, with no higher wisdom than to get rid of public assets—the Lady Macbeth syndrome: "Out, damned spot", or "Out, damned Rover"—are washing their hands of their responsibilities in an attempt to get rid of Rover at this opportunity.

Every country faced with a crisis in its car industry has seen the centrality of that industry to manufacturing, the balance of payments, employment and technology in that country. It does not involve just electronics but ceramics and plastics. Every country has intervened to save its threatened car industry. Even in the United States, the Government intervened to save Chrysler. That is the Government's responsibility. That has happened in this country too. Several countries are still supporting their car industries generously—Spain, France and Italy and, to a limited extent, West Germany.

The important point is not the endless argument between privatisation and nationalisation but the support necessary to build the industry up into a state in which it could survive on its own feet if it was Government policy that it should do so. The strength of the industry is the crucial factor, not the doctrinaire arguments about public or private ownership.

Rover cannot stand on its own two feet as an independent producer. It is still trapped in its central dilemma. It is too small to be a volume car producer, but it is not yet sufficiently well invested to be the quality up-market producer we would like it to be. A production total of just over 400,000 a year is not adequate to generate the investment or the new models. It is not a firm enough base to generate the profits that would allow the company to survive.

A previous top executive of Rover, Ray Horrocks, said in 1986 that to survive and to generate profits sufficient to make the investment self-sustaining Rover needed an output of 600,000 vehicles a year: in other words, a third higher than the present output. That is what it needs to survive. The Government's responsibility is to keep supporting and helping Rover and to keep it in the state stable until it achieves that figure. Then we can talk of its being viable. Then we can talk about returning it to the private sector, if that is the Government's doctrine. Until then, Rover cannot survive on its own. That is the crucial factor.

Ministers have not told us how a company that is now surviving and investing in new models only because it is in the state sector will manage on its own in the long term. Putting it into the stable with British Aerospace is effectively much the same as putting it out on its own. It needs a scale of production that it does not have. Until the company has that scale, the state has no alternative but to keep it. Endless questions have been asked about Labour's alternative. Our alternative is to keep Rover Group where it is, to build it up and invest in it and to produce the new models that will allow it to survive. That is the only sensible strategy, and that is the strategy we advocate.

The Government have prevaricated, chopped and changed and wombled and wandered all over the place alternating their policies. For a period, we have had the Graham Day treatment. If I am not well disposed to Graham Day, it is not only because he has dropped the name Austin. He has inflicted the anorexia nervosa treatment on Rover. He has constantly gone for profits and financial return rather than scale, investment and building up the company. That is the crucial thing. He has shed functions and services. He has shed Unipart, Bos, trucks, Llanelli Radiators, Beans Foundry and Leyland CVT—all functions that a car industry needs for

[Mr. Austin Mitchell]

integrated production. They have all been chopped off one by one in the desire to pretty up the profits and get the company back into the private sector as quickly as possible to raise money. In other words, Rover Group has shed everything that it needs in its association with British Aerospace.

Now the Government have gone in for another zig-zag phase. A previous zig-zag was to flirt with sale to competitors. Frankly, that would have brought in more money for the taxpayer, if that is what the Minister thinks is important. A competitor would undoubtedly have spent more to run it down——

Mr. Joseph Ashton (Bassetlaw): Is it not the case that the Government would have preferred to sell on the open market—if necessary to the Japanese—but that the Secretary of State for Wales, who represents Worcester, and the Secretary of State for Employment, who represents Sutton Coldfield, knew the political consequences of selling to a car competitor from abroad and used the interim period to sell the company to British Aerospace so that that company can sell it in five years' time? No guarantee has been given to the Select Committee on Trade and Industry that that will not happen.

Mr. Mitchell: My hon. Friend is extremely well informed on these issues, from his work on the Select Committee. That scenario is quite likely. Perhaps the Government are postponing the evil day. They were rightly stopped from pursuing that strategy. They could not carry out the only test of a company's ability to survive: they could not float the company, because they knew it would sink. The genuine way of privatising the company is not to lean it on another company but to float it off as an independent company.

Why did the Government not do that? If the company is ripe for privatisation, why not keep it going until it has the necessary scale and then float it? They did not do that, but they were desperate to give it the Lady Macbeth treatment. I am reminded of a joke from "Beyond the Fringe": what we need at this stage of the war is a futile gesture. The Government have found the futile gesture. They can get rid of it. It is the wind of opportunity; something that fell off the back of the devaluation expansion from 1986—the improvement in the fortunes of the company.

The Government were in a dilemma. Enter at that moment—not with a "Shazam!"; not from Krypton but from Harrods—Captain Britain, that industrial Toby jug, Professor Smith, who is not, it has to be said, as daft as he looks. He wants a good price for taking the company off the Government's hands. He has nothing to offer. British Aerospace has nothing much to offer except casual conversations between engineers. There is no synergy. Frankly, there would be more synergy if Rover merged with the manufacturers of dangling dice for the back window or plastic car upholstery.

British Aerospace works on a long-term investment strategy and it takes 15 years for its investment runs to come home. To sustain it now it needs a cash cow, something like an insurance company or, perhaps, Harrods. Instead, it is being offered Rover because it is clear that, for the next two years, Rover will boost its earnings per share. Phillips and Drew estimate that earnings per share will jump to 62p this year and 96p next year, as against 48p per share without the merger. It is all about giving British Aerospace survivability and the earnings that it cannot get from the cash cow that it should have had. All that British Aerospace has given in return is a guarantee that will last for only five years, with the possible consequences that my hon. Friend the Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) rightly mentioned. It is nothing more than a short-term measure.

As my hon. Friend asked, what happens if the European Commission deems that the Government's contribution to the merger is too great? The Select Committee asked Professor Smith whether it would affect his willingness to purchase if that contribution was cut. He said, "Quite dramatically." In other words, it will all be up for grabs again. That is the danger, and the Government have given no guarantee of what might happen then.

Both companies are vulnerable in the same way. They do not supplement each other; they simply amplify each other's weakness. Both are vulnerable to a rising exchange rate that is threatening British manufacturing once again. It does not matter which aspect of Government exchange rate policy we consider, whether it be the Prime Minister's or the Chancellor's—the one is only slightly dafter than the other—or a combination of those policies: the pound is now too high for the health of manufacturing. What is more, the Government are refusing to allow the free market, which they praise in every other respect, to operate on the pound. Why not let the free market operate on the pound, bring down interest rates and bring down the pound with that? Industry must bear the double burden of an over-valued pound supported by interest rates that are far too high.

Our real exchange rate against the deutschmark is up 16 per cent. on 1987 and up 40 per cent. on the last quarter of 1976. That is what will strangle British manufacturing industry. The Government cannot blame pay increases, because labour costs increased only slightly last year because of expansion. The Chancellor has discovered a secret—expand the economy and labour costs come down. Now, because production is falling, labour costs will increase again.

The terms of trade for manufacture now stand at 107, so they are worse than the 105 at which they stood in the first quarter of 1981. Everybody knows that the exchange rate then was disastrously high, with ruinous consequences for British industry. It is now worse. We are heading for a position in which both British Aerospace—especially its commercial planes and the Airbus contract—and Rover will be vulnerable. Our exports will be down and our imports up. Jaguar's exports to the United States are down 20 per cent. in the first quarter of this year, and the imported share of the British car market will increase to more than 50 per cent. this year. A repetition of the disaster of 1979-81 will result from over-valuation of the pound.

When both companies are weak in the same areas, they are not helped by being shackled together. They compound each other's problems. Whence will come the investment for new models? The Government have given no answer to that, yet new models are crucial if the company is to continue. All this has happened because the Government want a quick fix. There are no guarantees about redundancies, plants or new models. There is no provision for investment, and no provision for the future.

That is the economics of irresponsibility. The Government have betrayed the British car industry, which has seen a bigger rundown than has occurred in any other country since 1979. There has also been a bigger increase in imported cars than in any other country since 1979, and now Rover is about to be betrayed.

The danger is that a company in that situation will not survive but will have to be brought back into the state stable by a Labour Government as a central part of the expansion of manufacturing industry, because this Government, irresponsibly, made no provision for its future. That is the betrayal which a Labour Government will reverse.

9.50 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Industry (Mr. Robert Atkins): There have been four debates on this subject and at long last the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) has admitted that if—God forbid—the Labour party ever returns to government it will renationalise a privatised Rover Group. At last we have that on the record. We have been trying for some time to get that response and now we have it—and we shall not forget it.

It is inevitable that in the course of my remarks this evening I shall repeat myself, as on the three previous occasions—31 March, 4 May and 12 May—when the House considered this matter at considerable length all the points raised tonight by Opposition Members were discussed. Nothing has changed and we have nothing further to report in relation to progress in our discussions with the EC.

It is a measure of the lack of the Opposition's originality that they cannot find anything else to talk about except to repeat themselves. I was warned by the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist), in one of his Adjournment debates, that the chairman of the parliamentary Labour party was pressurised by him into having a further debate on which the Opposition could vote. He told me so, and he speaks with some authority on motor industry matters, as he frequently reminds us. Therefore, the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) had to do what he was told. That is why we are where we are today.

I remind the House again of my constituency involvement with British Aerospace, Leyland-DAF and Leyland Bus with the town whose name was once given to the company we are discussing today. That involvement has enabled me to see—contrary to the jibes of some Opposition Members, to the effect that many of my hon. Friends and myself do not pay attention to those working in the industry—the logical development that is represented——

Mr. Gould: The Minister has nothing to say.

Mr. Atkins: Opposition Members have chosen today for their debate. They have spoken at length, and on the basis of a lack of information. The least that they can do is to listen to the Government's response—albeit for the fourth time—because they do not have anything original to talk about.

In the short time left to me, I remind the House that we discussed this matter at considerable length on the Floor of the House and in the Select Committee.

Mr. Gould: He has nothing new to say.

Mr. Atkins: The hon. Gentleman is right; we have nothing further to add to what was said in the previous debates which the Labour party initiated. We have reminded the Opposition yet again that that is the case. It is not my fault that I am here answering the debate—it is the fault of the Opposition, because they chose this day to repeat themselves ad nauseam.

Mr. Ashton *rose*

Mr. Atkins: No, I am not giving way. If the hon. Gentleman has something to say, he can write it up in his article for *The Star* and we shall all read it with great interest.

Mr. Ashton *rose*——

Mr. Atkins: Go on, then.

Mr. Ashton: Is the Minister aware that the Select Committee on Trade and Industry has discussed the matter at length for many hours? It is apparent that the Government are stalling and refusing to reply to any debate until August because they do not want to respond to the Common Market point.

Mr. Atkins: I assure the House that my right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster has told me that he will be on holiday in August, and I shall certainly be. I suspect that the hon. Gentleman will be as well. On that basis, nothing of such importance is likely to happen.

From my knowledge of my area and from talking to people working in the industry, particularly the component manufacturers and a number of the dealers who have written to us, I am satisfied that the deal will be extremely good news for my constituents, and those of many other hon. Members on both sides of the House. Having talked and listened to them, I know that they want to stay within a British company, and that is what British Aerospace is—a company that has dedicated and devoted itself to doing great things in the export as well as the domestic market. I believe that their interests, and those of constituents of other hon. Members, will be protected by a speedy implementation of the terms of this conditional agreement.

Do the Opposition really want to return to the days when Leyland was a music-hall joke, the butt of every cheapskate comedian? Do they want to return to the days when morale was at rock bottom, and many employees —my constituents, working orginally for Leyland Motors and before that for Spurriers—resented the dreadful image created under their management? Do they not recognise the achievements of the present management in rebuilding the company in co-operation with the work force—a management that wants the company to be returned to the private sector? Need I quote Graham Day yet again? His classic comment was:

"For me it is not simply a matter of ideology, it is a matter of very good common business sense".

I want to draw particular attention to some of the speeches that have been made. My hon. Friend the Member for Beverley (Mr. Cran) made an excellent speech, as many hon. Members on both sides of the House will have recognised. He speaks as a knowledgeable former director of the CBI who understands industry. He is also a member of the Select Committee which, as he rightly said —as did the hon. Member for Bassetlaw (Mr. Ashton) —considered the matter. He is right in his assessment that

[Mr. Atkins]

the continuous spotlight on the company is not necessarily doing it all the good that it should do. My hon. Friend the Member for Bromsgrove (Mr. Miller) speaks with considerable authority, because he knows what is going on—backed by my hon. Friend the Member for Solihull (Mr. Taylor), who is prevented from contributing to the debate but whose advice we find invaluable in the Department, and without whom we could not make the decisions that we make.

There were jibes from Opposition Members that my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King) has never made so much as a mousetrap. Yet he was an engineer working for the British Motor Corporation, and he has set up a company that supplies components to the motor industry. He knows what he is talking about, unlike Opposition Members, and the sooner they realise that the better.

That is the point. Conservative Members, speaking about constituencies where they live and understanding what the work force has to say, speak with authority. Opposition Members are in the desperate straits of old-fashioned Victorian Socialism. All that they believe in is nationalisation at all costs, and the hon. Member for Great Grimsby, that master mixer of metaphors, has given a commitment to renationalise the company if and when Labour ever come into office.

We have made it clear that we believe that this is a good agreement, good for the company and good for the taxpayer. We believe that it will again demonstrate the benefits of privatisation, enabling a business to develop in response to the market, not Whitehall or Westminster. We believe that Rover Group will benefit from shaking off once and for all the perceptions associated with more than a decade of state ownership. The agreement with British Aerospace offers the prospect of a new future and a new period of stability for Rover Group, removed from the spotlight of political controversy. It is a good deal and we should support it.

Question put, That the original words stand part of the Question:—

The House divided: Ayes 198, Noes 307.

Division No. 344] **[9.59 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McKelvey, William
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Allen McKay.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cartwright, John
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mellor, David
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Moss, Malcolm
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

Question accordingly negatived.

Question, That the proposed words be there added, *put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 30 (Questions on amendments), and agreed to.*

Mr. Speaker *forthwith declared the main Question, as amended, to be agreed to.*

Resolved,

That this House believes that the recent improvement in Rover Group's performance owes much to the efforts of the workforce and management combined, that further improvement can best be achieved by returning the business to full private ownership, that the proposed takeover by British Aerospace is to be warmly welcomed and is in the interests of Rover Group's employees as well as those of its suppliers and dealer network, that future investment should be a matter for the management of the business and the prospective new owners, and that the overall terms of the sale agreement are in the interests not only of the companies but also of the taxpayer.

Goods Vehicles

Mr. Speaker: Before I call upon the Minister to move the motion, I must call the attention of the House to a misprint on the Order Paper in line 6 of the motion. After the word "suppression" the words

"so as to make its application, like the proposed Directive on"

should be inserted.

10.15 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Peter Bottomley): I beg to move,

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 8284/87 on spray suppression devices and lateral protection (sideguards) for certain categories of motor vehicles and their trailers; and endorses the Government's objectives of securing Community arrangements which would not require more stringent standards than those required in the United Kingdom at present, and amendment of the proposed Directive on spray suppression so as to make its application, like the proposed Directive on sideguards, permissive rather than mandatory, and restricted in scope to the same categories of vehicles as are covered by the existing United Kingdom Regulations.

I am grateful to the hon. Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) for pointing out that some words had been omitted from the motion.

Today we are to consider two proposals from the Commission. They were issued by the Commission in September last year. Both proposals are for directives for heavy lorries and their trailers, one for spray suppression devices and the other for lateral protection devices or sideguards. The proposals are for a mandatory directive for spray suppression devices and a permissive directive for sideguards. Both invoke article 100 as their legal basis. They would both have a dual role of making progress and improving safety and avoiding the possibility of member states erecting barriers to trade by applying unique national standards.

In the negotiations in Brussels the measure on spray suppression devices has aroused considerable opposition from some member states. It is unlikely that it will be adopted in the foreseeable future. There is likely to be agreement that the proposal for sideguards should be amended to correspond with the Economic Commission for Europe regulation. All member states are likely to find such an amendment acceptable.

Although at present there seems little prospect of a common position being adopted by the Council, there is a possibility that as the current presidency draws to a close it will try to achieve a common position to add to its tally of successes. We have recently been advised that such an attempt could be made this month. In our negotiations in Brussels these two proposals have been dealt with together. They are separate in their subject matter.

The sideguard proposal sets standards for the design and construction of lateral protection to be fitted to heavy goods vehicles and their trailers over 3·5 tonnes maximum gross vehicle weight. The guards cover the open space in front of the rear wheels and are intended to prevent pedestrians and cyclists from falling under the side of the vehicle and being run over by the rear wheels.

We have had requirements in regulations for sideguards in the United Kingdom since 1983. France and Holland also have similar requirements for them on some categories of heavy vehicle. To achieve harmonisation of requirements throughout Europe, discussions have been held in Geneva and an ECE regulation has been prepared.

This contains, for heavy vehicles over 12 tonnes and trailers over 10 tonnes maximum weight, requirements for flat sideguard rails similar to those in our present construction and use regulations. For vehicles from 3·5 tonnes to 12 tonnes the ECE regulation allows round bars, as specified in the French regulations, instead of flat rails. In our view, the round bars proposed for smaller goods vehicles offer slightly less protection than the flat rails which the current United Kingdom regulations require. A concession on that point was necessary to reach European agreement for flat rails to be part of the standard in the ECE regulation applicable to the heavier goods vehicles and trailers which predominate in international traffic. Such an agreement is in our interests as it paves the way for international haulage vehicles from Europe being fitted with sideguards similar to those required for United Kingdom registered vehicles.

All member states were party to the discussions in the United Nations ECE. In the negotiations in Brussels there was agreement among member states that the Commission proposal for sideguards should be slightly amended to align with the ECE regulation. There are signs that the Commission will propose such an amendment. It has not yet done so. If it does, it will be in the United Kingdom interest to support the sideguard proposal as it would then align more closely with the present United Kingdom requirements.

There are two implications for vehicles operating in the United Kingdom, be they purely national or international operations. It would be a continued requirement for operators or manufacturers of trucks over 12 tonnes and trailers over 10 tonnes to fit the more robust flat rail sideguards. However, for lighter vehicles they would have the option of fitting the rounded sideguards on very much the established self-certification basis. If they chose to fit the sideguards to meet the requirements of the directive, they would need type approval. In effect, I envisage maintenance of the status quo on this provision.

In addition, international transport operators, that is, those registered in the United Kingdom and in those member states that adopt the directive, will now have to fit sideguards. Gone will be the opportunity to dodge United Kingdom law by registering as an international operator.

I will now turn to the question of spray suppression devices, the second of the Commission proposals which we are to consider. Since 1986 the United Kingdom has been the only country to have requirements in regulations for the design and construction of spray suppression devices. These have been required to be fitted only to new heavy goods vehicles and trailers over 12 tonnes and 3·5 tonnes maximum gross weight respectively and to trailers with two or more axles already in service over 16 tonnes maximum gross weight.

The technical contents now contained in the Commission's proposals are based on and are similar to the present United Kingdom requirements for spray suppression devices.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): Like my hon. Friends and Opposition Members, I have had quite a lot of experience of driving along motorways. I have often done so in a typical English summer when it is pouring with rain and there is about an inch of rain in five hours. Hon. Members will have noticed, to their dismay and distress, lorry overtaking lorry under these conditions. They will themselves have attempted to pass the second lorry in the overtaking lane when that lorry was going at about 70 mph. There is no visibility. One cannot see. One is going through a mist and is putting one's life in the hands of the Almighty. It is incredibly dangerous. That is happening under the regulations which my hon. Friend says we already have in the United Kingdom and which we are asking the Europeans to bless and agree with.

My hon. Friend is normally robust on the subject of road safety. Cannot he come forward with a proper system so that the motoring public is not put at risk by the maniac juggernaut drivers who travel at speeds which are too fast when the roads are awash with water? It is devastatingly dangerous.

Mr. Bottomley: My hon. Friend makes his point with vigour. If I had my way, and if we were debating my prejudices rather than the draft directive of the European Commission, I would put forward a proposal that any lorry which did not have effective spray suppression would be allowed to travel at only 50 mph if its windscreen wipers were on. But I have not yet managed to convince my officials or the European Commission about that. My hon. Friend has made the sort of point which has often been made to me by my hon. Friend the Member for Devon, North (Mr. Speller), who will probably want to speak.

I return to the technical contents of the Commission's proposals which are based on or are similar to the present United Kingdom requirements for spray suppression devices. Although they are similar, there are a small number of differences where the technical content in the Commission's proposals departs from the technical characteristics of our regulations, particularly in the positioning of the mudflaps more closely behind the tyre which may result in them being damaged more easily than with the United Kingdom requirements, without them necessarily being more effective in reducing spray. These points of difference in the detail of the technical content have been discussed in negotiations in Brussels but would need to be resolved much more closely to our requirements before they are likely to be acceptable to the United Kingdom.

As I outlined earlier, the United Kingdom has taken the lead on spray suppression devices; that news will be welcome to my hon. Friends. The United Kingdom is the only country to have such requirements. For retrospective fitment the United Kingdom requirements apply only to trailers over 16 tonnes maximum gross vehicle weight with two or more axles. Although there were only 140,000 of these, we allowed three years for the retrospective fitting of these devices on these vehicles.

As proposed in article 9, the directive brings the weight down to 3·5 tonnes maximum gross vehicle weight and makes it applicable to all goods vehicles and trailers above that weight, both new and in service. This will considerably increase the number of goods vehicles, by about 430,000, which would have to be retrospectively fitted with these devices. This would be a mammoth task three times greater than previously experienced in the retrofit programme on heavy trailers. From our experience, it is clear that the Commission's deadline of 1989 for the completion of its proposed retrospective fitment could not be met. Such a programme would take years and it is estimated that it would cost about £40 million.

The United Kingdom Government are not in favour of compulsory retrospective fitment of anti-spray devices to

[Mr. Bottomley]

all goods vehicles from 3·5 tonnes upwards. Heavy trailers of four or five-axle articulated vehicles are already required to be fitted with these devices. These constitute 40 per cent. of motorway goods vehicle traffic. Their size, speed and generally poor aerodynamics and weight result in them being significant spray propagators, much more so than the relatively light, potentially more sleek and better mud-guarded lighter goods vehicles. Their length makes overtaking in spray particularly hazardous, but that is not the case with smaller vehicles. It is on motorways that speeds are highest and the spray worst.

Other types of vehicle such as rigid lorries and tractor units on the roads now have reasonable mudguards, and so a retrospective programme would offer minimal spray nuisance reduction and would not be cost effective. Application to new heavy vehicles is relatively simple and cost effective. In general, we get good value from the fitting of these devices to vehicles that have high motorway mileage. This is not the case for lorries below 12 tonnes gross. These smaller vehicles generally do not generate spray to the same extent as the heavier ones with greater number of axles and, in addition, they are most generally used on ordinary roads where spray is much less of a problem than on motorways.

The type and condition of roads, speed limits and climatic conditions can all affect spray. These vary considerably across the Community. It is likely that each member state will want to select the categories of vehicles to which these devices should be fitted to suit the particular operating conditions in each country—if they wish to fit them at all. It would be difficult to include all these variations under a mandatory structure. A permissive directive would allow such a flexible approach. In negotiations in Brussels no member state was able to support the Commission's proposals for the directive to be mandatory. Adoption in its present form is unlikely to achieve common agreement. For the reasons I have outlined, we shall be arguing strongly against the retrospective aspects of the directive other than for heavy trailers. We shall support other member states in their rejection of mandatory provisions.

The Government would support amendments to the proposed anti-spray directive to make its application permissive and to restrict its application to the same vehicles as those covered by the existing United Kingdom requirements Our record in both these areas is one of trying to promote sensible advances in improved safety benefits within technically and economically realistic limits.

Mr. Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield): Can the Minister enlighten the House about the exact meaning of "a permissive directive"?

Mr. Bottomley: A permissive directive allows member states to make requirements of their national operators.

Anti-spray devices and sideguards improve the safety of heavy goods vehicles. International directives will ensure that United Kingdom operators, whether engaged in national or international transport, will be required to fit the devices. A permissive directive on spray will give the best chance of a directive being promulgated. The motion promotes the best interests of the United Kingdom.

10.28 pm

Mr. Tony Lloyd (Stretford): I relished the moment of rare candour when we saw what might be described in unparliamentary terms as the real Peter Bottomley inside the Minister. I am rather intrigued by this concept of the separation of power and responsibility. There is the responsible man and the powerless Minister. As the Minister knows, I have some respect for his qualities. He speaks well about road safety but clearly he is so shackled by the culture and inheritance of his Department that the problems begin at that point.

As the debate is about the manner in which the European Community is approaching the safety of heavy goods vehicles and about the manner in which the Department of Transport is approaching such vehicles, it might be worth refreshing hon. Members' memories about the comments made in the 18th report of the Public Accounts Committee published in February. On the regulation of heavy lorries it said:

"Throughout our examination we were very concerned about the long delays by DTp in addressing fundamental issues about the effects of heavy lorries and a lack of urgency in promoting essential research."

Unfortunately, that charge is well made and difficult for the Department to describe as unfair.

Although the Minister tells us that the British Government were the first, and the only Government so far, to adopt spray suppression measures, those measures were hastily adopted and showed signs of being a political response to a problem about which the hon. Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) made the usual comment of the motorist. In reality, inadequate research had been done on that basis. The Government's White Paper in response to the Armitage report in 1981 said:

"A programme of research and trials on reducing spray from heavy lorries is also nearing completion. The Government hopes this research will produce effective solutions to the problem."

Unfortunately, despite the passage of seven years, that research has not produced the answers.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Perhaps in company with the Parliamentary Advisory Council on Transport Safety, which also has a keen and serious interest, the hon. Gentleman might be able to accept an invitation, which I extend now, to come and see spray suppression devices being tested at the Transport and Road Research laboratory at Crowthorne. We do not know everything that is to be known, but we know a great deal more than we did when the Armitage report came out. Most of us, including my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North who may be on his way back, will realise that many lorries have effective spray suppression. The trouble is that many have not.

Mr. Lloyd: In that case, if the research exists but has not been implemented, we have not advanced the argument or the level of safety. There is still considerable confusion about the merits of spray suppression. The Freight Transport Association, which does not and cannot claim to come to the debate with clean hands, makes the point about the research that it conducted that

"the results of the tests raised considerable doubts as to the ability of systems constructed to the standard to make any noticeable impression on the nuisance of spray from large commercial vehicles."

If the FTA is wrong, at no point has the Department of Transport published in a systematic form the evidence that

shows why and how it is wrong. It is important that that should be done because the haulage industry clearly will resist any attempt to increase its operating costs.

Mr. Sheerman: Will my hon. Friend give way on that point?

Mr. Lloyd: In a moment. Clearly the FTA will resist any measure that increases its costs. It is the responsibility of the House to make a rational judgment about the needs of safety irrespective of that resistance. But if the haulage industry resists what it sees as very arbitarily laid standards, that would increase its credibility in other areas and do no service to the argument about heavy goods vehicle safety.

Mr. Sheerman: Will my hon. Friend enlighten the House about how much the FTA thinks that fitting such spray suppression equipment that is currently mandatory in this country puts on the cost of the average vehicle that its members run?

Mr. Lloyd: The Minister will confirm whether I am right or wrong, but the generally accepted figures are about £40 million initially, and then some £2 million on an annual basis.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: If the whole of the draft directive came into effect, as the FTA and the hon. Members for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) and for Huddersfield (Mr. Sheerman) know, the figure would be insignificant in terms of the cost of buying a new HGV. The real question that we are considering is whether it is worth applying the directive retrospectively to lighter goods vehicles. In practice, it is generally accepted that it is not. It is really a question whether we can get the heavy goods vehicles to have effective spray suppression and whether we continue —and the Government need to take a lead in this—the research that will lead to even more effective spray suppression. About two thirds of the water thrown up by an HGV at 60 mph can be caught and demisted with the present knowledge. We hope to be able to go further.

Mr. Lloyd: A lorry travelling at 60 mph throws up about 60 gallons of water a minute, so about one gallon is still thrown on the car behind every three seconds. That is a lot of water.

My hon. Friend the Member for Huddersfield (Mr. Sheerman) may have misunderstood me. The Department has sat on the research for too long. This issue has not been a priority since 1981 but the Minister ought to be able to tell us what the research shows. The Department should be considering other methods, such as different road surfaces. The experience of the Netherlands is that an improvement can be achieved by increasing the porosity, if that is the right word, of roads.

Mr. Bottomley: Permeability.

Mr. Lloyd: I am advised that it is permeability, and on this occasion I am prepared to take the Minister's advice.

When the Minister spoke as a human being and not as a powerless Minister, he said that the problem is speed. The Department's national speed survey for 1982—the most recent available—suggested that nearly 40 per cent. of HGVs break the 60-mph limit on motorways. It is recognised that the spray problem really begins at speeds over 40 mph and that the problem is severe at 60 mph as it grows out of all proportion to the increase in speed. The failure to detect those who break the speed limit is crucial here. We do not need further research, just resources.

What normally happens in the Council of Ministers when an issue such as this is raised is that it is tossed around until a compromise is reached. With spray suppression, that compromise will almost inevitably be arbitrary and irrelevant to most member nations. It does not take a genius to recognise that the problem in Greece or southern Italy is fundamentally different from that in Britain. It is therefore likely that southern European members will not accept spray suppression measures in any form.

I am dubious about having permissive regulations. They would provide a ceiling but no floor. When the Department of Transport finally makes a research breakthrough it will not be able to commit this country to an improved standard of spray suppression, should it be necessary. If a permissive document were accepted, we would be limited by the highest standards set by the European Community. The Minister should clarify that important issue.

I do not believe for one second that this directive has a chance of doing anything. It is almost irrelevant to be detaining the House discussing it. We want national legislation that addresses the problems of road surfaces and speeding heavy goods vehicles and tries to introduce standards that will guarantee the maximum possible reduction of nuisance from spray.

I should like to ask the Minister a number of questions about sideguards, or lateral protection as the Eurocrats prefer to call them. They may appear to be technical, but nevertheless they are important. At present, the United Kingdom's standard of sideguard protection applies to heavy goods vehicles of 12 tonnes or more. Earlier, the Minister managed to clear the fog about the wording of the motion, but he has not managed to clear the intellectual fog concerning the figure of 12 tonnes. The probability of a child being dragged off a bicycle under the back wheels of a lorry depends not on axle or laden weights but on the physical construction of the space between front and rear wheels and the possibility of pedestrians and cyclists—the two most obvious groups —disappearing into the space at the side of the lorry. I know of no report—be it the Armitage report or the report of the Transport Select Committee—that recommended the fitting of sideguards to lorries of 12 tonnes. I foresee no reason why the restriction should apply simply to lorries weighing 12 tonnes. I hope that the Minister will consider seriously why we should not increase the applicability of sideguards to heavy goods vehicles that at present are exempted.

I should like to put a point to the Minister that was made clearly at the 10th international technical conference on experimental vehicles, about which the Minister knows much, partly because it was hosted by the "Department of Transportation, of Her Majesty's Government", as it is described in the conference report.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Where did that come from?

Mr. Lloyd: I can assure the Minister that this is not a leak from the Department of Transport. I have not been as lucky as some of my other colleagues with leaks from other Departments.

The conference discussed sideguards and said:

"With a sideguard fitted that just meets the UK".

[Mr. Lloyd]

construction and use.

"regulation, the pedal cyclist was run over"—

hon. Members will be glad to hear that this was a simulated test—

"by the wheels of the semitrailer in about 40 per cent. of the test runs."

That test conformed to current standards, but when the sideguard was reduced to a level of 300mm above the ground the probability of the cyclist being run over was reduced to almost zero.

Experience from Japan suggests that a 400mm level of operation is not only practical but effective in reducing death. While the present regulations almost certainly have reduced the death rate, an increase to a higher standard would reduce it further. I urge the Minister to consider that matter seriously.

The Minister was wrong to argue that these regulations will pave the way for European international haulage vehicles being fitted with sideguards similar to those fitted to British vehicles. The directive, if implemented on a permissive basis, will allow European heavy goods vehicles from countries that choose not to adopt sideguards standards to travel on British roads. That would not only give them a competitive advantage over British operators but would make our roads considerably less safe than they are already. The Minister should look carefully at permissive legislation.

There is a major omission. The overwhelming advice from all reputable documents in the past has been that the greatest area of improvement in the safety of heavy goods vehicles lay in the introduction of front underrun guard protection. That was the Armitage report's recommendation. It said:

"We consider that the greatest and most worthwhile improvements are likely to be obtained from the introduction of under-run and other guards all round the lorry, including energy-absorbing guards. We recommend that these should be made mandatory for all new lorries."

Seven years on we are still awaiting that. That may reflect again the lack of priority given to such safety research within the Department. In 1981 the Department felt that it was close to an acceptable solution and we still do not have that. That should be in the European directive if it is to have any force. It would be of far more significant benefit to road safety than spray suppression or sideguards, but I do not want to dismiss the value of both those things.

The concept of European legislation is rather dubious because we do not have the same interests on our roads as those that apply in other countries. It is not logical to say that the needs and interests of the travelling public in Greece are the same as those in Britain. We have different climates, different road construction and so on. For those reasons, it concerns me greatly that EC directives may hamper us in introducing the highest possible safety standards. I have to agree with the Government's conclusion that the correct thing is to bury the directives completely. Even the directive on sideguards would prevent the Government introducing a higher standard, which is what the Government should be looking at.

That is not a cop-out for taking some action against lorries coming to this country. In 1992 we face the prospect of cabotage. We face the prospect of lorries that have been registered elsewhere coming on to British roads. They will use standards introduced for different road systems. We know—the Minister knows this—that there are British companies operating on British roads which have chosen to register themselves in the Netherlands to avoid some of the existing regulations for heavy goods vehicles. That should be unacceptable and we should not allow the European directives to cloud the issue. It is for the Government to ensure that safety is paramount and to see that what is introduced applies not only to national operators but to international operators on British roads.

10.47 pm

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Minister on the reasonable approach that he has adopted to limit the excesses of the European Community in this important matter. However, rather than devoting so much of his attention to exempting small vehicles from the mandatory Community proposals, perhaps he would serve us better if he were to do something more than his Department has done in the past to reduce the spray from tyres on United Kingdom vehicles that threaten the lives of so many of us who use the motorways.

The Burton constituency has delighted the world over the years with the excellence of its products. I should mention Marmite, Bovril, Branston pickle, the wonderful beer products—Double Diamond, Bass, White Shield, Marston's Pedigree—the new diggers from JCB, the new tyres from Pirelli, the new building systems from Conder, the new civil engineering schemes from Douglas and the new plastic products from BTR. Therefore, it is no surprise that one of my constituents, Mr. Maurice Goodall, formerly of Barton-under-Needwood and now of Rolleston-on-Dove—two delightful villages in my constituency that I hope my hon. Friend the Minister will visit shortly—has invented an anti-spray device that works.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Only this morning, in anticipation of the debate, I travelled past Burton and saw the Bass chimney. As a partial vegetarian, I want my hon. Friend to know that I make an exception for Bovril and that I enjoy the Marmite as well.

Mr. Lawrence: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his kind remarks. The trouble is that too many Ministers pass Burton and do not go into it. If they visited it, they would be better able to enjoy the outstanding products that a lifetime of dedicated labour and intelligent, well-intended and progressive management have produced for a wonderful town.

Mr. Maurice Goodall is no crank. He is a legitimate, sensible and experienced inventor. It surprises me that the Government seem persistently to show little interest in his invention. The device for suppressing spray from heavy vehicles is one whose efficiency of 93 per cent. to 98 per cent. is 10 times more effective than the 65 per cent. that is required by the BS AU 200 specification. Geometrical formulae have been used to overcome the damage caused by the wheels of heavy vehicles and the device negotiates obstacles 10 in. high when a vehicle is fully laden. This is the product of research and development that has absorbed no fewer than 40,000 hours during the past 11 years of Mr. Goodall's time.

Does the Government's reaction stem from the effectiveness of current anti-spray devices? As my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) has said, any motorist travelling along a motorway in bad weather takes his life into his hands when he overtakes heavy vehicles that are churning up so much spray. We can send men to the moon, and we have wonderful devices that deliver messages to us wherever we happen to be in the House, but it seems that we cannot eradicate or reduce the murderous spray generated by heavy vehicles.

It is clear from the comments on the European Community proposals that have been made by the organisations most closely related to this issue that the safety effect of many of the present spray devices leaves much to be desired. The Freight Transport Association states:

"the equipment for its suppression, either under present British rules or under those which the Commission proposes, has at best a marginal effect."

VAG (United Kingdom) Ltd. states:

"The company suggests that standards developed to meet relevant British regulations have been hastily concocted. It argues that standards of design have been over-emphasised at the expense of standards of performance and that there is no evidence that these British standards have had the effect of significantly reducing spray emissions."

Volvo Trucks (Great Britain) Limited says:

"The Company concludes that further technical work would be advisable before the adoption of any Community rules and that since the bulk of the relevant expertise is British, this should be carried out in this country, with proper consultation with interested parties."

It is quite clear from our own experience and the knowledge and experience of various organisations that the present anti-spray devices are not sufficiently effective and efficient to save our lives.

I have been involved with Mr. Goodall for four years, during which time he has been trying to interest the Department in his device. Correspondence has been travelling backwards and forwards and there may have been a meeting or two, but still nothing is done. The matter is now in the hands of Mr. Robert Moreland, who was the Member of the European Parliament for the Staffordshire, East constituency until the last European election, when he was less than fortunate. I have no doubt that he will return to the European Community, where he currently serves on a number of transport committees. Mr. Moreland is doing his best to bring Mr. Goodall's invention to the attention of those who apparently will do something in the European Community.

I propose to hand to my hon. Friend a dossier of documents, which are now slightly out of date but can immediately be updated. It is clear that, so excellent is the tradition of creative, progressive developments in my constituency, so confident can we be when an excellent inventor comes along with an excellent and desirable product, that I can draw the conclusion only that, although the documents have, over the years, been handed to the Department, they have not been brought to the attention of my hon. Friend who, I know, personally considers anything that might contribute to road safety. I am grateful to my hon. Friend for taking the documents. I hope to hear further from him so that lives can be saved by the excellent invention of my constituent Mr. Goodall.

10.56 pm

Mr. Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield): I welcome the hon. and learned Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) to the ranks of those hon. Members who want regulation on matters relating to road safety. Had Mr. Maurice Goodall been involved in the invention of seat belts, I wonder whether the hon. and learned Gentleman would have paid the glowing tributes that he has this evening. However, I welcome any late converts to regulation on road safety matters.

Mr. Lawrence: The hon. Gentleman will recall that I was not opposed to having seat belts, wearing seat belts or improvements to seat belts. I was opposed only to compulsion.

Mr. Sheerman: I misunderstood. I thought that the hon. and learned Gentleman not only wanted his constituent's invention to be introduced, but wanted it to be fitted to heavy goods vehicles to protect people driving on roads.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I say confidentially to the hon. Gentleman that he should lay off my hon. and learned Friend. It is worth recognising that, because of my hon. and learned Friend's relative reticence, we managed to get the child restraint Bill through the House. We may yet have to consider Lords amendments, and I do not want to do anything that might in any way provoke my hon. and learned Friend to think that fluoride has anything to do with that Bill.

Mr. Sheerman: I think that both the Minister and the hon. and learned Gentleman understand that my comments were light badinage.

We are discussing a serious matter that has been tucked away late in our proceedings. I campaigned vigorously for anti-spray and anti-splash devices to be fitted to heavy goods vehicles because of the large number of accidents resulting in death and serious injury to innocent people. It always surprises me that the consumers on motorways and other roads have not been more vociferous or active about the conditions that they put up with when travelling. It must be unique for me to agree with the hon. Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow), but it is high time that there was effective regulation of vehicles that cause dangerous splash and spray.

I was part of a successful campaign to introduce regulations on splash and spray that were as good as we could achieve at that time. The nature of research means that we have to accept the technical device that is effective at that time. Science and technology always move on. I am suspicious of lobbies and spokesmen for different industry groups who say, "Don't introduce this standard; something is coming over the horizon that will be 100 per cent. perfect and wonderful." If a splash or spray device is produced that is 40 or 60 per cent. effective, let us have it and wait for the 100 per cent. to follow, and then go for a higher standard in the fullness of time.

I am always suspicious of the Road Haulage Association Ltd. and similar organisations, whose common denominator seems to be opposition to anything that will cost their members a few pennies or a few pounds. I do not say that in a narrow, nationalistic sense because I have spoken—and I must declare this interest—for Monsanto in the United States about the British experience and about how effective it had been in reducing splash and spray. That was something on which we showed the way in this country, so I am sad at the present situation.

Three years ago, we had Road Safety Year, which was introduced by the European Commission. I am a late convert to Europeanism. For many years I campaigned against the Common Market, although later I was convinced that it was something we had to accept. Even so, I get rather cross when I see this kind of directive, which brings everything down to the lowest common denominator. We have lost the opportunity for countries to lead the way and for the best practice to be adopted. This directive is permissive and a cop-out. It allows countries which want a higher standard to stay with it and introduce one, and others to opt out. That is a sad state of affairs, when the best practice is the thing to aim for.

One question the Minister has not answered—it is an aspect on which he has not campaigned vigorously enough—is what is to be done about those vehicles which arrive at our Channel ports and drive on British roads, causing as much splash, spray and danger as British vehicles. They will be largely unregulated. They may come from dry countries such as Spain and Greece, which do not see it as being in their short-term interest to introduce appropriate measures. However, when vehicles from those countries reach German, French and British roads, which are wetter, they ought to be regulated in the same way as other safety regulations are applied to foreign vehicles travelling on our roads.

Year after year, the number of non-British European vehicles travelling on British motorways increases. Hon. Members can see that for themselves as they drive to and from their constituencies. To have rules and regulations covering only British heavy goods vehicles is plainly daft. I refer to Norfolk Line and to the excellent speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) about sideguards. He made only one slip on the subject of splash and spray, and perhaps that was because he was briefed by different people. In terms of splash and spray, we must acknowledge that it is not good enough to accept vehicles from other countries entering Britain and causing a great deal of damage to citizens driving on our roads.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: My hon. Friend admits that he is a late convert to the European dream—although I still regard it as being a pipedream rather than an ideal. Nevertheless, the danger of the European directive in being permissive is exactly as has been pointed out by my hon. Friend. It will not only allow vehicles from other European countries to enter Britain but will also make it impossible for the Government to do anything to make them conform to the British standard. The directive will allow foreign vehicles to operate at the lower standard.

Mr. Sheerman: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. I was merely going to say that he was too gentlemanly to mention that Norfolk Line and others are registering their fleets in other countries to evade simple safety regulations that do not cost all that much money.

It was part of European Road Safety Year to act on those two matters, and it is sad for future campaigns that none of the objectives of Road Safety Year are to be achieved, because it means that the European Commission and the Community cannot deliver. It is a kind of opt-out Community. As my hon. Friend says, what we need is best practice in the Community, so that we are all protected evenly across all countries.

I had the misfortune to travel from Felixstowe to Bury St. Edmunds. The experience of driving in wet weather on that road, where the percentage of foreign vehicles is very high, shows in grim and graphic detail the problems of the permissive directive approach.

I agree with my hon. Friend's remarks about side underruns, and about the need to grasp the nettle of front underruns. Many members of the British public do not understand that front underruns are the kind with which most vehicles are involved in accidents, and we must take some action on them.

I regret the regulations. We should not reach a stage at which the European Community merely says that there are good standards achievable on the basis of the technology that we have now. That may be the technology that the constituent of the hon. and learned Member for Burton is about to introduce, but whatever it is, it should be for all member states.

11.6 pm

Mr. Tony Speller (Devon, North): The hon. Member for Huddersfield (Mr. Sheerman) can be brief at greater length than any other hon. Member who has contributed to the debate. I shall seek to be even briefer.

First, let me ask my hon. Friend the Minister not to try to avoid responsibility outside the motor industry. It is far too easy to do what we all do rather glibly and blame the road haulier and the designer. We should also think about the roads. Many parts of the country have no motorways and never will have, but they do have quite long, wide roads, and the water sweeping across them makes them more dangerous than motorways.

Much of the problem relates to road design—to windbreaks and lightbreaks. It is too easy to blame the heavy lorry and the motorway. I ask my hon. Friend to bear in mind the side wind, which is just as important. It is patent to anyone who drives, as I frequently do, along 50 miles of rather poor west country road—shortly to be improved by the link road to Barnstaple—and then on to the M5 and the M4, that side winds and poor visibility cause equal danger on the bad road.

Every hon. Member who has spoken has referred to "passing" when they mean overtaking. There is frequently a danger of approaching a vehicle and then going past it through a sheet of water, possibly finding some fool coming up behind the lorry and seeking to overtake. The great mistake is always to blame the awful juggernaut or road haulier on the wet motorway. I suspect that nothing in aerodynamics will ever stop spray from coming up on a wet road when a fast vehicle is going along it, whatever the shape of that vehicle. As more wide but single carriageway roads are built, there is an increasing danger of the hard cross wind on exposed parts.

I shall say no more except to thank my hon. Friend the Minister for his great concern about road safety. It is always a pleasure to listen to what he says, even if our constituents—particularly road hauliers—do not always agree.

11.10 pm

Mr. Ian Mills (Meriden): The problem is complex; the solution should be easy. I spent 20 years as a tyre designer and part of the problem is the design of the tyre. I still have a strong interest in tyres and in roads, as my hon. Friend the Minister knows. Part of the problem is that roads are not porous. Water does not disappear down into roads; it goes out at the sides. Roads have to be properly drained. We have to find a solution in the design of both concrete and asphalt roads, as well as anti-spray devices.

Having read the European directive, I am appalled to see that under category II(1) it says that devices exist to eliminate spray, and that

> "Both types of material have been developed over the last few years in Europe and elsewhere and are being produced by at least ten or more manufacturers."

I was present at least 10 years ago—if not 15 or 20 years ago—when Monsanto and others came up with what they called the plastic grass solution and the rubber mat solution. The solution has been available in various forms for over 10 years. All this talk about technicalities really makes me wild. My constituency includes the M42 and the M6—right in the heart of England—and I travel those motorways often. However, I still do not see any beneficial results from what we have done as a Government in seeking to ensure that heavy goods vehicles create less spray. I still have many constituents saying to me, "You said 10 or 20 years ago that the technical solution was there. What are you going to do about it?" The answer is not in this directive.

The Minister should use his able powers of persuasion, which he has done on many other items of road safety, to achieve progress. To discuss the technicalities of this matter is all very well but there should be an easy solution whereby we can equip heavy goods vehicles with simple devices, which will not cost the operators a tremendous amount of money. If the simple devices are judged not to be right under the appropriate British standard, at least something is better than nothing.

I pay tribute to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) and I encourage his inventor to put forward his ideas. Surely after all this time Europe should be able to come to a solution. If foreign vehicles are creating the problem, I ask the Minister to ensure that they will achieve the standards that we need.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I am grateful to the hon. Members who have contributed to the debate. It is an important issue and everyone who uses the roads when wet knows of the dangers that spray can create.

I pick up one point that was made by my hon. Friend the Member for Devon, North (Mr. Speller). If a heavy lorry is travelling along a motorway or a high-quality dual carriageway trunk road at, say, 60 miles an hour and throwing up a lot of spray, there is a sensible safe option to other motorists, which is not to try to overtake it. There is no reason why every domestic car driver should think that it is their duty to overtake every heavy goods vehicle, whether in wet or dry weather. I often think that we regard overtaking an HGV as a challenge and we somehow suffer in esteem if we do not always succeed in overtaking it.

There has been a significant advance in vehicles with spray suppression. Much of this debate has been concerned with spray suppression, because the sideguard issue, which is basic protection for pedestrians and cyclists, in non-controversial. The question whether they are rounded sideguards or flat sideguards is not enormously important. However, as the hon. Member for Stretford (Mr.Lloyd) mentioned, the height can be important. I will write to him on that matter and place a copy in the Library.

The issue of front underrun guards will be discussed in the House in the future. The Transport and Road Research laboratory is acknowledged all around the world as one of the leaders in virtually every subject that it takes up. Its work does show that energy-absorbing front underrun guards can help to save many of the lives presently lost in the approximately 250 serious crashes a year against the front of heavy goods vehicles.

We are basically considering spray suppression in the debate. My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) has raised the question of his constituent, the inventor, Mr. Maurice Goodall. As well as handing me the dossier that my hon. and learned Friend

[Mr. Peter Bottomley]

has with him, it may be appropriate if I ask the Department to consider an up-to-date submission from Mr. Goodall. I know that my hon. and learned Friend will facilitate that and I am grateful to him for raising that issue. The whole political process goes from one person's private experience, publicly expressed—people often have to be persistent—which is then adopted by the overwhelming minority, which is likely to include the hon. Member for Huddersfield (Mr. Sheerman). I have paid tribute to the work of the parliamentary advisory committee and I pay tribute also to the hon. Gentleman as an individual.

I think that I can overcome some of the insults that were offered up by the hon. Member for Stretford. Sometimes I am accused of being power-crazed and sometimes of being powerless. I think that I work in good partnership with the knowledgeable people in the Department of Transport and in Parliament. Between us we have managed to create what the European Road Safety Year in 1986 was designed for—a cut in road accidents and road casualties.

In the year after European Road Safety Year, we saw a 10 per cent. cut in the casualty rate in Britain, which has left us one of the top four countries, with Japan, Norway and Sweden. It is important that the United Kingdom is up there. It is not coincidental that we are the country that brought in spray suppression regulations. I hope that other countries will follow us.

However, we want to allow ourselves the freedom to develop more effective measures. The House will be interested to know that we are in the final stages of research into whole vehicle testing on spray suppression. As I said earlier, the aerodynamics matter as much as the actual water or mist catching behind the axles and wheels. When we can move forward, we shall be able to see how other countries react. My suspicion is that in the same way that the Commission has modelled the draft directive on the British regulations, when we get to whole vehicle testing, it will be prepared to forward with a draft directive which is likely to be acceptable to others.

The hon. Member for Stretford raised the question of publishing and demonstrating the effectiveness of spray suppression. It would be sensible if we laid on a demonstration—not just for hon. Members who are interested, but for the media. Many operators do not understand why Parliament wants spray suppressed. Enough horrifying crashes and collisions have been linked to the reduction in visibility that is suffered, especially by HGV drivers. Spray is not just a problem for those behind who are trying to look forward; it is a problem for those sitting in the driver's cab and trying to look back.

It might be appropriate if I pay a tribute to British Road Services. I spent today in the BRS midland region in Nottingham and Birmingham, looking at vehicle maintenance. It is worth remembering that every HGV and trailer in this country is maintained. I also looked at driver training. If more operators trained their drivers as BRS does, and maintained their vehicles as BRS does, we should see fewer dangers on the roads and more spray suppression devices installed and maintained.

The debate has been useful

Mr. Tony Lloyd: I should like the Minister to address one point even if he does not answer it now. With 1992 aproaching and with the prospects that hon. Members of all parties have already put to the Minister of British roads being flooded, or at least entered, by Spanish and Portuguese drivers, how will the directives apply if, as the Government want, they are permissive? Will my fears be proved accurate and will Spanish lorries, for example, coming on to Britain's roads be protected by the directive and allowed here without adequate spray suppression devices?

Mr. Bottomley: One reason why, in my guess—it is no more than that—we shall not get a directive is that the draft directive cannot be accepted by most European countries. If the Commission's draft directive on spray is not accepted, we have the opportunity to go forward with our own work. It might be possible for the Commission to come forward with a directive that would receive unanimous support even as a permissive directive, which is the best way of protecting ourselves. As the House knows, we do not have the opportunity of putting requirements on international hauliers unless there is a directive which is either mandatory on all European Community hauliers or is permissive but has been adopted by European nations. It is important to work towards what is practicable and demonstrably cost-effective. In that way we shall get the type of protection that the hon. Member for Stretford and I seek.

The debate has shown that the motion demonstrates the mood of the House. I am grateful to each hon. Gentleman who has spoken and I am glad that this issue does not arouse any unnecessary party prejudice. I am delighted that the hon. Member for Huddersfield has joined his leader in welcoming our membership of the Common Market and let us milk that for what it is worth.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 8284/87 on spray suppression devices and lateral protection (sideguards) for certain categories of motor vehicles and their trailers; and endorses the Government's objectives of securing Community arrangements which would not require more stringent standards than those required in the United Kingdom at present, and amendment of the proposed Directive on spray suppression so as to make its application, like the proposed Directive on sideguards, permissive rather than mandatory, and restricted in scope to the same categories of vehicles as are covered by the existing United Kingdom Regulations.

PETITION

Search and Rescue (North Devon)

11.19 pm

Mr. Tony Speller (Devon, North): I seek to present a humble petition on behalf of the residents of and visitors to north Devon who fear that helicopters of 22 Squadron (Search and Rescue), at present stationed at RAF Chivenor in north Devon, may be removed to RAF Brawdy in south Wales. There is an additional 30 minutes flying time from RAF Brawdy to north Devon and the petitioners believe that that flying time is too great to provide the same standard of cliff, moor and sea rescue facilities that presently prevails along the north Devon coast and throughout the area.

Wherefore your Petitioners pray that your Honourable House recognise the threat to safety and presses the Secretary of State for Defence to ensure that this service is continued from RAF Chivenor.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray, etc.

To lie upon the Table.

Factory Space (Northern Region)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Alan Howarth.]*

11.20 pm

Mr. Giles Radice (Durham, North): I wish to discuss the question of factory space because it is important to the recovery of the northern economy.

I do not believe that there is much dispute about the nature of the problem. The Minister is well aware that there is an acute shortage of medium to large factories —between 7,000 and 50,000 sq ft—in the north. The good news is that the demand for units of more than 7,000 sq ft has doubled in the past year. I understand that, up to 1 March 1988, there had been 511 inquiries about such sites, and the inquiries are continuing. The bad news is that the supply of such factories has fallen by 37 per cent. English Estates estimates that there are about 350 buildings of more than 7,000 sq ft now available in the north, but only 40 of them are sites of quality—that is, built in the past 10 years—which would attract inward investors. Some of those 40 buildings are already reserved. I understand that English Estates (North) told the Minister that there are only five modern premises of more than 10,000 sq ft which are vacant but not reserved.

A few examples will demonstrate the problems faced by different areas. In April 1986, in Durham there was almost 4 million sq ft of floor space available. By April 1988 the amount had been reduced to just over 2 million sq ft. In April 1987 there were 53 units of more than 15,000 sq ft, but by April 1988 that figure had gone down to 21, many of which are unsuitable for inward investors.

In Sunderland the demise of the Washington development corporation, coupled with the English Industrial Estates lack of resources, means that there will be no large-scale building in the borough until 1989-90 at the earliest. There are no modern units of more 10,000 sq ft availble in the borough.

In the Wear valley—I note that my hon. Friend the Member for Bishop Auckland (Mr. Foster) is on the Front Bench—there is no space available of more than 2,000 sq ft. English Estates has no plans to build there until October 1989.

What are the reasons for this considerable problem? First, few medium or large factories were built during the first half of this decade. The recession was the obvious reason for that. The possibility of rectifying the situation and increasing the supply has been curtailed by the reduced numbers of advance factory providers.

The major problem has been created by the winding up of Washington, Aycliffe and Peterlee new towns because in the past the new towns have been major providers of advance factory space. In Durham, for example, Aycliffe and Peterlee have been responsible for 370,000 sq ft compared with the 430,000 sq ft being built by English Estates—in other words, for roughly half. Now almost the whole of the advance factory programme will depend on what English Estates and the Rural Development Commission do. In their turn, English Estates is now tightly stretched and is planning only 10 extra factories above 10,000 sq ft in the coming financial year, which will not meet the demand. Therefore, the inescapable conclusion is that the north is rapidly running out of large-scale factory units for inward investors or for

[Mr. Giles Radice]

existing businesses that want to expand. The demand for space now exceeds the supply, so there is a real danger that the north could lose potential investors to other regions.

The Government's answer is that, given the low supply of factories and the high level of demand, rents will eventually rise to a point which will attract private sector development. I am sure that that is what the Minister will tell me tonight, as the Secretary of State has already told me and a delegation which I led to see him before the recess. I have no ideological objections whatever to the private sector making a contribution. On the contrary, I am strongly in favour of partnership, as in the development agencies in my constituency and in that of my hon. Friend, between the public and private sectors to encourage development. I am prepared to accept that there should be some rise in rents, although it is a fallacy to think, as some do, that English Estates is not already asking for the market rent which industry will pay.

My difficulty and the difficulty of everybody who knows about the problem in the region is with the timescale. In reality, it will probably take at least two to four years of famine for factory rents to reach a level which is likely to attract private investors. Even then, the market will work unevenly. Some areas are likely to continue to prove unattractive to private investors in terms of rent potential. The likelihood is that if the Government continue to insist that we should wait for the private sector to invest, there will be a sizeable gap. Meantime, inward investors will be discouraged and go elsewhere, either to Scotland and Wales, where the development agencies have ensured that there is much more of the right kind of factory space and they have powers over planning as well as industrial development, or even turn to other countries. That is the problem that we face in the northern region.

The Government should now be taking steps to manage the gap between now and the time when the private sector comes in, if it does, off its own bat and without any incentives. Because I am constructive, which is what we should be in an Adjournment debate, I want to suggest some solutions which will help the north provide factory space which industry so desperately needs. Clearly what is needed is a transitional period during which the public and private sectors will work in partnership to help cushion the risk for the private sector. I accept the Minister's solution because he represents the Government, but I am trying to make sense of his solution. That is why I am trying to help him by suggesting possible partnership mechanisms.

First, the Government could provide tax concessions to the private sector to come in, such as are currently available in enterprise zones. Secondly, there could be a partnership agreement between the public and private sectors where the infrastructure for a factory development is provided by, say, English Estates and/or where English Estates makes grants to private sector companies for building purposes. Thirdly, the Government could allow English Estates to take what is called a head lease as a way of guaranteeing minimal rents to the private sector, thus encouraging it to come in.

These partnership mechanisms could be used by themselves or as elements in a package. I am not asking the Minister for snap answers tonight; it is too late for that. I offer him these ideas to study. Indeed, I go further: I would be prepared to write the Minister a paper on the proposals which I have made because I would like him to examine them in detail.

The Minister must take the problem seriously, as everyone in the northern region does. It would be a tragedy—indeed, it would be unforgivable—if the long-awaited economic upswing in the north were to be choked by a shortage of factory space. If the Government are not prepared to fund public sector investment—I understand their thinking on this, although I do not necessarily accept it—they should at least be prepared to provide the facilities for a partnership between the public and private sectors which could help bridge the investment gap and provide the factory space which the north needs so much.

11.31 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Industry (Mr. Robert Atkins): I congratulate the hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) on raising this subject by way of an Adjournment debate. I also welcome the spirit in which he addressed the House. I shall certainly consider the detail of what he has said and look forward to the report by a man of his education; doubtless it will be couched in delightful English. We shall consider it carefully.

The hon. Gentleman raised an important subject. Before I deal with the specific issue of factory space, I want to put the problem in the wider context of the improvements in the economy which have created the demand to which he has referred. As I heard one of my hon. Friends say in a sedentary intervention, these ironically are the problems of success. It is not just the Government who are proclaiming the resurgence in the north-east; the local CBI and chambers of commerce confirm a firmly established trend of increased demand, output and sales across a range of industries. Business confidence and optimism for the future are at their highest for some time.

I have paid visits to the north, as some Opposition Members will know, and have much enjoyed them, so much so that I am considering whether to spend a holiday there in August. I hope that hon. Members will recognise the attractions of their own area which my family may appreciate.

The region still faces special problems and has special needs and the Government now have policies that are more effectively focused to deal with them. The message that the north-east is an area of opportunity and growth with everything going for it in terms of availability of good skilled labour, good communications, excellent social, leisure and cultural facilities has reached the foreign investor who does not have a prejudiced and stereotyped image of the north-east. Such an image is sometimes presented in the media and, perhaps regrettably, talked about by those who live there. I have that problem in my part of the north of England and I spend much of my time trying to persuade people not to talk down their own region.

As I have said, the Japanese are particularly attracted to the north. They have seen the region and like it. Nissan, which has 2,700 jobs in prospect by the early 1990s, is acting as a catalyst for encouraging other companies, and not only Japanese companies, to the region. There are 21 Japanese firms in the region, one quarter of the national

total, and about 220 foreign-owned firms employing 36,000 people. All this has helped to broaden the region's economic base, and has introduced new skills and work practices to the north.

One of the most encouraging developments is the growth of entrepreneurship in the north-east, a region without any recent tradition of self-employment. The region has made great strides in this direction in recent years.

I should now like to come to the specific question raised in the debate. I am well aware of the demand for factory space, not only because the hon. Member for Durham, North brought a delegation to see me and has talked to me, but also because my hon. Friends have brought it to my attention. I am delighted to see my hon. Friends the Members for Darlington (Mr. Fallon), for Hexham (Mr. Amos), for Stockton, South (Mr. Devlin) and for Tynemouth (Mr. Trotter) expressing their commitment and interest. They are here in slightly greater numbers than the Opposition but I recognise that the hour is late and I do not make much point of that.

The hon. Member for Durham, North was fortunate enough to get this debate and there is interest in it in all parts of the House. The demand for factory space has substantially increased in the past year in many parts of the assisted areas, and I recognise that the amount of vacant space has declined. As I have said, this increased demand arises from the sustained economic upturn brought about by Government policies.

I hope that the hon. Gentleman will acknowledge what the Government have already done in this area. The level of resources going towards factory building by English Estates in the assisted areas as a whole has been substantially increased in recent years. In 1986-87 its capital development programme was £33·5 million. In 1987-88, it was increased to £47 million. For 1988-89 we have authorised English Estates to spend up to £49 million if it can produce the necessary resources from asset sales. These are record capital investment levels for English Estates and represent very significant action already taken by the Government. We have also established a new programme for English Estates to provide managed work space in the inner-city areas in partnership with the private sector. The resources for that programme are additional to the figures that I have just given.

Perhaps I could mention just two examples of how English Estates money has been spent in the north-east and to what effect. In 1980, the British Steel plant in Consett closed down. Over 28 per cent. of the working population were jobless. English Estates was called upon to help and, as part of the Derwentside task force, set about attracting new employers to the area. As a sign of its commitment, it opened an office and invested £12 million, building about 800,000 sq ft of property in five years. That was a mixture of large factories, small workshops, and premises designed for high technology businesses. As new companies moved in, over 2,500 jobs were created in the local community putting Consett well on the road to recovery.

More recently English Estates have built the computer aided design and computer aided manufacturing centre on the banks of the River Tees, the first of its kind in Europe, Funded by the public sector, the £1·5 million centre provides advice and powerful computing and information resources for high-tech businesses that are crucial to the future success of the north and the rest of the country.

Ms. Hilary Armstrong (Durham, North-West): I thought that the Minister was about to say a little more about Consett. I hope that he recognises that the very agencies that he congratulated are presently saying very loudly that they desperately need the next stage so that the firms that may be ready to expand are able to do so. Despite much effort, those agencies have not been able to attract private sector funding to aid such developments. Indeed, we are looking for some commitment to support the work that the development agency and the task force have already done.

Mr. Atkins: The hon. Lady draws attention to a point that we have accepted. I have said that it is a problem of success, but I recognise that none the less it is a problem.

I am advised that there is an increasing number of inquiries from the private sector to both Teesside and Tyne and Wear development corporations, which suggests that the climate for private sector investment is steadily improving in the north-east, largely as a result of the well-publicised shortage of advance factory space to which the hon. Member for Durham, North has already referred and to which I know my hon. Friends have referred previously.

I have given some examples of the organisation and development programme for English Estates. The question now is what the Government should be authorising English Estates to do in future in the light of booming demand for factory space. The call from some quarters has been for more public sector resource to satisfy current demand.

That approach is unattractive for a number of reasons, not least because the additional resources required would be very substantial. But there is a more fundamental reason, which has to do with the role of English Estates and our ultimate policy objective in that area. English Estates' role is to fill a gap in the market so that industrial and commercial premises can be provided in the assisted areas where the private sector is unwilling to risk the necessary investment.

The aim is that the activities of English Estates should encourage the private sector. Our objective, which I hope is shared by Opposition Members, is a properly functioning property market serviced by the private sector and flexible enough to be able to respond to the demands of the market in the north-east just as in the south. Our judgment is that pumping in more public sector resources would be very likely to delay the achievement of that long-term objective rather than to encourage it.

The current situation in the north-east offers an opportunity that we do not wish to miss to secure that objective. It is quite true that, for a lengthy period, yield levels have not been sufficient to stimulate private sector provision of industrial premises outside the south-east. With the changing economic climate, increasing demand and rising rents, returns are beginning to look more acceptable. The job for the region, as the chief executive of the Northern Development Company has recently recognised, is to do all it can to draw in private sector investment.

I do not pretend that that will happen overnight. There is bound to be a transitional period during which excess demand helps the necessary process of increasing rents to levels which will provide an adequate return to the private sector, but the consequence of avoiding the discomfort of such a transition by increasing Government-funded

[Mr. Atkins]

provision would be to miss the major opportunity to re-create a private sector property market which I have mentioned.

That approach does not mean that the Government are ignoring the issue. There are a number of Government initiatives which are relevant to the provision of industrial and commercial property. The hon. Member mentioned the role of the two urban development corporations in the north-east, in Tyne and Wear and Teesside. Each is likely to spend well over £100 million during the next five years. The work of the UDCs is of major importance in creating the conditions to bring back private sector investment.

As far as English Estates is concerned, we are currently in active discussion with the board about how best its resources can be used in the areas where there is least prospect of an early return by the private sector and how, more generally, it can adapt its programmes and policies to give further encouragement to the private sector to respond to the current demand.

I am particularly pleased that the hon. Gentleman felt able to make his remarks in a spirit of understanding the Government's position, while not necessarily accepting it. I know that some of what the hon. Gentleman has said has been considered before, but it needs further consideration. As he has been kind enough to say that he will produce a report, although he did not give a time scale——

Mr. Radice: It will be two or three weeks.

Mr. Atkins: I think that we can manage that. We look forward to receiving the report. We shall not make any policy decisions, so I can assure the hon. Gentleman that his views will be taken fully into account. He will understand, however, that I cannot give any guarantees about the results.

It is not simply a matter of public sector agencies encouraging the private sector. There is an opportunity, which I hope will be seized, for the private sector to reassess the risks involved and for investors and developers to expand the geographical spread of their activities. I believe that the present rising trend in the level of rents is a healthy sign for the north, confirming what I know my hon. Friends believe to be the case—they frequently tell the House that life in the north is not as bad as it is sometimes depicted. I am sure that the future of the north, and the substantial demand for factory space, which we all agree is a sign of economic success, means that private sector provision is not far off in many areas.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at fifteen minutes to Twelve o'clock.

House of Commons

Thursday 9 June 1988

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

LONDON REGIONAL TRANSPORT BILL *(By Order)*

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question [10 December], That the Bill be now considered.

Debate further adjourned till Thursday 16 June

TEIGNMOUTH QUAY COMPANY BILL *(By Order)*

YORK CITY COUNCIL BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

CARDIFF BAY BARRAGE BILL *(By Order)*

FALMOUTH CONTAINER TERMINAL BILL *(By Order)*

Orders for Second Reading read.

To be read a Second time upon Thursday 16 June.

NORTH KILLINGHOLME CARGO TERMINAL BILL *(By Order)*

Order for Second Reading read.

To be read a Second time upon Wednesday 15 June at Seven o'clock.

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE TOWN MOOR BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

Order for Second Reading read.

To be read a Second time upon Thursday 16 June.

ASSOCIATED BRITISH PORTS (NO. 2) BILL *(By Order)*

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question [11 May], That the Bill be now read a Second time.

Debate further adjourned till Thursday 16 June.

Oral Answers to Questions

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

National Pig Breeders Association

1. **Mr. Nicholas Baker:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the president of the National Pig Breeders Association; and what matters were discussed.

The Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. John MacGregor): My ministerial colleagues and I keep in regular touch with representatives of pig producers, including the National Pig Breeders Association, on a wide range of issues.

Mr. Baker: Is my right hon. Friend aware of the serious state of the pig industry, with a large number of pig breeders going out of business? Will he bear in mind the need to continue his pressure in Europe for the abolition of MCAs? Will he examine allegations that some EEC countries are illegally subsidising their pig industries? That practice is unfair competition.

Mr. MacGregor: Yes, I am aware of the position of the pig industry. Although prices recently stabilised, as my hon. Friend knows, we are in the classic situation of supply outstripping demand, which is the basic cause of the problem. There is a strong case for the abolition of pigmeat MCAs, and I have been making that case in the Council. As always, it is one of the most hotly contested issues in any Council discussion, with several member states taking different views. It is not easy to get the required majority for any line of action.

On my hon. Friend's point about unfair state aids, the Commission is investigating an Italian state aid, which I think will be found to be illegal. It is also investigating French state aids. We are always assiduous in drawing such matters to the Council's attention.

Mr. Martlew: Is the Minister aware that, according to the latest figures from the National Pig Breeders Association, in the year to April, the prices that breeders were paid for pig products dropped by 12 per cent., yet the increase in supermarket prices was 2 per cent.? Can the Minister explain that? Could the reason be that a cartel is being run by the major superstores in this country?

Mr. MacGregor: They are matters for commercial consideration. The basic reason why pig prices have fallen is that supply and demand are currently out of balance; supply is greater than demand. However, although the price to pig producers has fallen, the average ex-farm price of feed wheat is now nearly £17 per tonne lower and that feed barley is about £5 per tonne lower than they were at this time last year. That is undoubtedly helping margins.

Rev. Ian Paisley: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware of the serious position of the pig industry in Northern Ireland, which is on the periphery of the United Kingdom? Can he give the House any inkling about how his negotiations are going and what is being done to rid us of MCAs?

Mr. MacGregor: Ever since price-fixing discussions began I have been pressing pigmeat MCAs as one of my

main issues, and I shall continue to do so. I have again done so this week. We shall return to the Council on Monday of next week, when it is hoped that we shall start to reach conclusions. I assure the hon. Gentleman that I shall again press the matter then.

Dr. David Clark: In his discussions with the National Pig Breeders Association, did the Minister discuss the implications for the pigmeat trade of the freeing of the market in 1992? Can he guarantee that the health of the British public will remain protected against infected imported meats?

Mr. MacGregor: Obviously I bear the move to 1992 very much in mind when arguing for the elimination of pigmeat MCAs. However, I believe that that case is already very strong because the current position is out of kilter with the original reason for setting pigmeat MCAs, so I should like them to be eliminated now. Certainly it should be done by 1992.

We are moving towards harmonisation with regard to protection against disease within the Community. However, it is very important that we have guarantees from countries that are swine fever free that their Governments are as assiduous as we are in ensuring that those areas remain disease free.

National Farmers Union

3. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the president of the National Farmers Union; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. MacGregor: I last met the president of the National Farmers Union formally on 16 May when we discussed the Commission's 1988-89 farm price proposals. I have met him informally on a number of occasions since.

Mr. Bellingham: When my right hon. Friend next meets the president, will he make clear to him the importance of the sugar beet sector to Norfolk farmers, particularly bearing in mind the despondency in agriculture at the moment? Sugar beet is one of the few bright lights on the horizon. Will he assure the House that no sugar beet package will be agreed at Monday's Council meeting that puts the United Kingdom at a competitive disadvantage vis-à-vis Italy and France? Will he do all that he can to persuade the Community to prevent Italy and France from renewing national aid to their sugar beet production sectors?

Mr. MacGregor: My hon. Friend will know that I am extremely well aware of the importance of sugar beet to Norfolk farmers. I can, therefore, assure him that I will endeavour to achieve what he asks. At the moment the Commission's proposal is for a price freeze which would not affect the competitive position of the United Kingdom industry. An attempt was made during the lead-up to the summit reforms to undermine our position through the sugar supplementary levy and we successfully fought that off. With regard to the aids in France and Italy, there is no Commission proposal to that effect in the price fixing at the moment.

Mr. Geraint Howells: Does the Minister agree with the statement made by the president of the National Farmers Union today that up to 30 per cent. of support to sheep farmers will be cut under the present proposals of the EEC policy for sheepmeat?

Mr. MacGregor: That will not happen under the proposals before us on stabilisers—which is the issue that we have already decided—unless there is a massive increase in sheepmeat production which would cause the stabiliser to be triggered in a substantial way. I do not envisage that happening. I have not seen the statement, but I imagine that the president had in mind the future of the sheepmeat regime as a whole. We have not yet embarked on discussions on that, so it is not possible to predict the outcome.

Miss Emma Nicholson: On his next visit to the National Farmers Union, will my right hon. Friend be kind enough to raise the problems raised with me by the Devon branch of the Women's Farmers Union about the continuing and upgraded use of bovine somatotropin in the production of milk? The Women's Farming Union believes that the lack of labelling of milk produced by that method will have a still further depressing effect on the sale of Dorset milk.

Mr. MacGregor: There is a question later on the Order Paper about product licensing and that is what will determine whether we see a big expansion, or any expansion, in BST milk. I will answer that question when we come to it and we will have to look at the question of labelling. If there is consumer concern about BST, labelling may be the way to tackle it. However, that raises many commercial considerations which will have to be discussed widely.

Dr. David Clark: In view of the comments of the Select Committee on the Environment on the NFU's sanguine view and the Department's complacent attitude towards agricultural pollution, when the Minister next meets the president of the NFU will he draw his attention to the fact that farm pollution incidents are at their highest recorded level? Will he also tell him that enough really is enough?

Mr. MacGregor: I assure the hon. Gentleman that we do not take a sanguine view of farm pollution. He will have seen the comments of my right hon. Friend the Minister of State earlier this week when the latest report was published. We take the matter very seriously and I am anxious to reduce substantially the number of farm pollution incidents. We are not sanguine about the matter.

Milk Marketing Board

4. **Mr. Robert Hicks:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he next plans to meet the chairman of the Milk Marketing Board; and what subjects he proposes to discuss.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. Donald Thompson): My right hon. Friend expects to meet the chairman of the Milk Marketing Board later today to discuss various issues affecting the dairy industry.

Mr. Hicks: When my right hon. Friend next meets the chairman of the Milk Marketing Board to discuss New Zealand butter, will he confirm that the purpose of the transitional period, which started 15 years ago, was to enable New Zealand to seek alternative markets for its dairy products but that it still has one third of the United

Kingdom packed butter market? Is not there evidence that New Zealand can benefit from world markets by the increase in the price of dairy products in those markets? In the last four years alone, that has enabled New Zealand to benefit to the tune of an additional £180 million.

Mr. Thompson: New Zealand's agricultural interests have been active in putting their case throughout Europe and the world. It will be for the Commission to devise any new arrangements with the New Zealand Government and the New Zealand butter industry. New Zealand butter is not part of our quota arrangements.

Mr. Ron Brown: Is not the European Economic Community a cynical con which makes people suffer, especially small farmers and working-class individuals? Would it not be better if we were honest enough to face the fact that Britain suffers in many ways because of the EEC and that it would be far better to withdraw from it instead of kidding people that the EEC matters? It matters only to rich farmers and to people in big business. That is a fact.

Mr. Thompson: It is not a fact that all classes of people in Britain suffer from this country being in the EEC. The contrary is true.

Mr. Jack: Is my hon. Friend fully satisfied that the Milk Marketing Board has taken every opportunity to develop innovatory products to counter the flow of foreign-produced dairy products on to our supermarket shelves?

Mr. Thompson: The Milk Marketing Board, together with Dairy Crest, is alive to the competition that it faces on the supermarket shelves. That competition will expand if people continue to buy foreign goods. I am sure that the MMB is looking at every possible way of adding value to milk, thus competing by producing import substitutes, and that it will also do everything it possibly can to find markets for its exports.

Set-Aside

5. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he expects the first arable land to be set aside under his new proposals.

Mr. MacGregor: I shall be making an anouncement shortly on the implementation in the United Kingdom of the Community set-aside scheme in order to enable it to go ahead in time for this autumn's planting.

Mr. Pike: The Minister has a tight timetable. He has to have a scheme in place by 14 July. Does he intend to allow the option of extensive grazing to be used? If so, what type of payment will be involved? If the Minister intends to permit that option to be used, will it not create other problems for agriculture?

Mr. MacGregor: Those matters will have to await the announcement, but the hon. Gentleman is right when he says that there is a tight time schedule. We have been working very hard and we are in the final stages of preparation. I am anxious to make an announcement to the House as soon as possible. I know of the widespread interest in the matter and I want to make sure that farmers are able to take details of the scheme into account in their plans for the forthcoming year's planting. As for the hon. Gentleman's last point, I have been listening carefully to all that has been said about grazed fallow, including the views of hon. Members.

Mr. Latham: Is it intended that when the scheme has been produced, less grain should be grown or that the same amount of grain should be grown on less land?

Mr. MacGregor: The primary objective is to deal with the problem of surpluses in cereals, but the scheme has other objectives. When farmers have to set aside 20 per cent. or more of their arable land, it will have a considerable impact on their cereal production. It may not be a full 20 per cent. in every case, but it will have a considerable impact, and less grain is the main objective.

Mr. Skinner: Is it not a sad state of affairs, with one third of the world's population wanting food, that the Common Market and the Minister are getting together to set land aside and leave it fallow? Has the Minister taken into account the fact that after a few years, when some of the land has been lying fallow for a while, his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment may come along and say, "As that land has not been used for arable purposes for several years, we can make a further incursion and use it for development"?

Mr. MacGregor: The hon. Gentleman's last point does not arise, because normal planning considerations will apply to all land, whether it is set aside or otherwise. The hon. Gentleman will know that we have a substantial food aid programme, but it is not the answer to the problems of agriculture in developing countries and those that are short of food. Those countries' leaders themselves make it clear that they believe that the development of their own agriculture is the important requirement. I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman would share our concern about the cost to the taxpayer of disposing of the surpluses; hence this measure as well as others.

Fish Farming

6. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received about fish farming in England and Wales.

The Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. John Selwyn Gummer): I have recently received a request from the British Trout Association to create a development council for the trout industry and this is now being considered. I am also aware of a number of reports concerning the development of marine fish farming in Scotland.

Mr. Dalyell: Is anything to be done about the effluent and disease problem?

Mr. Gummer: We believe it to be an important part of any consideration to ensure that effluent and disease are taken fully into account. Obviously, one cannot buy increased production at an unacceptable cost. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland has to take that into account, as it is particularly true of the sort of fish farming for which he is responsible.

Mr. Colvin: Will my right hon. Friend take this opportunity to pay credit to the fish farming industry, which now produces 14,000 tonnes of fish a year worth £30 million and caters for 90 per cent. of the home market,

which is no mean achievement? Will he also bear in mind the interests of the 3·5 million anglers in the country who are concerned about water pollution and assure the House that before the water authorities are privatised there is a legal obligation on fish farmers, who might pollute waters, to obtain water abstraction licences before further development?

Mr. Gummer: My hon. Friend is right to draw attention to the tremendous advances in fish farming and to the fact that the price of farmed fish has brought within the reach of large numbers of people products that used to be denied to them. This is a great industry and one which we want to support. I am also concerned about the effect of pollution on rivers and we have already announced that the licensing of water abstraction is to be extended to all fish farms in England and Wales. That will be part of the legislation that comes before the House.

Mr. Doran: Is the Minister aware that a considerable, if not the greater, part of research work into fish farming in this country is done at the Torry research centre in my constituency? Yesterday he sent me a letter refusing a request for the all-party group of Members with constituency interests in the fishing industry to visit the Torry research centre. Will he advise the House and those hon. Members who wish to visit the centre what exactly is going on at Torry that he wants to prevent them from seeing.

Mr. Gummer: The hon. Gentleman tells only half the story. He does not mention that I gave him specific permission to visit Torry, to meet anybody whom he wanted to meet and to ask any questions that he wanted to ask. For the hon. Gentleman to suggest that I am hiding something is wholly unacceptable.

Mr. Key: Will my right hon. Friend find time today to read the excellent report of the Freshwater Biological Association and the Wessex water authority on fish stocks in the river Avon in my constituency, which has over 20 fish farms in its catchment area? Will he consider carefully their request and their recommendation for substantial further research into fish farming and the impact of pollution on that industry and the environment?

Mr. Gummer: I shall certainly consider that question. I know that much of the work done is of great importance. I also agree with my hon. Friend that the industry has to be taken extremely seriously not only in terms of its contributions to the British economy and its substitution for what would otherwise be imports but for its export potential.

Dr. Godman: I am deeply concerned about the answer that the Minister gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen, South (Mr. Doran). I intend to visit the Torry research station this month. I sincerely hope that I shall have the Minister's agreement to that visit.

An effluent causing great concern is that associated with the use of Nuvan 500 EC on fish farms. What information has the Minister about its use on English fish farms and, if it is used, under what regulations is it used? Will he give serious consideration to banning the use of that pesticide on fish farms?

Mr. Gummer: The hon. Gentleman has asked a serious question about Nuvan. My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary is looking at the issue. As far as we know, there is practically no use of that pesticide on English fish farms. I say "practically" because I do not want to say that there is no use, because it may be used—although we cannot find any evidence of it. We are looking at the issue because it must be taken seriously.

The hon. Gentleman's comment about his hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen, South (Mr. Doran) was the wrong way round. I went to great trouble to ensure that his hon. Friend could have every possible access, for the right reason that it is his constituency. When it was asked what facilities should be made available, I said that all facilities should be made available, because the centre is in the hon. Gentleman's constituency.

I have never refused any sort of co-operation in any such circumstances to Opposition Front Bench Members as I am sure that the right hon. and hon. Friends of the hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman) will agree. It is not normal for any of our institutions to be available to any group of hon. Members who happen to wish to visit them, but I try to make such institutions as available as possible. The hon. Member for Aberdeen, South would have done the House a courtesy if he had admitted what I have done for him.

Bread Prices

7. **Mr. Tim Smith:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the average annual increase in the price of a loaf of bread *(a)* between 1974 and 1979 and *(b)* between 1979 and 1988.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The price of bread rose on average by 14 per cent. per annum between February 1974 and May 1979. The rate of increase between May 1979 and April 1988 was 6·9 per cent.—less than half the rate during the previous shorter period.

Mr. Smith: Does my hon. Friend recall that 10 years ago the price of a loaf of bread was a major political issue as it rose inexorably year in, year out, notwithstanding Canute-like food subsidies? From the figures that my hon. Friend has given, will not most people now be able to see which side their bread is buttered and continue to vote for the party of low price inflation?

Mr. Thompson: I agree entirely with my hon. Friend. The price of bread has increased by 30 per cent. since 1960 compared with the price of milk which has increased by 53 per cent. and the price of a pint of beer which has increased by 87 per cent.

Mr. Morley: Does the Minister agree that much of the top-quality grain used in bread production has been imported and is not home grown, because the bulk of the cereal grain grown in Britain is of poor quality and goes into intervention stores and attracts the subsidies that go with that?

Mr. Thompson: Because of the climate, the bulk of the grain grown in Britain is of a different quality, not an inferior quality. It is used for different purposes.

Green Pound

8. **Mr. Brandon-Bravo:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what progress is being made with attempts to devalue the green pound, following the recent meeting of the Agriculture Council.

Mr. MacGregor: Discussions are still continuing. I have made it clear to the Agriculture Council that in my view it would be right to take a measured step in the current price-fixing towards the elimination of MCAs from all products by 1992, and to remove them immediately from the pigmeat sector.

Mr. Brandon-Bravo: My right hon. Friend is aware that I represent a typically inner-city constituency, but, by way of explanation, I should say that even that constituency has three splendid farms on its southern border. On behalf of that tiny minority, may I ask whether the negotiations will ensure that my three constituents and the rest of the farming community will have a fair deal? For the less initiated, how will it affect the cost of our food?

Mr. MacGregor: I assure my hon. Friend that I am seeking a fair deal for the United Kingdom farmer at the price-fixing negotiations. I made clear my intentions about the green pound from the outset of the Council discussions. This will, however, be one of the trickiest parts of the negotiations, and we have not yet seriously debated it. My hon. Friend's second point depends on whether there is devaluation and the extent of it. The impact on the retail prices index of a 1 per cent. green pound devaluation is minute.

Mr. Leigh: Will my right hon. Friend reassure the 500 farmers in my constituency that his efforts on green pound devaluation, MCA abolition and to prevent unfair subsidies abroad will result in a common agricultural policy that is truly free and fair? Our farmers are the most efficient in Europe, but they demand a free market, not a cheats' market.

Mr. MacGregor: I assure my hon. Friend that that is my objective. I think that he used the words "cheats' market" at the end of his question. That is a separate issue, but he will be aware that I am one of the Ministers taking a lead in Europe in the drive against fraud in the CAP.

Horses

9. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if, pursuant to his answer of 5 May, *Official Report*, column *588*, he will take steps to increase the use of horses as agricultural animals.

Mr. Gummer: It is up to individual farmers to decide how they shall use their horses as agricultural animals. I recently addressed a conference to promote what I think is a very important aspect of farming.

Mr. Greenway: Is my right hon. Friend aware that Britain is the only EEC country not to recognise the horse as an agricultural animal? Is he further aware of the damage that that does to racing, breeding, bloodstock, riding and driving in this country? What animal could be more agricultural than a horse?

Mr. Key: A cow?

Mr. Devlin: A chicken?

Mr. Tim Smith: A pig?

Mr. Greenway: I do not think so.

Will my right hon. Friend take steps to have the horse recognised as an agricultural animal, as it will be in 1992?

Mr. Gummer: My hon. Friend must accept that a horse is an agricultural animal when it is an agricultural animal. When it is running in the Derby, it clearly is not an agricultural animal, and we intend to keep it so.

Pig Movements (Cheshire)

10. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received regarding Cheshire county council's charges for pig movements.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Representations have been received from a number of individuals and organisations, including the National Farmers Union and the National Pig Breeders Association. All have expressed opposition to these charges.

Mr. Butler: Is my hon. Friend aware that Cheshire county council is continuing to charge for pig movements, and that that does not have legal status? What action does he propose to take to stop that procedure?

Mr. Thompson: I am aware of my hon. Friend's anxiety about this matter. He has been good enough to write to me about it, but I must reiterate the advice that I gave. This is a county council matter. It is for local Members of Parliament to put pressure on locally elected councillors who, all too often in this matter as in others, are ready to hide behind the Government.

Bovine Somatotropin

11. **Dr. Marek:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he expects to be in a position to announce the final results of the testing of bovine somatotropin; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. MacGregor: Results of trials authorised under animal test certificates are normally submitted to the licensing authority as part of any application for a product licence. They are assessed, together with all other information submitted in support of the application, in accordance with the provisions of the Medicines Act 1968. I cannot forecast at this stage what the outcome of any application in relation to bovine somatotropin would be.

Dr. Marek: Will the Minister assure the House that when the information is available he will speedily pass it on to the public so that they are aware of BST? Will he ensure —I believe that there is cross-party support for this—that BST-treated milk is labelled as such?

Mr. MacGregor: Labelling is a separate question and depends on the outcome of applications for product licences. Two companies have applied for product licences, but the applications must be rigorously scrutinised. The difficulty about publishing the results of the trials is that all data supplied by companies in support of applications made under the Medicines Act are kept in strict confidence. The Medicines Act, under which that takes place, prohibits disclosure of the information.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: Is my right hon. Friend's Department paying for, or otherwise supporting, any research into establishing reliable tests to show whether this hormone has been used? Surely without the existence of any such reliable tests it is quite pointless to talk about any control mechanism.

Mr. MacGregor: There is a distinction between the animal test certificate and the product licence and before issuing an animal test certificate the licensing authority, advised by the veterinary products committee, has to be satisfied that there is no risk to human health. The authority was so satisfied in the case of the applications for animal test certificates. That is why the test trials are going on. There is no scientific reason to impose conditions on the disposal of milk because we have been advised by the veterinary products committee that there is no risk to human health. That has been the outcome of tests that have so far taken place. Wider tests are now taking place in relation to animal test certificates and in due course we shall have to take a view about applications for product licences.

Raw Sugar Refining

12. **Mr. Shersby:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what recent proposals made by the European Economic Community Commission have been accepted for assistance in the refining in the United Kingdom of raw sugar imported from African, Caribbean and Pacific countries.

15. **Mr. Page:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if the European Community Commission recognises any special circumstances surrounding the refining, in the United Kingdom, of raw sugar imported from the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries; what proposals have been made to the Council of Ministers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: In this year's price fixing the Commission has proposed a Community-funded aid of about 52p per tonne which will be available to all Community pure cane refineries and which could be adjusted to take account of changes in the storage levy and in Community prices. It has also proposed authorisation for a national aid of up to about £3·28 per tonne, 25 per cent. Community funded, on ACP sugar refined in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Shersby: Will my hon. Friend confirm that the Government are willing to pay in full whatever percentage of the special refining aid the Commission stipulates should be at the discretion of the United Kingdom Government?

Mr. Thompson: At present we are concentrating our efforts on persuading the Council to adopt the Commission's proposals which provide for this maximum rate of national aid. We shall review our stance in the light of the decisions reached by the Council.

Mr. Page: As it has been about two years since the EC agreed to review this sugar cane refining margin, would my hon. Friend like to make a statement to the House about whether the increases will be backdated to 1 July 1987 as was originally proposed?

Mr. Thompson: Under the Commission's proposals, not yet accepted by the Council, the suggestion is that both refining aids would be backdated to 1 July 1987.

Mr. Spearing: Will the Minister confirm that, whatever the outcome of any price negotiations in any year, the commitment to 1·3 million tonnes of cane sugar is fulfillable only if the price permits the exporting Third world countres to cover their transport and refining costs in this country? Is it not therefore important that any price should enable the EC to discharge its moral commitment to those Third world countries with which it is in association?

Mr. Thompson: I know of the great interest of the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) in this matter and the employment implications. I agree with all that the hon. Gentleman has said.

Mr. Wells: Will my hon. Friend tell the House whether the cost of this extra sugar refining margin will be borne by the sugar producers or directly by the Government? Can he tell us whether we shall simply spend the money of the European Community to which we contribute 20 per cent.?

Mr. Thompson: The Community will contribute 25 per cent. and the Government will contribute the remainer.

Irradiated Food

13. **Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what discussions he has had with consumer and similar groups about the import and export of irradiated food since the Chernobyl disaster.

Mr. Gummer: As regards exports for which I have responsibility my officials have had contact not only with a great many individual consumers, producers and exporters but with a wide range of trade associations, producer and marketing groups, and trades unions.

Ms. Ruddock: In the light of that reply, will the Minister reveal whether one of those organisations is the Asian regional office of the International Organisation of Consumer Unions, which claims that there has been deliberate dumping by Europe of contaminated food in the Third world? Will he set up an inquiry to ensure that Britain is not one of the responsible countries?

Mr. Gummer: I will look into the matter that the hon. Lady has raised. Obviously, dumping of that kind would be completely unacceptable.

Sir Peter Emery: Will my right hon. Friend tell the House what discussions he or his Department have had with other EC countries to try to establish a standard of irradiation for all food stocks when there has been an accident such as Chernobyl?

Mr. Gummer: As my hon. Friend knows, we have had a number of discussions. We have a system which will operate should any such accident take place in the future. However, we have not come to the kind of final decision that many hon. Members would like to see. I hope that the United Kingdom will continue to press for decisions based on the best scientific evidence and for proper protection for the consumer rather than rely on arguments which are sometimes merely emotional.

Mr. Wigley: Will the Minister accept that sheep farmers and farmers generally in Britain played a vital part in minimising the amount of contaminated irradiated food that was produced? In those circumstances, two years after Chernobyl, is it not ridiculous that there are dozens of farmers who have been affected by Chernobyl who still have not had adequate compensation for the trouble that they took at the time?

Mr. Gummer: The hon. Gentleman fails to mention that £5·3 million has been paid out in compensation. The compensation arrangements were worked out step by step with the various unions and farmers were, in fact, considerably compensated. The only cases remaining are those which have specific objections to the rules laid down in agreement with the farming unions. It really is not fair to blame the Government for what has been a generous scheme.

Mr. David Nicholson: Has my right hon. Friend had his attention drawn to research from Bristol university on the effects of post-Chernobyl radiation on sheep in Somerset and Devon? Is he aware of the urgent need to reassure farmers and consumers in that area on that matter before the subject is exploited by irresponsible people?

Mr. Gummer: I am happy to tell farmers and consumers in the whole of the United Kingdom that there is no danger to human health as a result of Chernobyl. The sheepmeat that has been on sale in the United Kingdom has been wholly safe. At that time I was happy that my pregnant wife was busy eating lamb.

Mr. Flynn: Does the Minister not agree that the research unit at Bristol discovered the new contaminated hot spots, not so much by judgment as by luck? Is it not time that there was thorough research throughout the country to ensure that there are no other hot spots of irradiated land as a result of Chernobyl?

Mr. Gummer: I do not think that the hon. Gentleman has understood how the system works. He does considerable damage to cast doubt on the safety of the food that is produced in this country. I say again that no lamb has been sold in this country which could possibly be a danger to human health. We stand by that.

Home Grown Cereals Authority

14. **Mr. David Davis:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Home Grown Cereals Authority; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. MacGregor: The last time I met the chairman of the HGCA was on 13 April when he and other senior figures from levy-funded bodies came to discuss the industry funding of research in agriculture, fisheries and food.

Mr. Davis: I thank my right hon. Friend for that answer. In those discussions did he raise with the HGCA the possibility of the use of that research for low-cost, low-input, limited output varieties that will reduce the technological pressure on the CAP rather than exacerbate them?

Mr. MacGregor: No, because we were not discussing individual items of research. However, I know that research into that matter is going on and a good deal of it will be longer-term. Basically, we were discussing possibilities for more industry funding of near market research, to ensure that the taxpayer was getting value for money and that there were proper priorities in any Government funded research. We also want to ensure proper commercial exploitation of the research that we do. That is what the discussion was concentrating on.

Horticultural Produce (Dumping)

17. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps he takes to prevent the dumping of horticultural produce on the British market.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The horticultural market in the Community is protected from dumping from third countries by the reference price system for major products and by provisions in the treaty and in Community regulations which enable the European Commission to take action to control imports.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Is my hon. Friend aware that strawberries from Holland have been on sale in the Bristol and Liverpool markets at 25p per lb, which is well below the cost of production? Will my hon. Friend act to prevent that dumping by using the same Common Market procedure that was successfully used a year ago by the French Government to reduce imports of Spanish strawberries in similar circumstances?

Mr. Thompson: My hon. Friend is quite correct about the disappearance of the threat of Spanish strawberries to our market. I shall look carefully at what he has told me about Dutch strawberries being imported into this country at a price which he alleges is below the production price.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Wall:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 9 June.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House, I shall be having further meetings later today, including one with the President of Tanzania.

Mr. Wall: Does the Prime Minister accept that many young people are becoming homeless to escape violence, sexual abuse, overcrowding or because of leaving care? Will she explain how, particularly in low-paid Bradford, young people can get together the £100, plus four weeks' rent in advance, which is required by most landlords? Will she explain to Sean Coles, who is 17 years of age, receives £19·40 per week and lives and sleeps in a rubbish skip, how he is to survive in her society? Are squatting or robbing the only alternatives?

The Prime Minister: Undoubtedly some young people do leave home for the reasons that the hon. Gentleman gave, but by no means all: many leave home voluntarily. The hon. Gentleman is well aware that there have been changes in the way in which homeless teenagers are provided for financially. Under the old system, they used to get money in advance; now they get it in arrears. It is a new system. Local offices have taken special steps to inform landlords and hostels in their areas about the changes. Claimants are provided with evidence of having made a claim to help them to secure accommodation. The early indications are that landlords are beginning to adjust to the new rules.

Q2. **Mr. Andrew MacKay:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 9 June.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. MacKay: Will my right hon. Friend welcome today's decision by the French Government to follow our lead in dealing with sub-Saharan debt? Does she agree that it is a pity that they did not respond more positively to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's initiative a whole year ago?

The Prime Minister: Yes. A number of proposals have been received about how to deal with the debt problem. They all have one thing in common. They follow the initiative of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer of nearly a year ago. I agree that it would have been better if we had had a better response at that time. I hope that we shall deal with the matter effectively at Toronto. In the meantime, I make it clear that this country has already written off £1 billion-worth of debt.

Mr. Hattersley: In the light of today's reports from the Low Pay Unit and the Child Poverty Action Group, does the Prime Minister still believe that everyone has benefited from increased prosperity during the past eight years?

The Prime Minister: I have seen briefly the summaries of those reports. The right hon. Gentleman knows that the figures that were published in May, the low-income families statistics, which are the latest statistics and cover 1981, 1983 and 1985, confirm that people at all levels of income have been getting better off. They show that those on lower incomes have done better than the population in general and that there are fewer pensioners, in proportional terms, in the lower income bracket.

Mr. Hattersley: That answer, as anticipated, dealt with the period up to 1986. Will the Prime Minister now bring her own figures up to date? Will she confirm that this year more than one million families and households are worse off by more than £3 a week as a result of the combined impact of the Budget and social security changes? Will she confirm that a total of seven million households are about to suffer a fall in their standard of living?

The Prime Minister: I believe that the Child Poverty Action Group figures referred at the latest to 1985; of course ours go beyond that. The Child Poverty Action Group figures are related strictly to the outdated method of supplementary benefit, whereas we are on a wholly new benefit system now. With regard to the new benefits, as the right hon. Gentleman is aware, some 88 per cent. of people are on either the same or an improved rate of benefit—*[Interruption.]* Yes some others are on a lower rate.

Mr. Hattersley: That answer may or may not be accurate. *[Interruption.]* It suffers from the minor deficiency of being the answer to a quite different question to that which I asked. So I ask her again, will she tell us yes or no, whether the very large number of families I quoted will be worse off as a result of the Budget? If she goes on waffling with this answer as she did with the previous one, it will reflect not only on her compassion but on her integrity as Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: No, I will not confirm the right hon. Gentleman's figures. The Budget was an excellent one. It has helped many people on lower pay because it has increased the allowances by twice the amount of inflation. It has also reduced the standard rate of tax which, at the time when the right hon. Gentleman was in power was 33p in the pound, and is now down to 25p in the pound.

Mr. Janman: Given our long-standing commitment to the independent nuclear deterrent, our recently announced support for the European fighter aircraft programme and our continuing full implementation of the armed forces pay review body recommendations, does my right hon. Friend agree that the Government's defence policies are intellectually well founded, firm and consistent, unlike the increasingly divided, indecisive and floundering policies of the Opposition?

The Prime Minister: Yes, our defence policies effectively safeguard the defence of this country and ensure that we are staunch allies of NATO, including its vital nuclear deterrent policy. I have not been able to make out the Opposition's policy. I do not believe that it has changed from having absolutely unilateral nuclear disarmament and no nuclear deterrent.

Mr. McGrady: Does the Prime Minister share my concern for the welfare for the fishermen from the County Down coast who have suffered substantial losses of tackle, catches and equipment because of submarine activity in the Irish sea? Does she also share my concern about the unhelpful response from the Ministry of Defence, which said that such losses are due to natural underwater obstacles which have the unnatural ability to drag trawlers backwards at considerable speed? Will she take some action to alleviate their plight?

The Prime Minister: Of course I am concerned about the plight of fishermen, but I do not think that I am going to get involved in this one. The hon. Gentleman must take it up with the Ministry of Defence, in which I have the greatest possible confidence.

Sir Ian Lloyd: The Prime Minister will have seen the immensely disturbing reports this morning that Cuban forces are massing on the frontier of Angola and that the South African Government are calling up reserves. In view of the immense importance to the West of South Africa as a stable country, will my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister say precisely where we stand on this matter?

The Prime Minister: Yes, of course we have seen the reports that there are a comparatively large number of Cuban forces near the Namibian border and comparatively near a very important dam. I think it is important that talks which began in London about the Angolan position are taken further. There is some dispute about where the next round of talks should take place. I think it is important that the two sides should get together and resolve that problem. I think that the Soviet Union too is anxious for it to be solved.

Q3. **Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 9 June.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Jones: The Prime Minister will be aware that the Welsh Office has consulted on the need for a new Welsh language Act and that the period of consultation ended in March 1987. Two thousand responded to the call for evidence and more than 90 per cent. were in favour. Does she now think that because of the obvious demand for

greater status for the Welsh language in Wales an announcement should be made? If an announcement is to be made, will it include a commitment to legislate at an early date?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Gentleman will be aware that the original responses were varied, which is why my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales decided to take further soundings. My right hon. Friend and the Minister of State are now considering measures to promote and protect the Welsh language, details of which will be announced shortly. There is, of course, no commitment to legislate.

Q4. **Mr. Stanbrook:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 9 June.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Stanbrook: Has my right hon. Friend seen the report of the tragic incident at a Manchester school in which an Asian boy was killed? Does she agree that that confirms that so-called anti-racist policies only strengthen race prejudice? Is it not now time for us to abandon policies which emphasise the differences between British citizens and to concentrate instead on those which promote the unity of this nation and pride in our achievements, irrespective of class, sex or race?

The Prime Minister: I agree with my hon. Friend that everyone who settles here permanently has the same rights and responsibilities, and I welcome all genuine efforts to remove discrimination and racism.

Q5. **Mr. Alan W. Williams:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 9 June.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Williams: Was it the Prime Minister's decision to send the SAS assassination squad to Gibraltar?

The Prime Minister: We never discuss matters concerning security forces in this House.

Q6. **Mr. Cran:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 9 June.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Cran: Is my right hon. Friend aware that unemployment in my constituency of Beverley in the north of England has fallen by 22 per cent. in the past year? Is she further aware that male manual earnings in Humberside are higher than the United Kingdom average? Does that not suggest to her, that her economic policy works for the north of England as well as the south?

The Prime Minister: Yes, unemployment is falling in all regions, including Humberside which is now doing well. I agree with my hon. Friend that the overall policies of the Chancellor of the Exchequer are returning enterprise to all parts.

Mr. Foulkes: Has the Prime Minister had time to read today the report of the committee on medical aspects of radiation in the environment, which points to a direct link between Dounreay and an increased incidence of leukaemia, and recommends that increased monitoring, including full body monitoring, should be carried out? Will she confirm that this increased monitoring will apply not just to Dounreay but to every nuclear establishment in Britain?

The Prime Minister: The committee on medical aspects of radiation in the environment has completed its consideration of the incidence of leukaemia in under 25-year-olds living near the Dounreay nuclear plant in Caithness and its report is published today. As my hon. Friend the Minister responsible for health in Scotland said yesterday, the Government have accepted the report and are now considering how best to implement the recommendations contained in it. The report identifies a number of possible explanations for there being six cases of leukaemia where only one would have been expected. It does not point to any particular explanation and therefore considers that all possible explanations require to be investigated further. Recommendations for these further investigations are made and are accepted.

Mr. William Powell: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 9 June.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Powell: Is my right hon. Friend aware that her welcome and support for the success of the summit last week has been widely echoed throughout the country? Will she confirm that further rapid progress in the improvement of relations between East and West will be made possible if there is rapid success in the negotiations relating to the elimination of chemical weapons and to the reduction of the imbalance in conventional forces in central Europe?

The Prime Minister: I agree with my hon. Friend in welcoming the ratification of the intermediate-range nuclear weapons agreement. The next step should be to complete the negotiations on reducing United States and Soviet strategic nuclear weapons by 50 per cent. After that, as my hon. Friend pointed out, we must get on with the negotiations preferably to abolish chemical weapons and those on conventional weapons, and we now have a mandate to do that.

Business of the House

3.31 pm

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): Will the Leader of the House state the business for next week?

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham): Yes, Sir. The business for next week will be as follows:

MONDAY 13 JUNE—Until Seven o'clock, private Members' motions.

Consideration of Lords Amendments to the Dartford-Thurrock Crossing Bill.

Ways and Means resolutions relating to the Finance (No. 2) Bill.

Progress on remaining stages of the Housing Bill.

TUESDAY 14 JUNE—Progress on remaining stages of the Housing Bill.

Motion to take note of EC documents on the limitation of the emission of pollutants from large combustion plants. Details will be given in the *Official Report*.

Motions on the Building Societies (Commercial Assets and Services) and the Building Societies (Limits on Commercial Assets) Orders.

WEDNESDAY 15 JUNE—Completion of remaining stages of the Housing Bill.

The Chairman of Ways and Means has named opposed private business for consideration at Seven o'clock.

THURSDAY 16 JUNE—Progress on remaining stages of the Criminal Justice Bill *[Lords]*.

Motion to take note of EC document on weights and dimensions of certain road vehicles. Details will be given in the *Official Report*.

Motion to take note of EC documents on proposals to extend roadworthiness testing. Details will be given in the *Official Report*.

FRIDAY 17 JUNE—There will be a debate on the growth of the tourism industry on a motion for the Adjournment of the House.

MONDAY 20 JUNE—Completion of remaining stages of the Criminal Justice Bill *[Lords]*.

[Debate on Tuesday 14 June 1988. Relevant European Community Documents: (a) 11642/83, (b) 5124/85, (c) unnumbered, air pollution from large combustion plants.

Relevant Reports of European Legislation Committee: (a) HC 78-xxvii (1983-84) para 4; (b) HC 5-xviii (1984-85) para 2.

Debates on Thursday 16 June 1988. First Debate. Relevant European Community Document: unnumbered, commercial vehicles: weights.

Relevant Report of European Legislation Committee: HC 43-xxvi (1987-88) para 2.

Second Debate. Relevant European Community Documents: (a) 6878/86, (b) 7946/87, roadworthiness tests for motor vehicles and trailers.

Relevant Reports of European Legislation Committee: (a) HC 21-xxiii (1985-86) para 5 and HC 21-xxvii (1985-86) para 4; (b) HC 43-iii (1987-88) para 2.]

Mr. Dobson: I thank the Lord President for telling us what the business is.

I think that the whole House recognises that the Minister for Housing and Planning is having great difficulty in producing a Housing Bill that makes sense even of his own proposals. Will the Lord President accept that the intention to complete the Commons consideration of this measure next week will put an intolerable burden on the House and is likely to result in an even shabbier than normal Act of Parliament? Does he not accept that, with the Government having tabled no fewer than 183 new clauses and amendments, there is no possibility of their being properly considered? Will he seriously consider our request that further time be devoted to this Bill, even if it is only to make sure that the Bill is eventually a workable piece of legislation?

Having said all that, I must ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he can tell us when we are to have the opportunity to consider the proposals on short speeches.

Turning from short speeches to the Short money, when can we expect to debate the proposals for uprating the funding of Opposition parties?

The Lord President will be aware that his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales has long been promising something that he refers to as the Welsh valley initiative. Can he give us an undertaking that that will be announced in the House before it is announced anywhere else?

When can we expect the oft-promised general debate on foreign affairs?

Finally, the Lord President will recall that last week I asked him if he would look into the police restrictions placed on access by right hon. and hon. Members to Downing street. I wonder whether he is in a position to make a statement on that now.

Mr. Wakeham: The hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) asked me six questions about the business for next week and I shall seek to answer them in the order in which he asked them.

I understand that the Opposition are in some difficulty in respect of the Housing Bill. I believe that the time allocated is adequate, but I recognise that there is some concern. I am prepared to have discussions through the usual channels to see whether any assistance can be provided.

As to short speeches, I regret that the motion that I originally tabled could not be debated at the time that I intended. I hope to bring forward that motion again in the near future.

With regard to the Short money, the financial assistance to opposition parties, I hope that it may be possible to make an announcement about the timing of that debate in my next business statement.

I confirm that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales hopes to make a statement in the House on the valleys initiative in the very near future.

It is my intention to have a debate on foreign affairs in the very near future, but I hope that the hon. Gentleman accepts that the precise timing is best left for discussion through the usual channels.

As the hon. Gentleman rightly said, he raised last week the question—as did one of his hon. Friends—of Members' access to Downing street. My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department explained in a written answer on 7 June to his hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick):

> "Fresh instructions have been issued by the police to make it clear that, as hitherto, no restrictions should be placed on the number of hon. Members who need to enter Downing street in the course of their parliamentary duties."—[*Official Report*, 7 June 1988; Vol. 134, c. *448*.]

It was most unfortunate that some right hon. and hon. Members were mistakenly prevented from entering

Downing street to present a petition. I hope that the House will accept that that was a genuine misunderstanding and nothing more. The Metropolitan police restrict access generally to Downing street in pursuance of their common law duty to prevent crime and disorder, but it has never been the intention to prevent hon. Members from pursuing their parliamentary duties.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. As we have been away for a week, I will repeat a statement that I made earlier this Session. The purpose of business questions is not to make a speech about a subject of an hon. Member's choice, but to ask for a debate. In order that I may be as generous as possible in calling Members to put supplementary questions, I ask hon. Members to confine themselves to one question and not to make a speech or to expect a detailed reply.

Mr. Michael Fallon (Darlington): In view of the firm undertaking last night by the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) to renationalise the Rover Group, will my right hon. Friend arrange a debate on the state of the privatisation programme so that those people who work for privatised companies, or for companies which are to be privatised, may be very clear about their fate under any future Labour Government?

Mr. Wakeham: Enough was said in yesterday's debate to cause people concern about what might happen should there unfortunately be a change of Government at any future time. I should like to arrange such a debate, but I cannot promise my hon. Friend a debate in the immediate future.

Mr. Ron Davies (Caerphilly): Is the Leader of the House aware of the widespread concern on both sides of the House, and outside it, at the delay in implementing the fair labelling order by his hon. Friend the Minister for Trade? Is he aware that there is widespread support for that measure, and will he give a guarantee that the order will be laid before the summer recess?

Mr. Wakeham: Consultations and discussions are going on at the moment. I shall certainly refer the hon. Gentleman's concern to my hon. Friend the Minister for Trade.

Rev. Ian Paisley (Antrim, North): In view of the serious deterioration in security in Northern Ireland, will the right hon. Gentleman ensure that we have a full debate soon, keeping in mind that not one person has been made amenable to the law for the terrible massacre in Enniskillen, the 11 murders in South Down and the 17 murders in Castlederg? Will the right hon. Gentleman remember that Members from Northern Ireland can take part in debates on and move amendments to English legislation but cannot move amendments to Northern Ireland legislation?

Mr. Wakeham: Of course I recognise the concern of the hon. Gentleman on security in Northern Ireland, the grave and continuing difficulties and the need for a debate. I also recognise the concern about the way in which legislation for Northern Ireland is dealt with. Any changes in that system would be best considered in the wider context of progress towards devolved government. I cannot promise the hon. Gentleman an early debate, but I recognise the strength of what he has said and I will bear the matter in mind.

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): I am sure that the Leader of the House accepts that the report of the Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment on leukaemia clusters requires careful consideration because it raises important and serious issues. Will the House have an opportunity to discuss the report?

Will the Leader of the House also consider early-day motion 1185 in the names of myself and my right hon. and hon. Friends?

[*That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that the Local Government (Direct Labour Organisations) (Competition) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 1988 (S.I. 1988, No. 956), dated 22nd May 1988, a copy of which was laid before this House on 8th June, be annulled.*]

Will we have an opportunity to debate it, in the House or in Committee?

Mr. Wakeham: The second point on local government regulations in Scotland can best be discussed through the usual channels.

I note what the hon. Gentleman said about the COMARE report which has recently been published. I believe that there should be time for consideration. I cannot promise an early debate but I shall certainly bear the matter in mind.

Mr. Tim Yeo (Suffolk, South): Does my right hon. Friend agree that an early debate on defence policy would give those of us who favour multilateral rather than unilateral disarmament the opportunity to hail the unexpected but none the less welcome arrival in our ranks of the Leader of the Opposition, even if very few of his hon. Friends appear willing to follow him at this stage?

Mr. Wakeham: A debate on defence is an important part of the parliamentary year. We shall have a debate on defence, but the White Paper has only recently been published. I understand that the Select Committee on Defence is in the course of preparing a report on it. I want to have discussions as to the best time for that debate.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): Has the Lord President of the Council seen early-day motion 1183 about the tragic crash of an RAF Meteor jet aircraft in Coventry on Monday 30 May and the heroism of the RAF pilot who gave his life to avoid crashing into the houses and the social club in Coventry, South-East?

[*That this House notes with regret the fatal crash in Coventry of an RAF Meteor T7 jet aircraft during the Warwickshire Air Pageant on Monday 30th May; recognises that the pilot, Flight Lieutenant Peter Stacey, was a hero to give his life by crashing his plane on the only available space of open ground, between a school and two adjacent housing estates, thus avoiding turning a tragedy into a potential civil disaster; recognises that whilst air displays are a popular family entertainment, no entertainment is worth this risk to the lives of people, such as the constituents of the honourable Member for Coventry, South East who had large pieces of debris scattered onto their houses and grounds, which thankfully caused only minor damage; demands that the future organisation of such air displays be modified to ensure areas of dense population are*

[Mr. Dave Nellist]

safe from potential accidents; regards the offer by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence for the Armed Forces, in a letter to the honourable Member for Coventry, South East on 6th June, to send an advance copy of a summary of the findings of the Royal Air Force Board of Enquiry into the Meteor crash, as inadequate; and believes that for the peace of mind of the people of Coventry and the relatives of Flight Lieutenant Stacey, the investigation report should be published.]

Can the right hon. Gentleman explain why the Secretary of State for Defence has not yet made a statement to the House on the crash? Air displays such as the Warwickshire air pageant, during which the crash took place, are popular family entertainment, but no entertainment is worth such a risk to the lives of my constituents who had large pieces of wreckage scattered on their homes and gardens.

Mr. Wakeham: I am sure the whole House will share the hon. Gentleman's regret at this tragic accident. A thorough investigation is being undertaken and the results will be made public in accordance with normal practice. I am sure that is the best way to proceed, and that all of us would want to express our sympathy to the relatives of the brave pilot who was killed.

Mr. Richard Holt (Langbaurgh): My right hon. Friend's announcement of a debate on tourism will be welcome, but tourists need roads. When will we have a debate on motorway policy so that the north-east can be exploited to the full by tourists, who would love to get there if only the motorways were adequate? There is unanimous support for an adequate motorway system to the north-east from everyone, it would appear, except "Pimply" Heffer of *The Daily Telegraph* and those who advise the Minister.

Mr. Wakeham: I have answered previous questions on roads from my hon. Friend. I recognise the connection between roads and tourism. I should have thought that my hon. Friend, with his customary skill, would be able to relate the two in the debate on Friday 17 June.

Mr. Merlyn Rees (Morley and Leeds, South): The Leader of the House will have seen last week's report on riots in Crowborough in Sussex. In recent years, there have been many such occurrences in more affluent parts of the country. Today, the Association of Chief Police Officers, is publishing a report about the new phenomenon of riots in so-called affluent areas. Will the Leader of the House made sure that we get a sight of the report? Will he arrange for it to be placed in the Library? We should debate the matter, if not next week, then soon, so that we can get away from the idea that the problem arises only in inner cities.

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise the strength of what the right hon. Gentleman has said, in view of the offices that he has held and his great experience in these matters. I shall certainly refer the matter to my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary and see how best to meet the hon. Gentleman's request.

Sir Eldon Griffiths (Bury St. Edmunds): Although it was good of my right hon. Friend to agree to draw the attention of the relevant Minister to the question of the hon. Member for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies) about the labelling of furs, I remind him of my early-day motion 978.

[That this House, noting the intention of the Department of Trade and Industry to introduce a labelling Order to cover the furs of animals caught in leghold traps, a device made illegal in the United Kingdom following the report of the 1951 Scott Henderson Committee, which describes it as a diabolical instrument which causes an incalculable amount of suffering, congratulates the Minister for Trade on taking this valuable step, which will allow the consumer to exercise freedom of choice as to whether or not to purchase garments the production of which will have involved extreme cruelty to animals; and calls upon Her Majesty's Government to include in the Order the furs of badger, beaver, bobcat, coyote, cross fox, ermine, fisher, gray fox, lynx, marten, muskrat, opossum, otter, racoon, red fox and wolf, all of which are frequently caught in leghold traps.]

My motion has attracted close to 100 signatures from hon. Members. We should get a move on so that people can exercise real consumer freedom of choice.

Mr. Wakeham: I have seen my hon. Friend's early-day motion, and I recognise the support that it has attracted. I know that my hon. Friend the Minister for Trade wants to get on with it as quickly as he can. He is in the process of negotiations, and I shall urge him to get on with them as fast as possible.

Mr. Adam Ingram (East Kilbride): In view of the huge question mark involving alleged financial irregularities hanging over the proposed sale of the National Engineering laboratory at East Kilbride, is the Leader of the House prepared to make time available to debate that vital issue?

Mr. Wakeham: I cannot promise the hon. Gentleman time to debate the issue. If he has evidence of financial irregularities, I am sure that he knows the right way to deal with them.

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): Will my right hon. Friend reflect on the answer that he gave a moment ago, when he referred to progress towards devolved government in Northern Ireland? Will he explain why it is the Government's policy that there should be no devolved administration in Scotland or Wales but that there should be devolved administration in Northern Ireland?

Mr. Wakeham: My job is to answer questions about business for next week. I shall not indulge in a debate with my hon. Friend about that issue at present, although there are answers that can be given at the right time.

Mr. Harold McCusker (Upper Bann): What proportion of the legislation that the right hon. Gentleman today announced will be proceeded with next week has any application to Northern Ireland?

Mr. Wakeham: I cannot give the answer to that question without notice.

Mr. John Browne (Winchester): Is my right hon. Friend aware of the alarming rise in the offence of violence against the police, that 90 per cent. of it is alcohol-related and it is rising fastest in counties like Hampshire, where the police are thinly distributed—widely distributed—over a large area? Dos he not think that this is such an alarming trend in crime that it deserves an urgent debate?

Mr. Wakeham: Yes, of course, these are important matters. I stated to the former Home Secretary, the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees), that I shall discuss the matter with the Home Secretary. I confirm that I shall do that.

Mr. Ron Brown (Edinburgh, Leith): As the Prime Minister has condemned trial by media, surely we should have a special debate to consider the role of press barons, bearing in mind the sort of stories that are repeatedly pumped out about public figures, including hon. Members.

Mr. Wakeham: I cannot promise the hon. Gentleman any Government time for such a debate. Perhaps he would like to have a word with his right hon. and hon. Friends on the Labour Front Bench.

Mr. Tony Speller (Devon, North): Has my right hon. Friend noticed the growing number of parliamentary questions relating to pollution of the atmosphere, the earth, and the waters around our coast? Will he find time in the reasonably near future for a debate on pollution throughout the United Kingdom?

Mr. Wakeham: I noted my hon. Friend's success in obtaining the 17 May Adjournment debate on the subject of marine pollution. The Government are considering the points that he raised. It is not possible in the immediate future to have a debate on the wider issues. I shall certainly bear the matter in mind.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): May we have an urgent debate next week on the Government's flagrant abuse of parliamentary procedures? The Leader of the House will be aware that the Committee considering the Housing Bill finished its consideration on 15 March. As late as last night, new clauses and new amendments, including the "White Paper", were tabled by the Government. The Government are not giving the Opposition a chance fairly to reflect our role in the House by critically examining the Government's proposals. We do not have Report stages any more; we have new Bills on Report. We need an urgent debate on the flagrant abuse of the Government's position.

Mr. Wakeham: I do not accept what the hon. Gentleman has said, but I recognise the concern. As I said to the shadow spokesman, the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson), I am perfectly prepared to have discussions through the usual channels on matters that are causing concern.

Mr. Chris Butler (Warrington, South): In view of the proposals by Power, Water and Waste Ltd. to import millions of tonnes of festering American domestic waste into the north-west and south-west of England, will my right hon. Friend grant a debate so that hon. Members on both sides of the House can express their opposition to those proposals?

Mr. Wakeham: Of course I recognise my hon. Friend's concern. This is primarily a matter for the waste disposal authorities which are responsible for ensuring that any waste disposed of in their areas is dealt with properly and safely. I suggest that my hon. Friend gets in touch with them, but I will bear in mind what he has said.

Mr. Eddie Loyden (Liverpool, Garston): In view of the widespread concern about apparent unfettered exploitation by loan sharks, when are the Government going to take some initiatives to bring recommendations to the House to tighten up the laws against loan sharks?

Mr. Wakeham: I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman has any particular case in mind. If he has, I suggest that he either gives me details or makes details available to the Department of Trade and Industry or to the appropriate authority. With regard to matters of financial irregularity generally, I believe that my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry acts properly and swiftly in accordance with the law, which we have very much strengthened in recent years.

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): Earlier this week a teenage girl was killed in my constituency by a heavy goods vehicle. I believe that that was the fourth such incident in Kent this year and it throws into stark relief the importance of a debate on the whole question of road provision in Kent following the building of the Channel tunnel. Will my right hon. Friend grant a debate on that subject?

Mr. Wakeham: I am very distressed to hear what my hon. Friend has said about events in Kent. Of course, the subject of roads and the Channel tunnel is a suitable one for debate, and I wish that I could offer my hon. Friend an early date for such a debate. He will recognise the substantial increased resources that the Government have found for the road programme.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): Will the Leader of the House acknowledge that in the Scottish Grand Committee this morning we received an extremely unsatisfactory reply from the Minister of State? In particular, he could not assure the Committee that there would be a separate Scottish Bill for the privatisation of electricity. Will the Leader of the House assure the House that there will be a separate Scottish Bill—[HON. MEMBERS: "Why?"] Because it is an important matter. In view of the obscure replies from the Minister of State in relation to the imports of coal for power stations in Scotland, may we have a statement from the Secretary of State for Energy to clarify the matter and give some clear sign of the state of negotiations between the South of Scotland electricity board and British Coal?

Mr. Wakeham: I have not had an opportunity to read the report of the debates upstairs and I am not sure whether I should comment on it if I had. However, I will take the opportunity to do so, and will refer the matter to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy if I think that he should take any action.

Mr. John Carlisle (Luton, North): Will my right hon. Friend consider giving time for an early debate on the impartiality of the BBC? Is he not particularly worried that this coming Saturday some 10 hours of air time is to be given over to an organisation that supports terrorism?

Mr. Wakeham: These are primarily matters for the BBC. The Anti-Apartheid Movement concert is not a matter for the Government. However, I should tell my hon. Friend that the Government are considering representations received in Pretoria this morning in connection with the matter.

Mr. Paul Boateng (Brent, South): With his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department, will the Leader of the House find time, not least in view of the unusually forthright condemnation of racial discrimination by the Prime Minister a few minutes ago, to arrange an urgent debate on racial harassment, in view of the report that was issued only yesterday by the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that shows an alarming increase in London alone of 26 per cent. in this particularly unpleasant form of crime?

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise the concern and the force of the hon. Gentleman's argument, but I cannot promise a debate in the near future.

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire): Will not my right hon. Friend reconsider the question of the BBC's charter and its use of public money? Does he not share the widespread concern, at least on this side of the House, about the fact that the BBC is prepared to spend a large amount of its, and therefore its licence payers', money and a lot of air time on praising somebody who has been convicted of terrorism and who refuses to renounce violence?

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise my hon. Friend's concern. There will be an opportunity before too long for a debate on broadcasting, but I cannot promise one immediately.

Mr. Kevin Barron (Rother Valley): In the time allocated next Wednesday to the discussion of a private Bill, will the Leader of the House assure us that the Bill that will be discussed will be a private Bill and that he will not be party to a meeting such as that between the Secretary of State for Transport and the outside promoter of the private Bill which became the Associated British Ports Act? We found out later that there had been collusion between the Secretary of State for Transport and that promoter. Will it really be a private Bill or will it, once again, be a front for the Government?

Mr. Wakeham: I reject entirely the hon. Gentleman's allegations in respect of my right hon. Friend. The question of private Bills is a matter for the Chairman of Ways and Means. I am quite sure that he will see to it that all proper matters are dealt with.

Mr. Roger Knapman (Stroud): Will my right hon. Friend find time during the next week, or before the summer recess, for an additional Opposition day, bearing in mind the almost total lack of interest in yesterday's debate, with only 12 Labour Members of Parliament being present for the wind-up after the Rowntree debate and even fewer than that for the wind-up after the following debate?

Mr. Wakeham: I am glad to be able to assist my hon. Friend. I am sure that I shall be able to find time for an Opposition day before the summer recess, but I am not responsible for what they choose to debate or for how many Opposition Members decide to come and listen. That is a matter for them.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): Could we have a debate next week, or at an early opportunity, on the National Audit Commission's report on the Property Services Agency? Then we could debate that organisation's autocratic and bureaucratic decision to stop the cross-Bradford rail link that would have been a boost for Bradford and Bradford railway services. The local passenger transport authority and the local authority want a cross-Bradford rail link to link the interchange and Bradford Forster square. A debate on the National Audit Commission's report would provide an opportunity for an investigation.

Mr. Wakeham: I cannot promise the hon. Gentleman a debate next week on that matter, but I have no doubt that with his customary ingenuity he will find a way to raise matters that he believes to be of concern.

Mr. Michael Colvin (Romsey and Waterside): Is my right hon. Friend aware of the growing number of problems that face civil aviation, one of Britain's most successful industries from air safety to airport capacity, from the deregulation of European air services to the computer reservation systems that are currently being studied by the Select Committee on Transport? He will no doubt be aware of the fact that many decisions on these problems will be taken by Ministers and the Civil Aviation Authority before the end of the year, without any need for primary legislation. Is it not very important, therefore, for the House to have an opportunity to debate civil aviation before the summer recess?

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise that considerable changes are taking place in the civil aviation industry and that it would be appropriate for the House to debate them. At this time of the year it is difficult to find days for additional debates. I am sorry that I cannot be more forthcoming about when that time can be provided.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): Reverting to the Housing Bill that is to be considered on three days next week, is the Leader of the House aware that not only were four important new clauses tabled last night but that one of them, new clause 47, has the novelty of being applicable, after Royal Assent, as from today? Is this not an unusual procedure? As the Leader of the House has said that there will be discussions with the usual channels, will he withdraw his decision that consideration will be completed next Wednesday?

Mr. Wakeham: No, I cannot undertake to do that at all. I thought that I was being helpful. The time allocated for the Bill is quite substantial. I recognise that there are some difficulties, and I have undertaken to have further discussions about those difficulties. However, I cannot undertake to say in advance what the conclusions of those discussions will be.

Sir John Farr (Harborough): I do not know whether my right hon. Friend has seen the announcement in today's papers about the intention of the Murdoch group, News International, to flood the country with satellite television by next year. Does he agree that the House should consider this matter and, in particular, how reasonable standards of decency and morality can be achieved and maintained when this happens, in a very short time?

Mr. Wakeham: I have seen the announcement. I should have thought that my hon. Friend would welcome the increased competition and consumer choice that the services will provide; indeed, he may well do so. As I said before, I hope that we shall be able to arrange a debate on broadcasting in general before too long, when no doubt some of these issues will be highly relevant.

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): May we have a debate soon on the way in which many building societies and banks are blatantly in breach of the Consumer Credit Act 1974 in publishing misleading and confusing advertisements about mortgage interest rates? As that result of the mortgage war is wholly unacceptable, will the right hon. Gentleman refer the matter to the Under-Secretary of State for Industry and Consumer Affairs and seek from him an urgent statement to the House?

Mr. Wakeham: As I understand it, there are codes of practice and codes of conduct in these matters. If the hon. and learned Gentleman considers that he has evidence of improper practice perhaps he will let me have the information and I shall certainly see to it that my right hon. Friend considers it.

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): Having taken time to read the speech by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister of Trade and Industry yesterday in the Rowntree debate, will the Leader of the House invite the Attorney-General to come before the House? The Chancellor of the Duchy said that he had played the Rowntree takeover completely straight and that he certainly had not asked the Treasury Solicitor to approach the trustees of the Rowntree Trust. Someone must have done; somebody interfered. Will the right hon. Gentleman ask the Attorney-General to come before the House and explain who exactly put the Treasury Solicitor up to interfering in the takeover bid?

Mr. Wakeham: I do not think that I can add anything to what my right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy said yesterday. I shall draw to his attention the point made by the hon. Gentleman and leave it to him to decide how best to deal with the matter.

Mr. Bowen Wells (Hertford and Stortford): Is my right hon. Friend aware that issues concerning the implementation of the Single European Act in 1992 are now being discussed in the EEC, including the questions of monetary union and a central bank? Is he further aware that the Chancellor of the Exchequer yesterday sent to the Select Committee on European Legislation a discussion paper on those matters that should have been debated but which he intends to agree in the Council of Ministers before the House has had any chance to consider the underlying issues at stake? Does not my right hon. Friend consider that it is becoming more and more urgent that the House reconsider the way in which it examines European legislation?

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise that there has been some concern in the House about the way in which legislation has sometimes not been considered as it was intended to be considered. My hon. Friend and the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) have been to see me about these matters. A number of EC issues are to be debated next week. I am trying to improve the situation and I shall look into the matter to which my hon. Friend refers.

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): Has the Leader of the House seen early-day motion 478, which deals with the hunting of deer by packs of dogs?

[*That this House deplores the increasing frequency of incidents and damage arising from the hunting of deer with packs of dogs; notes the overwhelming public opinion in support of the abolition of this unnecessary practice; and calls upon Her Majesty's Government to introduce early legislation to give deer the same basic protection from cruelty as domestic and captive animals currently receive under the terms of the Protection of Animals Act 1911.*]

We seek the introduction of legislation to ensure that deer are dealt with in the same way as captive and domestic animals and to give them the same rights. The early-day motion has broad support in the House and carries 132 signatures. As well as signatures of representatives of the two major political parties, it carries signatures from one of the two alliance parties—if that is not a contradiction in terms—and from the two nationalist and three Ulster Unionist parties. Will time be provided for a debate?

Mr. Wakeham: Wild deer are already protected by the provisions of the Deer Acts 1963 and 1980, which provide safeguards against abuse by poachers and against unnecessary suffering. We have no plans to introduce further legislation.

Mr. Nicholas Budgen (Wolverhampton, South-West): May I, too, refer my right hon. Friend to the Prime Minister's excellent and stirring answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Orpington (Mr. Stanbrook), in which she said in absolute terms that our citizens ought to be treated equally, irrespective of their class, sex or race? Will my right hon. Friend allow time urgently for a debate to allow the Prime Minister to explain how she squares that with the doctrine of positive discrimination enforced by her Government in the teaching of ethnic languages in schools, the allocation of building contracts in the public sector in inner-city areas and her proposals for employment in Northern Ireland?

Mr. Wakeham: When my right hon. Friend made her statement, I think that she was supported by hon. Members on both sides of the House. I have no plans for a debate on that matter next week.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): May I press the Leader of the House on the subject of the promised debate on foreign affairs? May I ask that the motion be drafted to allow the House a debate about recent events in Pakistan so that we may call on President Zia to hold elections to the national assembly before 29 August and warn him that the reintroduction of powers would have serious implications and create serious difficulties in relationships between the United Kingdom and Pakistan? Will the Leader of the House give such an assurance?

Mr. Wakeham: I certainly give an assurance that I shall have discussions through the usual channels about the form of the debate so that widespread agreement can be reached as to its basis. If we have a wide debate, no doubt the hon. Gentleman will be able then to raise the points that concern him.

Mr. Andrew MacKay (Berkshire, East): Before the recess, will my right hon. Friend arrange a further debate on the Civil Service to enable hon. Members such as myself whose constituencies are under threat from excessive development to urge the Government to show a lead with a massive relocation of civil servants away from Whitehall? That would benefit the economy in the south-east and in the regions and would offer better value for money to the taxpayer, who funds the Civil Service.

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise that this is a big issue of concern to a number of my hon. Friends. I cannot promise an early debate, but I note that the Minister of State, Privy Council Office, who is responsible for the Civil Service, will be answering questions on Monday and it may be possible for my hon. Friend to raise the matter then.

Mr. Graham Allen (Nottingham, North): Will the Leader of the House find time for a debate on the distribution of butter and beef which is surplus to requirements in the EEC, especially in view of the failure of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to issue tenders for the distribution and packaging of both those commodities?

Will the right hon. Gentleman sponsor my Bill to make the code of practice for publicans and tenants statutory so that Scottish and Newcastle Breweries does not evict 35 tenants in my constituency over the next few weeks?

Mr. Wakeham: The hon. Gentleman is a persuasive arguer, but he has not persuaded me that I should necessarily sponsor his Bill. I shall refer the other matter to my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): May I draw my right hon. Friend's attention to the widespread admiration of President Reagan's work for peace and for Anglo-American relations? May we have an early opportunity to discuss a suitable high honour for him?

Mr. Wakeham: I am not sure how best the House should proceed in these matters. I certainly recognise the President's contribution to world peace and I shall perhaps talk to my hon. Friend about what he has in mind.

Mr. Alan Meale (Mansfield): Has the Leader of the House noted the large number of early-day motions dealing with badger protection—in particular early-day motions 843, 1091 and 1173?

[That this House notes with concern that Her Majesty's Government has no plans at present to legislate for the protection of badger setts; and calls upon Her Majesty's Government to initiate suitable amendments to the Badger Act 1973 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1987 so as to afford protection to badger setts as a matter of urgency.]

[That this House condemns the practice of badger baiting in Britain; and calls upon Her Majesty's Government to amend the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, to protect their setts.]

[That this House condemns the abhorrent practice of badger baiting, as recently depicted on the Central Television programme, The Cook Report, and calls on the Government to amend the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, to protect badger setts, increase magistrates' courts' powers to impose heavier fines on convicted offenders, consider increasing the maximum prison sentences for the offence from six months to two years for persistent offenders and make liable those landowners whose employees in pursuit of their employment deliberately kill badgers or disturb setts on their land.]

Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that a recent television programme dealing with the matter showed quite clearly that this abhorrent practice regularly occurs in Britain? Will he find time for a debate on this practice so that we may see an end to it as quickly as possible?

Mr. Wakeham: The Government share the abhorrence expressed in early-day motion 1173 but doubt whether additional measures could reasonably be taken that would significantly increase the protection already afforded to badgers under the existing law.

Mr. John Battle (Leeds, West): May I respectfully request the Leader of the House to reconsider his answers to my hon. Friends about the Housing Bill? That Bill was considered for a long time in Committee, longer than the poll tax Bill and longer than the Education Reform Bill but, at the eleventh hour, over 160 Government amendments have been tabled. Yesterday, guidelines were published transferring local authority housing to the private sector, which undercut provisions in the Bill.

The impression is being created that the Bill is being marginalised in terms of the debate in the House by being put on at the tail-end of Monday's business and, as a result, there will not be sufficient time properly to consider the provisions that the Government have now brought before the House. May I ask the Leader of the House at least to reconsider the timetable, or preferably withdraw the Bill, even at this late stage, until the Government have a coherent policy?

Mr. Wakeham: I told the hon. Gentleman's hon. Friends that I would have further discussions. I hope that he does not want me to reconsider that, because I would have thought that that was a helpful response. That is the way forward, and there is nothing more that I can add to what I have already said.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Did the Leader of the House hear the Speaker yesterday respond to me when I asked the Secretary of State for the Environment to come to the House to be questioned on the new planning procedures as they affect opencast mining applications up and down the country? Since the Leader of the House has an aversion to the earthmoving equipment trampling all over his constituency, perhaps he will understand why there are serious objections to large-scale opencast mining applications being allowed on the basis of new criteria on marketing and commercial viability.

Will the Leader of the House ask the Scretary of State for the Environment to answer questions on this matter and organise a debate so that everybody can take part? Will he point out to the Secretary of State that if the planning application system is allowed to carry on it will result in large incursions into green belt planning procedures and will be used in all sorts of ways up and down the country?

Mr. Wakeham: I am sure that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will answer any questions that it is proper for him to answer, if the hon. Gentleman tables them. I notice that there may be a debate on Monday and, with the hon. Gentleman's customary ingenuity, he might be able to get a speech in order that would enable him to express his concerns.

Mr. Paul Flynn (Newport, West): Will the Lord President of the Council give us a guarantee that, in the debate next week on pollution caused by combustion, it will be possible to discuss the pollution caused by the combustion of toxic waste, especially in view of the threat of hundreds of tonnes of toxic waste from Switzerland, which has been rejected by almost every country in Europe and Africa, being brought to Re-Chem in Pontypool? If

that is not possible, will he give a guarantee that in the near future we will be able to discuss the matter raised by the hon. Member for Warrington, South (Mr. Butler) that waste already at Pontypool has come from more than a dozen countries and that we are importing some of the deadliest substances known to mankind for incineration in a way which, if it became defective, would present a great peril? Is it right that Britain is becoming the dustbin for the waste that the rest of the world has rejected?

Mr. Wakeham: I hope that the hon. Gentleman will be able to get the points he wants to make in order for the debate next week. Whether he can do so is a matter for you, Mr. Speaker, not for me. If he does that, the rest of his question is hypothetical.

Mr. Ian McCartney (Makerfield): Will the Leader of the House give us an assurance that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry will bring forward at an early opportunity the final draft regulations, originally announced in February, for the banning of standard polyurethane and high resilience foams? Will he give a further assurance that the regulations will take account of the phasing out and banning of the sale of secondhand furniture containing dangerous materials with toxic fumes that will kill and incinerate people within three minutes? It is essential that the proposals are brought before the House before the summer recess so that by February next year it will be a criminal offence to sell such obnoxious products. There are still companies on the high street advertising combustion-modified foam as a safe foam when the Government have already announced that it will be a criminal offence to sell such foams. That is a highly irresponsible act especially when, as I have said, it will be a criminal offence by February of next year.

Mr. Wakeham: I give the hon. Gentleman the undertaking that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will consider the points made and all the representations made to him on this important subject. At this stage I cannot give him a firm undertaking about when the orders will be laid.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): Would it not be educative next week for the Leader of the House's colleagues no less than mine if, in the light of early-day motions 1142 and 1156 and in the light of Robert Harris's full-page article in Sunday's *The Observer*, to have a debate on how No. 10 Downing street now operates? In particular, would it not be helpful to have an explanation next week as to why, on 17 May, the Secretary of State for Education and Science threw a protective smoke-screen around the role of No. 10 Downing street and resorted, uncharacteristically for him, to carefully considered personal abuse and, as transpires from the unchallenged leak of his Civil Service brief, to what looks like calculated deceit of the House?

[That this House notes that the Guardian of Friday 20th May carried an article entitled 'Thatcher's boy in a cleft stick', which stated that according to Foreign Office sources 'Mr. Charles Powell wants Washington or Paris nothing less, but he's not going to get either of them', and that Mr. Powell had been offered and turned down the post of Ambassador in Stockholm, and that the article added 'Powell has another string to his bow: he knows where the bodies are buried in the Westland Affair. He escaped appearing before a Select Committee, but not their sharpest criticism for his orchestrating rôle in the leaking of a letter from the then Solicitor General, which ultimately resulted in the then Secretary of State for Defence's resignation'; expresses its concern that knowledge of wrong-doing by the Prime Minister is alleged to put Mr. Powell in a position to obtain an Embassy more senior than his status warrants; asserts that this is not in keeping with the high moral ground claimed by the Prime Minister; and calls on Her Majesty's Government to make a statement.]

[That this House calls on Her Majesty's Government to set up an inquiry into the SAS operation in Gibraltar, to address itself to the questions as to whether the Joint Intelligence Staff, through its current intelligence groups, was responsible for preparing assessments of the situation in Spain and Gibraltar prior to the shooting, if so, as to how many assessments were made and on what days, as to whether the Joint Intelligence Committee, in any form, considered these or other assessments or reports on the matter, if so, as to when it did so and whether it was as a full committee, a sub-committee or by the chairman alone, as to whom advice was offered by the Joint Intelligence Committee, as to whether the Permanent Secretaries' Committee on the Intelligence Services was involved in considering or formulating assessments or advice, and, if so, on what occasions, as to on what occasions advice or assessments were offered to the Prime Minister by the Permanent Secretaries' Committee on the Intelligence Services, the Joint Intelligence Committee, MI5 or Sir Colin Figures, as to who, or which committee, proposed the use of the SAS, as to whether the SAS was ordered to operate in Gibraltar under pre-existing rules of engagement, or as to whether specific Rules of Engagement were drawn up, as to on what occasions, in the 72 hours prior to the shooting, the Prime Minister was apprised of the sequence of events in Gibraltar, and on what occasions, over the same period, she issued instructions or agreed actions in relation to the events, and as to what consultation she undertook with the Overseas Policy and Defence Committee of the Cabinet.]

Mr. Wakeham: I believe that the business I have announced for debate next week will be a more profitable use of the House's time than the suggestions made by the hon. Gentleman, in a spirit of helpfulness.

Orders of the Day

Housing Bill

[First Day]

As amended (in the Standing Committee), considered.

4.16 pm

Mr. Clive Soley (Hammersmith): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I ask you to consider as carefully as you are able the way in which the Government are legislating on the hoof? There are no fewer than 183 new clauses or amendments being added to the Bill, many of them at short notice. I accept that some are in response to our requests in Committee, but that is not a good enough reason for introducing completely new measures that were not even debated in Committee.

It is extremely important because, as you will know, Mr. Speaker, Standing Committees are set up to look into the way in which legislation is made, not just in areas of disagreement but in areas of agreement. The idea behind that has always been that the Committee procedure should lead to detailed investigation so that we achieve better legislation and avoid the danger of unintended consequences, which is a common problem in the House. In spite of that, some important changes are being made to the Bill.

A social landlord charter has been announced and it was supposed to be debated in the House. It was announced yesterday by the Minister in a speech. I have still not received a copy of that speech, even though his office told me that it would send me one. The Government have also announced that another amendment on housing associations will be introduced, even while the Bill is on Report. That amendment will affect security of tenure, the tenants' charter and the right-to-buy for housing associations. That has not even been mentioned in the House but it is apparently to be introduced.

An entirely new part of the Bill is being announced on Report involving a housing corporation for Wales. I am not opposed to that, but, as you will have seen, Mr. Speaker, the legislation involved is complex and detailed. There was no explanation in Committee from the Secretary of State for Wales and we did not have a Welsh representative on the Opposition Front Bench, although there was a Back-Bench Member from Wales representing each party.

This is not the way to legislate. In the amendments and new clauses the Government are changing legislation that is passing through the House. For example, they refer to the Housing (Scotland) Act, but that measure is not yet an Act of Parliament.

New clause 47 would dispose of council housing stock and undermine clause 4 of the Bill. It would have a dramatic effect on homelessness but, above all—I place great emphasis on this—it is retrospective legislation. The new clause takes effect from 9 June 1988—today. We shall not be debating it until next week. The Minister cannot claim that it is a new measure because the other day he put in the Table Office a document of about seven or eight pages which states what it is intended to do. Clearly, the Government have been thinking about it for some time, but this is the first time that we have had news of it.

I am sorry to delay the House, but it is an important point of order. It is so important to the procedures of the House that we felt it essential to bring it to your notice, Mr. Speaker, to put pressure on the Government to stop them legislating on the hoof. If they cannot get their act together and decide who is the housing Minister, they should give more time to ensure that we have a Housing Bill that meets the needs of our people.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I ask hon. Members to allow me to deal with the matter. I have not selected the motion for recommittal for debate and I listened to what the Leader of the House had to say about the matter. I am sympathetic to the points and requests for more time made by the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley), but it would be best to proceed today and see how we get on next week in terms of time.

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Our concern about the late appearance of substantial new clauses and amendments is that it is impossible for Oppostition parties or Government Back Benchers to table further amendments in the knowledge of what the Government are doing. We are likely to be caught by the publishing tomorrow of amendments that the Government wish to introduce—whether it be by press release or in other documents—to amend major parts of the Bill that will be debated later. There will be no opportunity for us to debate those amendments because the time allocated for such debate will have passed.

At the beginning of the Report stage there is a proposal that the Bill should not follow the usual order of debate. It is proposed that it be taken in the sequence of the Bill rather than in the sequence of new clauses—starting with Government new clauses—and amendments to them. I have heard that the reason for that may be that the Government believe that, by delaying consideration of a new clause or amendment, they may be able to defeat a proposal from their own Back Benchers that they do not wish to take early on. Whatever the reasons, the lack of opportunity for ordinary Back Benchers to reconsider matters, and the fact that matters have taken an unexpected turn today, mean that there is additional reason for asking, in the presence of the Leader of the House, for reconsideration of the timetable.

We could deal with certain matters today—I do not believe that the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) dissents from that—and there should be a further delay so that we know exactly what the Government intend before we consider the Bill further.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Are the points of order concerned with the same matter? [HON. MEMBERS: "Yes."] I shall take them, but I ask hon. Members to make brief points of order because I doubt if they are points of order for me but questions of time for the Bill.

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): My hon. Friend the Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) said that a number of the amendments refer to the Housing (Scotland) Act 1988, which does not exist. The Housing (Scotland) Bill has yet to have its Report stage in another place.

May I draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to one or two new clauses and amendments that have been tabled by Ministers? New clause 47 includes not only the Secretary of State for the Environment but the Secretary of State for Scotland and specifically amends Scottish housing legislation. As the Housing (Scotland) Bill is before the House, it is open to the Government to amend that Bill on Report in another place and for us to consider those Lords amendments. Is it in order for the Government to use this ostensibly English—and now Welsh—Bill to deal with Scottish housing legislation?

Mr. Speaker: There is no time limit on the Bill, so it would be sensible for hon. Members to put their questions to the Minister when we reach the amendments or new clauses. I cannot give explanations; that is a matter for the Government to answer.

Mr. Barry Jones (Alyn and Deeside): Further to the point of order raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley), Mr. Speaker. My hon. Friend made some important remarks regarding Wales. New schedule 240 is 180 lines long and new schedule 241 is 400 lines long. Why has this arrogant, high-handed attitude been taken to Wales, and is it not wrong to spring this complicated matter on the House?

Mr. Rhodri Morgan (Cardiff, West): I ask you, Mr. Speaker, as the guardian of Back Benchers' rights, to consider my point of order regarding the issuance of the Government's guidelines on the large-scale voluntary transfer of local housing. In Committee in the first week of March, I specifically asked the Minister for Housing and Planning about the Government's response to the initiatives of Cardiff city council and Cŷngor Bwrdeistref Ynys Môn in relation to the large-scale voluntary transfer of housing associations. The Minister said that it was purely for local authorities to make their bids. There was no mention in Committee of the possibility of the Government issuing a guideline document. How can it be right for the Government in Committee to table amendments on matters that were first raised by the press? If there was no possibility of debating the matter then, how can we debate it now when the document was issued only last night—the day before the Report stage?

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is a convention of the constitution that Parliament strives to avoid retrospective legislation where possible, although there might be odd occasions when it is necessary. It is up to you, Mr. Speaker, to bear that in mind when you make your selection, as I am sure you do.

The Housing Finance (Special Provisions) Act 1975 proposed to give retrospective support to Clay Cross councillors. You, Mr. Speaker, may recall that Conservative Members stood up in unison and said that retrospective legislation was terrible and was the slippery slope on the road to Fascism. It is proposed that new clause 47 will be effective from today, but it will not be debated until next week and will not receive Royal Assent for several weeks. The Bill, therefore, is bound to be retrospective in that clause alone. The way in which the Government have tabled it shows that they are deliberately proposing retrospective legislation, which is unnecessary. This is a narrow and shadowy matter, but should not the conventions of the constitution be given consideration? Will you, Mr. Speaker, assure the House that, with retrospective legislation, you give consideration to preserving the constitution and preventing us from sliding down what Conservative Members described 14 years ago as the slippery slope to Fascism?

Mr. Speaker: When the hon. Gentleman looks at my selection he will see that I have born those matters very much in mind. The selection has been generous.

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is self-evident that there is an exceptional number of Government amendments, Government new clauses and new schedules. You, Mr. Speaker, did not have the advantage of serving on the Standing Committee that considered the Bill. Many of the amendments appear in response to a number of suggestions made by Labour Members. Can you confirm that all the amendments and all the new clauses and schedules tabled by the Government are perfectly in order in terms of the time limit laid down by Standing Orders? Does it not lie ill on the lips of the Opposition to protest about the tabling of amendments, new clauses and schedules which have all been tabled precisely within the time limit?

4.30 pm

Mr. Speaker: I did not have the advantage of serving on the Committee. I understand that some of the amendments are concessions. Some other matters are perhaps new to the Bill, and that was the point raised earlier with the Leader of the House. He has said that he will again look at the matter of timing. I do not think that there is much more we can do about that now.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. There is no time limit on the amendments and when the Minister comes to them he could be asked about what they mean and could give his explanation in the ordinary way. It is not a matter for me to answer.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): I have two points of order, Mr. Speaker, and perhaps I could ask you to dispose of the first before I put the second. I was not a member of the Standing Committee. I have served on many Standing Committees that adjourned when statements were made outside the House by Ministers about prospective new clauses. You will know that today there appeared in the Vote Office what purports to be a White Paper about new clauses tabled last night and in particular new clause 47. This means that after Monday we will not be able to table amendments to new clause 47. Therefore the notice for consideration of these matters is short.

I understand what you, Mr. Speaker, have said about what the Leader of the House said. My hon. Friend the Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) has properly used his procedural rights to put down a motion that the whole Bill be recommitted to the Standing Committee. For reasons about which we can speculate but which, of course, we accept, you have not selected that. You will know that in "Erskine May" there is provision for the committal of part of a Bill. I could not have seen new clause 47 or its sisters, new clauses 45 and 46, until about 9 o'clock this morning, and I do not think that any other hon. Member could practically have been expected to do any better than that.

[Mr. Nigel Spearing]

For that reason it was not possible for me either to add my name to the motion in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Hammersmith or to put down any other motion for today's Order Paper or today's sitting. Would it be in order and would you now consider, Mr. Speaker, a manuscript amendment that new clauses 44 to 47 be recommitted to the former Committee on the Housing Bill? If you feel that you cannot accept that, perhaps you could accept a manuscript amendment that new clause 47 be recommitted, partly because of its nature but particularly because of the retrospective effect from today that has already been well put to you by me and by my hon. Friends. That is my first point of order.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman has said that he would like a ruling on that first. It would be in order to put down a motion, but I would not accept a manuscript amendment today because, as the hon. Gentleman will see from the Order Paper, I have not yet selected the new clauses.

Mr. Spearing: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With great respect, on page 2 of this very long selection list at the end of group 4 there is listed Government amendments Nos. 42 to 47—I beg your pardon, Mr. Speaker. I incorrectly assumed that the selection list was for the whole of the debate on the Bill, but I see that it is for the first day only.

Mr. Speaker: I think I can help the whole House. We should proceed with today's business. The Leader of the House has said that he will look at the timetable. I fully understand and I am sympathetic to the points being made about new clauses that have been put down fairly recently. However, the Leader of the House has said that he will look at that and there is nothing else that I can do now about the matter. In any case, we shall not reach them today.

Mr. Ian McCartney (Makerfield): Some of us who sat for 180 hours on the Housing Bill are celebrating our first anniversary in this place. During the past year the Government have shown an increasing tendency to misuse the Report stage as a Committee stage and to table amendments in a fashion that curtails the rights of Back Benchers. The issue is not simply about time but about the individual rights of hon. Members. I look to you, Mr. Speaker, to protect and safeguard those rights because we are thoroughly sick and tired of being misused and abused.

I sat on the Committee for 180 hours—longer than the hon. Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow) who turned up on occasions. We tried to persuade the Minister to deal with the matter and we did it in a way that should have given the Government an opportunity to improve the legislation.

I was given categorical assurances about amendments that would improve the Bill and meet my feelings about it. The Government have chosen to ignore the guarantees given to me and to other Back Benchers. The issue is one of principle and it is for you, Mr. Speaker, to sort it out. If it is not sorted out, the Government will be given the green light to use between now and the end of this Session, the Report stage to abuse the House and the rights of hon. Members. For that reason I implore you to look at this matter and to give serious consideration to the request by my hon. Friend the Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) who asked for the matter to be taken back to the Committee so that hon. Members such as I may have an opportunity to consider the amendments proposed by the Government and to protect our rights.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I ask how the actual selection works? You have listened to the points made by my hon. Friends and you will clearly understand the distress that we feel. We were in a Committee that finished on 15 March and now find ourselves confronted by vast quantities of new clauses and amendments. Despite what the hon. Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow) says, those matters were not discussed in Committee and nor were they the subject of requests made by us.

We accept that some of the amendments arise out of undertakings given by Ministers, but if the hon. Member for Eastbourne reads them he will see that many of them relate to completely new business. As I say, the Committee finished on 15 March and last night new business was still being tabled and a great wedge of clauses and new amendments came out on Tuesday. That does not give us a chance to operate effectively as an Opposition.

When one looks at all the new Government business that is put forward, one sees that Report stages are not being treated like proper Report stages. We came back to the House to report the changes that we made to the Bill that went to Committee after Second Reading, but this is a completely new Committee stage. In many cases it will be treated by some hon. Members as a re-run of Second Reading since we will be discussing some fairly broad principles. When you see this happening, Mr. Speaker, and when you see the amendments that have been put down by the Government, surely you should say that you are not prepared to select these amendments on Report because as Mr. Speaker you are not giving the House a fair opportunity to consider these matters.

Mr. Speaker: I am not having that. If the hon. Gentleman says that I should not select the amendments there is no opportunity for them to be debated. I am sure that he does not mean that. I have made a very generous selection and the hon. Gentleman has only to look at the selection list to know that that is true. I think that we should get on with these amendments, which have been tabled for some time.—*[Interruption.]* There is no argument about them. They have been tabled long enough for hon. Members to prepare their amendments and speeches.

What we are concerned about and what I am concerned about is what will happen next week. The Leader of the House has already said that he will look into that.

I am going to call the motion.

Mr. Roy Hughes (Newport, East): On a point of order——

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: No. I must put the order of consideration motion.

Motion made, and Question put,

That the Housing Bill, as amended, be considered in the following order, namely, Amendments relating to Clause 1, Schedule 1, Clauses 2 to 7, Schedule 2, Clauses 8 to 22, Schedule 3, Clauses 23 to 37, Schedule 4, Clauses 38 to 43, New Clauses 25, 26 and 27, New Schedules 240 and 241, Amendments relating to Clauses 44 to 57, Schedules 5 and 6, Clauses 58 to 71, Schedule 7, Clauses 72 and 73, Schedule 8, Clause 74, Schedule 9, Clauses 75 to 99, Schedule 10, Clauses

100 to 108, Schedule 11, Clauses 109 to 114, Schedule 12, Clause 115, remaining New Clauses and New Schedules, Amendments relating to Schedule 13—*[Mr. Ridley.]*

The House divided: Ayes 231, Noes 176.

Division No. 345] **[4.40 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bendall, Vivian
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Latham, Michael
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
McCrindle, Robert
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
Major, Rt Hon John
Maples, John
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Moate, Roger
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Page, Richard
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stokes, John
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Peter Lloyd and
Mr. Kenneth Carlisle.

NOES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam

Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Harman, Ms Harriet
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLe'sh, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McTaggart, Bob
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Paisley, Rev Ian
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Rogers, Allan
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Alun Michael.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Schedule 1

Tenancies Which Cannot be Assured Tenancies

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Ian Grist): I beg to move amendment No. 9, in page 75, line 41, at end insert—

'(2) The reference in sub-paragraph (1) above to the case where the interest of the landlord belongs to Her Majesty in right of the Crown does not include the case where that interest is under the management of the Crown Estate Commissioners.'.

Mr. Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to take Government amendment No. 61.

Mr. Grist: Both are straightforward amendments. Properties let by the Crown Estates Commissioners, like those let by the Chancellors of the Duchies of Cornwall and Lancaster, are to be brought within the scope of the assured tenancy regime although Crown properties are, of course, generally outside the scope of the Bill. The Crown Estate Commissioners and the Duchies were brought within the scope of the Rent Act 1977 by the Housing Act 1980. The Duchies' interests are already covered by clause 43. Government amendment No. 9 applies the assured tenancy regime to lettings by the Crown Estate Commissioners.

Government amendment No. 61 is a technical amendment. As the Duchy of Lancaster will be letting on assured tenancies, it is necessary to deem that the Chancellor of the Duchy shall be the owner of Her Majesty's interests for the purpose of those tenancies. That is because Her Majesty cannot be sued in the event that legal action should arise. I am sure that hon. Members will accept that the amendments are uncontroversial and necessary.

Mr. Simon Hughes: The amendments are uncontroversial in one sense, but it would be convenient if the Minister could tell the House how many properties are affected in England, Scotland and Wales, because for the people in question the amendments are clearly important although the percentage of the total stock that is affected is small. How many properties and tenants are we talking about?

Mr. Grist: I cannot answer the hon. Gentleman off the cuff but I shall certainly try to find out the answer for him.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. McCartney: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. We have just had a vote on the order of consideration motion, but the Minister cannot answer the first question that he has been asked about the first amendment. It is an absolute shambles—*[Interruption.]*

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. I ask the hon. Gentleman to resume his seat. Answers given by Ministers have nothing to do with the Chair. We now come to Government amendment No. 70——

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): Further to that point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. As you are aware, a considerable number of points of order were raised with Mr. Speaker about the generally unsatisfactory nature of the Bill as it comes to the House on Report, and about the late tabling of amendments. Many of my hon. Friends have made the point that the House as a whole is now being expected to give Committee stage consideration to these amendments rather than the normal Report stage reconsideration. It seems farcical that we are faced with a situation in which an hon. Member, not of my party, asks a perfectly reasonable question about the number of tenancies affected by the very first amendment but the Minister apparently does not have the faintest idea. That seems to reduce our proceedings to a farce. The object should be to allow hon. Members to find out the background, the justification and how many people are involved—*[Interruption.]*

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I think that I can deal with this. I understand the frustration felt by hon. Members, but I must remind the House that the Chair is

not responsible for answers given by Ministers. Perhaps the point that has been made by the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) from the Opposition Dispatch Box has gone home to those in all parts of the House. We must now proceed with Government amendment No. 70.

Mr. Paul Boateng (Brent, South) *rose*——

Mr. McCartney *rose*——

Ms. Dawn Primarolo (Bristol, South) *rose*——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I call the Minister to move Government amendment No. 70.

Ms. Primarolo: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. Opposition Members raised earlier with Mr. Speaker the point that new information is before us and that, as Back Benchers, we have been unable to consider that information properly in order to debate the Bill. Mr. Speaker advised us that Ministers would answer our questions during the debate. However, on the very first amendment and on the very first question asked, the Minister told us—he was not even on the Committee—that he could not answer the question. What faith can we have in the proceedings on the rest of the Bill?

Madam Deputy Speaker: The House cannot go on rehearsing and repeating points which have already been made and which, in effect, are not points of order. We must now proceed with the amendments, which, I repeat, have been before the House and all its Members for some time. It would be to the advantage of everybody concerned to proceed with the amendments.

Mr. Tony Banks *rose*——

Mr. Boateng: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I appreciate your predicament in this matter and do not seek to go beyond your rulings but I am bound to say that in Committee we were used to the somewhat cursory comments from the Front Bench of the Minister of State's acolyte who never departed from her script. Much of the Bill that we considered in Committee has been dispensed with—like, apparently, the services of the Minister who considered the matter in Committee. Is it really in order for this matter to be dealt with by the Minister of State's new acolyte in this way? We ask ourselves, "Where is Marion Roe?"

Madam Deputy Speaker: I appreciate the hon. Gentleman's sympathy for the Chair, but I assure him that I am in no predicament. I call the Minister to move Government amendment No. 70.

Mr. Grist: I beg to move amendment No. 70, in page 76, line 14, at end insert—

'(cc) the Broads Authority'

I was going to say, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the answer to the question asked by the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) is that the lettings are for the future so the number is hypothetical anyway.

The Broads Authority was established for the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads earlier this year. For housing purposes it is treated as a local authority. It is intended that its small housing stock should be let on secure tenancies, not assured tenancies. The amendment adds the Broads Authority to the list of bodies in schedule 1, the lettings of which cannot be assured tenancies.

Mr. Soley: We are glad to know that the tenancies will not be shorthold tenancies in that context. However, in view of the Minister's unfortunate contribution to the debate so far, I advise him that the whole essence of this afternoon has been the Government's inability to get their act together in relation to the Bill. We need detailed answers, given that to some extent the Government seem to have accepted that the Bill is now being drafted on the Floor of the House. Let me put the Government on notice that we expect to have answers to reasonable questions. We do not expect to have dismissive answers. If, in some circumstances understandably, the Minister does not have a complex answer to hand, we expect to hear from the Minister and to be given an answer in due course. Otherwise, the Bill will not only be an appalling mess, but it will be a very long and very bitter, nasty mess.

5 pm

Mr. Simon Hughes: On what should be relatively short and uncomplicated matters, the figures are very important. In the same schedule, one of the excepted authorities is the Inner London education authority. The House might believe that the ILEA owns no houses apart from those lived in by school teachers, but that is not correct. Several people who are tenants of the ILEA live near me. It was several months, if not years, before I could discover how many properties in Southwark and Bermondsey not attached to school or education premises were owned by the ILEA. The amendment does not concern my constituency. It is about the Broads. None the less, I am sure that the same question is relevant. How many people will be affected by being in one category of tenancy rather than another? The whole debate is about what tenancies and what rights people will have.

Like the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley), I hope that whenever we consider proposals—they are all new Government amendments—to put into the Bill or take out of the Bill a category of housing we shall be told how many properties are involved. However small the geographical area, it is a fundamental change for the people in question. Repeatedly in the Bill we have discussed what for many tenants will be the most fundamental change in their status relative to their landlords since the war. I ask again, and I give notice that I will do so on each similar amendment, how many properties and how many tenants are involved.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): It may come as a surprise, but I have not always agreed with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. As I understand the Bill, and as I understand what the hon. Member for Hammesmith (Mr. Soley) said when he talked about 99 if not 100 concessions being made, the concessions which many of us have heard about today are profound concessions that hon. Members on both sides of the House welcome. Surely those concessions were made because the Secretary of State and his team listened to what has been said and listened to the worries that people have had. That will make it a better Bill.

Is it not right that, even if the Opposition do not like the Bill, it is the will of the country and the will of the Government that the Bill will prevail in the end? Is it not

[Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark]

their task to see that it is a better Bill and to discuss the very proper concessions that have been made? Are we not better to move on in that attitude, instead of in the manner of people who think that they still run the country when they do not?

Mr. Allan Roberts (Bootle): The assumption is being made that the amendment that we are now considering and the other Government amendments that have been tabled, some at great length, are the result of concessions granted to the Opposition. In Committee we were granted a large number of concessions, or given assurances about a large number of matters, which we saw as concessions.

The great tragedy for us, and for people in this country, is that the Government amendments, new clauses and new schedules do not reflect the concessions and undertakings given in Committee. If they did, we would be very happy and we would not be complaining. However, they are quite different. They represent the Government's rewriting of the legislation and the final gestation of a dispute between Ministers and civil servants in the Department of the Environment. It is obvious from the length of time between finishing Committee and reaching Report and the panic over the way that the Government have tabled amendments that there have been major problems in the Department of the Environment which have resulted in amendments being tabled in a way that treats the House with contempt. As we discuss Government amendment after Government amendment, the Opposition will point out how concessions which seemed to be granted and agreed in Committee have been ratted on and we shall table amendments to make sure that the Government's promises in Committee are put before the House in the form of Opposition amendments.

Mr. McCartney: I should like to ask the Minister a question about his statement. I heard him say that the Broads Authority will be treated like a local authority. At about 8 o'clock this morning I received a copy of what loosely could be called a White Paper entitled:

"Large Scale Voluntary Transfers of Local Authority Housing to Private Bodies".

I had a cursory look at it. Will the Minister confirm that the Broads Authority will be treated like a local authority and will be included in the concepts set out in that White Paper? If so, has the Broads Authority been advised of the contents of the White Paper and what procedure will be used to consult the tenants of the Broads Authority in respect of the possibility of their homes being transferred to the private sector by the Broads Authority?

Mr. Spearing: I was not a member of the Committee and therefore I approach these matters as an amateur. That does not mean that the Minister does not have the responsibility to make things absolutely clear. As I understand it, an assured tenancy is a new form of legal tenure which has much less security for the tenant than he has at the moment. Even what is described as a secure tenancy in another part of the Bill is not as secure as such tenancies are at the moment.

I understand that schedule 1, to which the amendment applies, defines tenancies which cannot be assured tenancies. Therefore, I assume that they are tenancies which, whatever happens to the property, will remain secure tenancies whether they remain with a local authority or whether the local authority disposes of them in the way in which the Government wish.

The amendment is adding to the list of local authorities, on page 76 of the Bill, the Broads Authority, which does not yet exist. The House has passed a Bill creating the new Broads Authority. Informal discussions are taking place, and I believe that the county clerk of Norfolk county council is about to call a number of meetings in which policies are to be discussed and the authority will take over next year.

If the Broads Authority is added to the list and becomes a local authority for the purposes of the Bill, presumably it will be subject to the Government's policy of disposal, including the policy of disposal encapsulated in new clause 47 which is on the list of amendments and is therefore important in the debate. Will the Minister tell me whether I am correct in saying that, by adding to tenancies that cannot be assured the tenancies of the future Broads authority, if that authority used the future facilities of the Bill, it could sell off property? Indeed, the Government say that the future Broads Authority, inheriting tenancies and ownership of property, can, if it wishes, come to an arrangement with another landlord under new clause 47, or with anyone else, and sell it off. Therefore, they say, if it is sold it must retain secure tenancies and not assured tenancies.

Is the Minister saying that the servants of the Broads Authority—which has hardly got going, and which is an important new authority in the administration of a novel sort of national park—who will be in occupation of property, the ownership of which will be visited on the Broads Authority, might have their property sold under them? The implication is that, although that may happen, they will remain secure tenants, but the property will be sold. In answering this short debate, which may be less important than others, will the Minister say whether that is correct?

Does the Minister envisage that the Broads Authority will be able to sell or to transfer tenancies to charitable organisations as defined in new clause 47? If that were the case, tenants would remain secure, but the ownership would be transferred.

Mr. Grist: For housing purposes the Broads Authority is treated like a local authority, so it comes under exactly the same rules as a local authority. In the terms of this small amendment, these tenants are secure tenants and the terms of the amendment mean that they remain so. I would have thought that that would be welcomed by Opposition Members.

Mr. George Howarth (Knowsley, North): Will the Minister answer the question put by the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes): how many tenants and properties will be affected by this?

Mr. Grist: I said "few" when I opened this little debate.

Amendment agreed to.

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Mr. William Waldegrave): I beg to move amendment No. 10, in page 77, line 17, leave out 'sub-paragraph' and insert 'paragraph'.

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take Government amendments Nos. 11 to 13.

Mr. Waldegrave: These are intricate amendments relating to the resident landlord provisions of the Bill. They derive from a particular case, about which there has been regular correspondence since 1974 between a constituent of my hon. Friend the Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Sir H. Rossi) and the Department.

Lettings by resident landlords—that is, people who let part of their homes—are not assured tenancies. Under the Bill they are not subject to statutory security of tenure or to rent control. Many of these restrictions were removed as long ago as 1980. Paragraphs 18 to 20 of schedule 1 ensure that a letting which has been made by a resident landlord does not become assured during certain periods when there there is no landlord in residence in the building.

Amendment No. 11 covers the case in which there is a change of landlord, a new landlord gives notice that he intends to occupy the dwelling within six months or, within that period, another resident landlord moves in or the landlord's interest becomes vested either in trustees with the beneficiary moving into the dwelling or in the owner's personal representatives following his death. During the intermediate period, when no landlord is in residence, the tenancy does not become assured.

Amendments Nos. 12 and 13 deal with the case when the landlord's interest is vested in trustees and the beneficiary under the trust who has been living in the dwelling dies. The tenancy will not become an assured tenancy in any period up to two years while the landlord's interest remains vested in trustees until a new beneficiary moves in.

Mr. Allan Roberts: This seems to be an interesting but somewhat convoluted amendment.

Mr. Waldegrave: That means that the hon. Gentleman does not understand it.

Mr. Roberts: It means exactly that. That is why I am on my feet asking the Minister to explain it further so that we can decide whether we agree with it. *[Interruption.]* If the hon. Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth) understands it, I will be surprised. What I do understand is that one of the proposals gets rid of the protection that might exist for some tenants who are living in property where the landlord is not resident.

If I understood the Minister correctly, he said that if a house is sold with sitting tenants to a new landlord and the old landlord was not in residence, so the sitting tenants have security of tenure, the new landlord can give notice to the tenants that he intends to become a resident landlord in the house which he has purchased within six months, whereupon the tenants lose their security of tenure. That is one of the main thrusts of the amendment.

Will the Minister confirm or deny that? If that is true, a strange position will be created. If a landlord who is not resident sells a house with sitting tenants and the new owner can get vacant possession, how is the property valued? Is it being sold with vacant possession, half vacant possession or sitting tenants? It will certainly make life difficult in terms of property prices and sales, and the security of tenure enjoyed by those who live in accommodation where there is no resident landlord.

5.15 pm

Mr. Simon Hughes: I wish to make a short confession similar to that of the hon. Member for Bootle (Mr. Roberts), but in relation to my notes on the amendments. The first one said, "technical" and the second, "probably technical". By the third one I could not work out whether it was technical, probably technical or neither.

I heard what the Minister said, but he will accept that this is the sort of amendment which, if we have not understood it or its implications clearly before we hear his contribution, although we can understand the words, we do not necessarily understand the consequences. Would it be possible as a matter of practice, specifically in a Bill such as this to which there are many Government amendments and new clauses at this stage, to have the courtesy of notes on Government changes in the usual way, certainly for those who served on the Committee?

Many individual constituency cases were raised in Committee which the Minister undertook to consider and do something about. Some came from his side and others from the Opposition. With a clear head and a slightly better opportunity to consider them, we may improve the Bill further. I do not pretend to know the answer, but I should be grateful for that opportunity if it is possible.

Mr. Waldegrave: I have considerable sympathy with the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) and I shall endeavour to ask my officials to produce a commentary on the Government amendments which I hope to put before the House at the earliest opportunity and which I hope will be helpful. I well understand his anxiety, because many of these issues are complex.

I assure the House that many of these amendments seek to meet the points on which commitments were made. The hon. Member for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney) suffered from a different problem in Committee. It was not that I made commitments to him which I subsequently broke, but I refused to make any commitments to him except on one occasion at the end, when I made a concession which surprised him. Normally he was given the thin edge of the wedge.

Mr. McCartney: On one occasion, when the Minister was not present to look after the Under-Secretary of State, she slipped up and gave me a further concession which I shall speak to on clause 14.

Mr. Waldegrave: I do not want to disappoint the hon. Gentleman but I must point out that my hon. Friend is in Finland—*[Interruption.]*—which precludes any such repeat. She will doubtless return recreated by a better acquaintance than many of us with Finnish opera and other cultural events.

These intricate amendments are aimed at a problem which has been brought to our attention over many years in a lengthy correspondence with a constituent of my hon. Friend the Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Sir H. Rossi), Mr. Bednar, and we are taking the opportunity to meet that small point.

No one who has an assured tenancy will lose it as a result of these amendments. It is about circumstances in which the residence qualification is met by the resident being the beneficiary of a trust—that can be met under the present law—and in which, if the beneficiary dies, it may take some time before another beneficiary can move into the same position. That is covered by the legislation. It would be wrong if he suddenly lost the resident qualification. That would be a radical change in the present law.

[Mr. Waldegrave]

So it is a tidying up amendment. I apologise for its intricacy. I had to read it at least as many times as the hon. Member for Bootle (Mr. Roberts) before I could understand it. But I assure him that it does not have the implications that he feared.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendments made: No. 11, in page 77, line 26, leave out 'the condition in paragraph 10(1)(c) again applies'
and insert
'that interest becomes again vested in such an individual as is mentioned in paragraph 10(1)(c) or the condition in that paragraph becomes deemed to be fulfilled by virtue of paragraph 19(1) or paragraph 20 below.'

No. 12, in page 78, line 8, at end insert—

'(2) If a period during which the condition in paragraph 10(1)(c) is deemed to be fulfilled by virtue of sub-paragraph (1) above comes to an end on the death of a person who was in occupation of a dwelling-house as mentioned in paragraph (b) of that sub-paragraph, then, in determining whether that condition is at any time thereafter fulfilled, there shall be disregarded any period—

(a) which begins on the date of the death;

(b) during which the interest of the landlord remains vested as mentioned in sub-paragraph (1)(a) above; and

(c) which ends at the expiry of the period of two years beginning on the date of the death or on any earlier date on which the condition in paragraph 10(1)(c) becomes again deemed to be fulfilled by virtue of sub-paragraph (1) above.'.

No. 13, in page 78, line 16, after '18', insert 'or paragraph 19(2)'.

Clause 6

FIXING OF TERMS OF STATUTORY PERIODIC TENANCY

Mr. Waldegrave: I beg to move amendment No. 72, in page 5, line 12, after 'landlord", insert 'or the tenant'.

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take Government amendment No. 73.

Mr. Waldegrave: Clause 6, as hon. Members know, provides that, where a statutory periodic tenancy arises at the end of a contractual fixed-term tenancy, either the landlord or the tenant may, within 12 months, serve a notice on the other proposing a variation in the terms of the tenancy. The party on whom notice is served may, if he wishes, refer the notice to the rent assessment committee to consider whether the proposed variation is reasonable.

These amendments introduce two small but useful changes to the procedure, which I hope will be welcomed. As drafted, the Bill provides that in serving a notice of variation of terms the landlord may propose an adjustment in the rent to take account of the variation. It seems to us, on reflection, that it should be equally open to the tenant to propose an adjustment of rent in this way, and amendment No. 72 provides the tenant with just such a facility.

Amendment No. 73 extends from one month to three months the period allowed for the party on whom the notice is served under clause 6 to refer that notice to the rent assessment committee. Here we are moving exactly to meet an undertaking given in Committee. I am glad to see the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) and the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) nodding on that point. I hope, therefore, that that will be welcomed.

Since this is the first occasion I have had to refer to the hon. Member for Hammersmith, I will depart from the normal rancour and asperity of party politics to offer him the congratulations of the House on the birth of his son, who is called Benjamin I believe, which is a name with very good Tory credentials.

Mr. Allan Roberts: We welcome the concession that the tenant can ask for the rent to be reassessed. Can we have an assurance that if the tenant initiates the reassessment the rent will not be put up?

Mr. Waldegrave: The procedure is symmetrical now and the rent assessment committee can make its own judgment either way. It is the same the other way round —if the landlord puts it in the rent may go down.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment made: No. 73, in page 5, line 16, leave out 'one month' and insert 'three months'.

Mr. Grist: I beg to move amendment No. 14, in page 5, line 18, after 'may', insert
'by an application in the prescribed form'.

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this we shall take the following: Government amendment No. 67.

Amendment No. 228, in clause 12, page 9, line 39, at end insert—

'(3A) A notice served under subsection (2) of this section shall—

(a) be in a form prescribed by regulations made by the Secretary of State by statutory instrument subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament:

(b) contain a statement, in characters not less conspicuous than those used in any other part of the notice,

(i) that the tenant, if he does not agree to the increase, may refer the notice to a rent assessment committee, within one month of service of the notice:

(ii) that the tenant is entitled to refer the notice to a rent assessment committee to fix a market rent;

Government amendments Nos. 15 and 26.

Mr. Grist: So far as the Government amendments are concerned, a number of points were raised by hon. Members in Committee about the provisions in the Bill which involve the service of notice. In the light of the comments made, we undertook to have a further general look at these provisions. One result of so doing has been to identify the need for three further forms to be prescribed by the Secretary of State. Amendments Nos. 14, 15 and 67 make the necessary provision for this. They relate to an application to the rent assessment committee under clauses 6 or 12 and to the notice of proceedings for possession under clause 8.

I trust that hon. Members will welcome these new provisions as introducing greater clarity and certainty into the procedures concerned.

Amendment No. 26 is purely a matter of drafting. It removes an unnecessary definition in respect of the shorthold notice served under clause 18(1).

Opposition amendment No. 228 reopens an issue which we discussed at some length in Committee—whether it is sensible for a statute to specify the detailed points to be included in a notice which the Secretary of State is empowered to prescribe. Our firm view is that such a course is not sensible.

We entirely agree that it is desirable for the prescribed notice to contain essential information on the tenant's statutory rights. We shall be giving very careful consideration to what information should be provided. It may well include at least some of the points referred to in this amendment, but we do not want to prejudge the whole issue by spelling out the details in the legislation itself. That would constitute a wholly inflexible and unwieldy approach and would not, in our view, be of any service to tenants.

The Government accept the need for the principal notices under the Bill to be in a prescribed form; indeed, our own amendments extend this requirement to three further provisions. We accept, too, the need for notices to provide essential guidance for the tenant. But we resist very strongly the argument that the details of such guidance should be laid down in statute. I therefore hope that the Opposition will not press their amendment.

Mr. Allan Roberts: Clause 12, which the Government are amending and the Opposition are attempting to amend, implements the high-rent policies behind the Government's legislation. It is the clause that spells out the mechanism by which the Government are to allow landlords to change rents from fair rents to market rents. It is therefore a significant clause. It matters to all tenants of private landlords throughout the country who will receive notices that their rents are being increased, sometimes by massive amounts, to market rents. It will affect the level of rents in relation to council housing and especially those houses that are handed over to the private sector or to bodies other than local authorities. And it will have an influence on the level of rents and how that is dealt with in relation to housing associations.

So it is a very important clause and the Government amendments, while welcome, go nowhere near far enough. They do not meet the requirements that the Opposition spelled out in Committee. The Minister is correct in saying that we debated them in Committee. We debated amendment No. 192 at the ninth sitting, on Thursday 21 January—columns 361-71—and we had some assurances then from the Under-Secretary—whom I wish well in Finland, which is, as I said from a sedentary position, obviously the western equivalent of Siberia for the period of the Report stage and Third Reading of the Housing Bill.

We were given some undertakings in Committee along the lines that the Minister has just repeated, except that there was some implication in what was said then that the changes would be even more significant on Report than those we have before us in the form of the Government amendments. The Under-Secretary said that she agreed that

"the notice should give the tenant some information about his statutory rights."

Very little is given in the way that the Government have tabled their amendments. She also said:

"The key piece of information that we would want to include in the prescribed form of notice is that the tenant, if he does not agree to the increase, may refer the notice to a rent assessment committee, and that he has a fixed period within which to do so."

That essential point does not appear in the amendment. We shall want to think further about what else should go into the notice, but we should certainly not want our hands to be tied by the shopping list set out in the amendment.

The Under-Secretary went on to say:

"I hope, therefore, that the amendment will be withdrawn in the light of my assurance that the notice needs to give the tenant some basic information."—[*Official Report*, Standing Committee G, 21 January 1988; c. 366.]

On the basis of that and other assurances given by the Minister in Committee, the Opposition withdrew the amendment. But we should not have withdrawn it; we should have pressed it to a vote, because the Government have not come forward with the results of the assurances that they gave us in Committee. So we want to press amendment 228; we want to keep it before the House and not withdraw it. It would give the tenants the rights and the knowledge that they need. We are talking about the notices that will go out to increase rents massively and change fair rents into market rents.

First, the tenant, if he does not agree to the increase, should be able to refer the notice to a rent assessment committee within one month of service of the notice. Secondly, the tenant is entitled to refer the notice to a rent assessment committee to fix the market rent, rather than its just being fixed on the basis of what the landlord or the Secretary of State for the Environment thinks the market rent should be—and I am sure that his idea of the market rent would be higher than anybody else's. Thirdly, the tenant's security of tenure under this Act should not be affected by his referring the notice to a rent assessment committee.

It is the shorthold assured tenancy that is difficult, because, if a tenant starts to be awkward and refers things to a rent assessment committee, when the shorthold period of six months is up the landlord can throw him out anyway and get someone who is not as awkward and does not take these issues to a rent assessment committee. However, that is another issue in relation to our opposition to the concept of shorthold tenancies.

We believe also that the tenant should be entitled to agree with the landlord a variation different from that proposed in the notice or to agree that the rent should not be varied. The Government claim to be in favour of agreements and negotiations between the two parties in terms of property, without any Government impositions; that is their justification for the whole concept of shorthold tenancies. The Government claim also that tenants and landlords are equal partners, but they know full well that that is not the case. The tenant often has to accept, as a supplicant, the landlord's offer because if he does not do so he will be made homeless.

5.30 pm

We believe also that no further notice should be served under subsection (2) in respect of the tenancy until after the first anniversary of the original notice's date of service. In other words, there should be at least one year's breathing space before the landlord may initiate proceedings to push up his rents even higher. Such is not unreasonable or bureaucratic, and it should be written into the legislation. We cannot just accept Ministers' bland assurances that at some future time a code might be produced which will incorporate such safeguards but that they need not be in the Bill. When the courts interpret any legislation, it is only what is in the Act that matters. Codes of conduct and notes of guidance are not legally binding and are not necessarily enforceable in law. Ministers' assurances cannot be quoted in courts of law in order to justify a tenant's action or an attack on those of the

[Mr. Allan Roberts]

landlord. Therefore, we ask the Government to accept amendment No. 228; if not, the Opposition will not withdraw it.

Mr. Simon Hughes: My name is also appended to this amendment, and I remember well the debate in Committee. I take a slightly different position from that of the hon. Member for Bootle (Mr. Roberts), because I do not necessarily argue that such provisions should be included in the substantive Act. However, I seek from the Minister assurances additional to those which he has already given.

The House has been reminded that we pressed in Committee that certain matters should be made explicit when the notice is served. The Minister's assurances, coupled with those given by his hon. Friend in Committee, do not go far enough. Nobody should underestimate the potential effect of this clause on private sector tenants, who will be taken out of rent control and into a free market system. The reality of that could be substantial rent increases.

We ask that when tenants are informed of potentially enormous rent increases the document giving that information should state in bold lettering—and, as is said in the amendment, the wording of which comes from other Acts,

"in characters not less conspicuous than those used in any other part of the notice"—

that the tenant may refer the matter to the rent assessment committee and state the time in which he is allowed to do that. It should state also that the rent assessment committee has power to fix a market rent. That may still not provide any great security, but at least the rent may be reduced from being extortionate to one that is truly a market rent. It should be made clear also that if, a tenant goes to the rent assessment committee, that will not affect his security. Many tenants are terrified that if they go to what they think of as a court, that they will lose everything; that is a common fear of tenants. The notice should make plain that the tenant is free to negotiate with his landlord, and that no further notice or regular demand can be served until after the first anniversary of the earlier notice.

I am sure that the Minister accepts that those are perfectly proper concerns. It is vital that a notice which may be put through the letterbox of a multi-occupancy property, and which might be received by people who do not have English as their first language, should be clear as to its implications and about the opportunities which exist for the tenant thereafter. I ask the Minister to assure the House that, whatever may be the final form of the notice, it will include the information which the amendment suggests. It is one of the most important documents that tenants in the private sector will receive. That information needs to be presented clearly and boldly, leaving no room for uncertainty. The House must be given such an assurance, if it is to be satisfied.

Mr. McCartney: As the person who moved the original amendment in Committee, and as it forms 50 per cent. of the concessions I have achieved during the three months of debating the Bill, I am bitterly disappointed that the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment is not in her place. I prepared for today's debate a savage indictment of her failure to make adequate proposals confirming her clear and unequivocal promise, given on the morning of the debate in Committee. However, I am relieved that the Under-Secretary is holidaying in Finland rather than in Iceland. Had she chosen Iceland, I would have waited for the Government to introduce proposals for low-cost housing in the United Kingdom, including igloos. Some people, because of cuts in capital allocations, are suffering from heating conditions such as those which exist in igloos; one might then ask the Government to provide resources for heating assessments.

The Minister will understand that, in directing my fire at his hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State, I am directing it at him also. In Committee, we sought with our amendment to assist the Government, as we did during the whole 180 hours of debate. On every occasion, I and my hon. Friends attempted to improve the Bill, despite our fundamental opposition to the Government's proposals. We tried in practical ways to assist the people who will have to live with the consequences of the Bill. We attempted to improve the Bill in the best ways we could, in terms of clearly setting out the rights of the individual to assessment and advice, be it from housing organisations —and I shall not name those in Leicester in case I fail to mention anyone—law centres and so on.

It is essential that the Government respond more adequately to amendment No. 228, which is coupled with Government amendment No. 14. It is important to consider rent arrears that will result from the changes made in housing benefit, and the effect that will have on schedule 2 to the Bill. One must consider also the implications for security of tenure and the draconian effect of the introduction of market rents on the budgets of low-income families, as well as the role of the rent assessment committee and its direct influence on rents and related matters. It is important that tenants' rights should be clearly set out in statute and that their security of tenure in rented accommodation should also be safeguarded.

In Committee, I quoted a promise given to my hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Withington (Mr. Bradley). The Under-Secretary stated:

"the question of information is being considered. I see no reason why that should not be done as it would be helpful to both landlord and tenant."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee G*, 12 January 1988; c. 50]

Subsequently, my hon. Friend the Member for Bootle (Mr. Roberts) was, as he so eloquently highlighted earlier, given assurances that on Report the Government would bring forward specific improved arrangements that would be satisfactory to the Opposition.

The Minister's latest assurances are inadequate because they do not answer the grievances expressed by myself and by the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes). At one point, even the hon. Member for Mid-Staffordshire (Mr. Heddle) commented about his feeling of uncertainty about the way in which the Bill was drafted. I hope that the Minister will not proceed as he has done earlier but will give an assurance that he will consider seriously what has been said.

In Committee the Under-Secretary played a game called "Give us a clue". Each time she got up to utter soothing words she gave us another clue. We wanted to know what the Government's concessions meant, what precisely they would put in the notice and what they intended to do to alleviate the worries expressed by us and by the housing associations and organisations involved with tenants in the private sector. We waited from March

until now and the Government have offered us nothing, not a single dot or comma in answer to the points raised in Committee.

The Minister has taken the place of the Under-Secretary. He has indicated that it is not normal practice to set out in detail the information we require and that the Secretary of State does not seek such powers in legislation. That is rich coming from a Government who, every time they introduce legislation, give draconian powers to the Secretary of State to cover almost any circumstances they can think of. The wording is so loose that on many occasions the Secretary of State's powers cover circumstances which were not thought of when the legislation was drafted.

We are not in that ball game on housing. There are clear precedents in legislation for the Government to set out in detail the rights of tenants. For example, section 83 of the Housing Act 1985 sets out tenants' rights in detail in the notice seeking possession. In sections 51 and 52 of the Rent Act 1977 the arrangements for security of tenure and rent levels are set out specifically. Therefore, our proposals in Committee and again today are in line with current Government thinking.

The Minister knows that one thing I could not be accused of is naivety. If I could be accused of anything, perhaps it would be of reading too much into what the Minister and the Under-Secretary said in Committee. I might be accused of being moderate and of putting aside some of my opposition to what was said by the Government in the hope that they would come forward with genuine proposals.

Are not the Government operating double standards? The Minister is not prepared to insert a simple provision which would make clear the rights of private tenants, yet during the eight years that the Government have been in power they have dealt specifically with every aspect of tenants' rights under local authorities. They have been prepared to detail the rights and obligations of tenants in local authority housing. As a member of a local authority involved with housing I have no objection to that, but I object to double standards. A local authority tenant has protection and rights; the tenant in the private sector has few rights and under this legislation he will have fewer still. My hon. Friends and I are not prepared to accept those nauseating double standards.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Bootle said, in Committee I set out in detail the principles behind our amendment. The debate is recorded in columns 361-371 of the *Official Report* of the Committee's proceedings on 21 January. Because my hon. Friends wish to speak in this debate, I shall not repeat those arguments. My hon. Friend the Member for Bootle has put forward many of them today. Therefore, I simply point out to the Minister that it is essential that tenants' rights are protected. There is no point in the Minister making a spurious argument about supporting tenants' rights if the tenant cannot exercise those rights because they are not set out in statute and there is no detail about how he can seek advice.

5.45 pm

The Minister conceded in Committee that we are not dealing in the market place with bodies of equal opportunity. The landlord has significantly greater power to determine the level of rent and the condition of the property. The tenants' negotiating strength is non-existent. The Minister conceded that fact in Committee, and he and the Under-Secretary indicated on numerous occasions that they would produce practical proposals to take account of what I and my hon. Friends had said.

When I moved the amendment in Committee I said:

"The amendment is practical and does not undermine the fundamental thrust of the Government in relation to the Bill but puts a little meat on the bones of the statement made by the Under-Secretary of State on 12 January. I hope that the Minister will respond positively and either accept the amendment or give an assurance that she will come forward with proposals at a later date. Anything other than that would be a negation of the promise that she gave in the debate, and would undermine our understanding of the promise given to the Committee by the Minister for Housing and Planning that he would consider amendments that were practical and which assisted the passage of the Bill, assisted tenants and their rights and resulted in good relations between tenants and landlords."

We cannot get any more sympathetic, moderate or practical phraseology. The Minister has had from 21 January until now to make good the promises of the Under-Secretary of State. She promised:

"The key piece of information that we should want to include in the prescribed form of notice is that the tenant, if he does not agree to the increase, may refer the notice to a rent assessment committee, and that he has a fixed period within which to do so. That essential point does not appear in the amendment. We shall want to think further about what else should go into the notice".

Later she said in a poignant whisper:

"I hope, therefore, that the amendment will be withdrawn in the light of my assurance that the notice needs to give the tenant some basic information."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee G*, 21 January 1988; c. 365-66.]

I accepted in faith what the Minister said and, despite the concern of some of my hon. Friends, I dutifully withdrew the amendment. I have to ask the Minister again not to give me empty promises, as the Under-Secretary did in Committee, but to come to the Dispatch Box and produce the goods for once in his life. The Under-Secretary could not do so. The Secretary of State is not here. The Minister has an opportunity to speak his own mind for once. So often we have seen the young leviathan harpooned behind the Speaker's Chair. For three months the Under-Secretary gave promise after promise. Then, almost at the end of the Committee, the Secretary of State put his little head round the door and a look was enough. The leviathan was harpooned.

I ask the Minister to go back to the Dispatch Box and give a firm commitment. Without a commitment, the reality in the market place will be that tenants' rights and their ability to challenge ruthless landlords will be eroded. The Minister's soothing words will be of no use to many of my constituents, some of whom I mentioned in Committee. I referred to genuine cases of hardship. They will be affected by landlords who are ruthless in the extreme. Landlords will pressure tenants and affect rent levels, conditions and other matters that we are trying to improve and get out of the public and private housing sectors. Unless the Minister gives a commitment, his words will be no more than empty promises, and hundreds of thousands of private sector tenants will surely face not only the effects of increasing rents but the real possibility of harassment and losing their right to continued occupation of their properties. We shall not countenance that. We shall press the matter if the Minister does not come up with some proposals.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Perhaps the lesson for my hon. Friend the Member for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney) is that he should not be so moderate. Perhaps

[Mr. David Winnick]

he should not listen to and take promises from Tory Ministers. That is particularly so, as he indicated, because there seems to be a running battle between the Secretary of State and the Minister. The press would have us believe that the Minister is the moderate in this game, but he recognises the potential for Rachmanites and so on. Whenever he wants to put forward some basic protection for private sector tenants, the Secretary of State makes it perfectly clear that that is out of the question. My hon. Friend was absolutely right. With this legislation, in which, in effect, protection and security for private sector tenants is being thrown overboard, it is perfectly right and proper that we should do our utmost in Committee and on Report, as we are not doing, to try to provide some basic protection and security, especially when landlords propose increases.

It is perfectly clear that, in most cases, the proposed increases will be quite substantial. To a large extent, the whole Bill is based on the fact that rents should be market rents. As I said on Second Reading, in certain parts of the country—certainly in greater London—many market rents will be higher than mortgage repayments, except that the people concerned will not be able to claim tax relief on their rent payments. We know also that the responsibility of rent officers will be to see to it that, in many cases, housing benefit will not apply to the rents that are demanded by private landlords.

If there were an adequate supply of accommodation, our fears would be less justified, but we all know that demand is far greater than supply. If a private tenant is asked for a rent increase under clause 12, it is perfectly understandable that that tenant and his family will be absolutely terrified about what will happen unless he pays that rent increase.

We are suggesting that there should be certain basic protections, that the notice should be quite clearly set out, and that a tenant's security of tenure will not be affected by referring the notice to a rent assessment committee. Surely there is nothing wrong with such safeguards. Surely they do not undermine the purpose of the Bill. The Under-Secretary gave my hon. Friend a promise; it is quite clear that no such promise will be implemented. To a large extent, it is a test not for the Secretary of State but for the Minister. The Minister has done his utmost to get maximum publicity. He has said that there will be adequate safeguards against harassment and Rachmanites, and that all kinds of things will be done so that tenants will be able to claim compensation in court and so on.

Mr. Keith Bradley (Manchester, Withington): They would be able to apply for compensation only after they had been thrown out of their properties.

Mr. Winnick: As my hon. Friend says, if they are thrown out, they will not get back into their accommodation.

Of course, Mr. Ingham and co. have done their utmost to get the most favourable publicity this week for the Minister's various statements. What we have said is not rhetoric, statements or publicity handouts by information Ministers; it is what will be done to try to protect the tenants. What will we do to ensure that tenants and their families receive at least some basic protection against eviction and finding themselves homeless? One of the tests of the sincerity of the Minister's publicly declared wish that tenants should not be subject to harassment is whether the Government are willing to accept amendment No. 228.

Mr. Grist: I do not know whether Opposition Members are sirens of beguilement or alarm. Unfortunately, they serve to raise alarm among current tenants who will not be affected by the changes. Therefore, Opposition Members sow despondency where it should not be sown. They beguiled by telling me—I was not on the Committee, although I have read the Committee debates—that my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary gave promises that were not met in the Government amendments. What was promised then has been met by the Government this evening.

We are following the precedent of the Rent Act 1977. Again, prescription has been made by the Secretary of State—for instance, in orders and notices such as this—in considerable length and detail, which I shall read if hon. Members wish, but which is not included in the Act itself. We are discussing whether prescription should be on the face of the Bill. We believe that we should follow the precedent of the Rent Act and that we should take great care about what goes into the legislation. I assure Opposition Members that much of the information in amendment No. 228 will be included in the prescribed form under clause 12, but we do not want to put it in a form that may not be suitable later.

Mr. John Battle (Leeds, West): On innumerable occasions in Committee we asked about rent and whether the Minister would be prepared to assure us that a rent increase for people on housing benefit will be matched by a housing benefit increase. Will he assure Opposition Members and those who are interested in the fact that their rent may go up that such increases will be met by housing benefit? It seems to some of us that the reduction in housing benefit will mean that market rent levels will not be met by housing benefit.

Mr. Grist: Assurances have been given over and over again, but I do not see how they arise from this group of amendments.

Mr. Simon Hughes: As the Minister will have heard earlier, I accept the point about the matter going into regulations. Perhaps it is the lawyer in me that is more used to dealing with such matters, but I still do not quite understand why the Minister cannot explicitly say that what is in the amendment will be in the regulations. There is nothing unreasonable in that request. It is quite reasonable to ask for an assurance that the request in this amendment will be accepted for inclusion in the document and in the notice. I should be grateful if the Minister would say what, if anything, he finds difficult. If there is nothing difficult, surely the Government should now be in a position to say that they accept it, and their position would be much better.

Mr. Grist: That seems rather otiose. The situation has worked perfectly well with the Rent Acts. I should have thought that that would have given the assurance that the hon. Gentleman and other hon. Members are seeking.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment made: No. 74, in page 6, line 13, at end insert

'or if the tenancy has come to an end'.—*[Mr. Waldegrave.]*

Clause 7

ORDERS FOR POSSESSION

Mr. Grist: I beg to move amendment No. 282, in page 6, line 27, leave out '1' and insert '10A'.

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to consider the following: Government amendments Nos. 282, 286, 288.

Amendment No. 225, in schedule 2, page 80, line 37, at end insert—

'*Ground 10A*

Suitable alternative accommodation acceptable to the tenant is available for the tenant or will be available for him when the order for possession takes effect.'.

Government amendments Nos. 290, 291, 284 and 285.

Mr. Grist: A good deal of concern was expressed in Committee about the fact that ground 1 of schedule 2 gives a landlord a mandatory right to possession of a dwelling on an assured tenancy where he makes suitable alternative accommodation available. We undertook to consider making that ground discretionary and the amendment achieves that.

Under section 98 of the Rent Act 1977 the court will be able to consider whether it is reasonable to grant possession taking full account of the tenant's circumstances. Opposition amendment No. 225 provides a slightly different version of the discretionary ground under which the alternative accommodation must be acceptable to the tenant. That will not do because if the tenant is prepared to accept the accommodation, the landlord would not have gone to court in the first place.

6 pm

Mr. Soley: In Committee, the Minister assured my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) that if we withdrew our amendment he would be prepared to consider amending the ground so as to require the court to consider whether it was reasonable to grant possession under the Rent Act 1977. The Minister went on to say that that was the major change.

Amendment No. 225 places the ground in a discretionary category and includes a repeat of amendment No. 34 moved in Committee which sought to make alternative accommodation acceptable to the tenant. We are concerned about acceptability to the tenant. I know that in Committee the Minister accepted that the discretion should lie with the court. However, we believe that there are real problems about defining what is suitable for a tenant.

We explained in Committee that a person might be told that he is being offered alternative accommodation without a garden which may be the same or even better internally when compared to the previous accommodation. Who is to decide whether the alternative accommodation is suitable? If the tenant claims that it is not suitable, presumably he can appeal to the court. However, we are still worried that a situation might arise, especially with regard to the elderly who may have an attachment to a house, flat, garden or an area in which they may have lived for many years, in which people will not consider alternative accommodation to be suitable.

I want the Minister to address problems that may arise in that context. The elderly may be presented with an option which even the landlord and even the court in certain circumstances feel is appropriate but which the elderly tenant may, often for psychological reasons—an attachment to a particular flat, grounds, garden or area —consider unacceptable. We have been troubled by that matter of judgment, especially with regard to the elderly.

Mr. Simon Hughes: I welcome the concession from a mandatory to a discretionary ground because we argued for that in Committee. However, I am somewhat sceptical about this. I understand the concern expressed by the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley). The insertion of the words "acceptable to the tenant" in practice might mean that a property would never be offered as an alternative. A tenant would always be able to say that it was not acceptable for some reason or another. It is better, with one caveat that I will describe in a moment, to allow the matter to be adjudicated by the court.

My caveat arises from my experience of these cases. Quite understandably, because judges are not especially keen to spend their days on site considering bathroom sizes, the court suffers from the disadvantage that we discussed in Committee of not being specially charged with housing matters. We discussed in Committee how soon the review and establishment of housing courts would happen. One of the failures of the court system, which need not be a failure inherent in a system that adjudicates on these matters, is that there should be a system which allows proper and slightly fuller evidence to be given in written form about the nature of the accommodation needed and that offered.

I do not support amendment No. 225 and I accept the reasonable concession that has been made. I hope that my concern will be heard on the Government Front Bench and in other Government Departments that are reviewing the matter, so that when the courts and/or their successors—tribunals or housing courts—have to adjudicate what is acceptable or suitable they can do so in a much more rounded way than at present. The courts make the decisions, but they are often made in a remote way.

There is a danger that sometimes what a court says is suitable is not suitable in practice. For example, a family in my constituency consists of a widowed mother and a mentally handicapped adult son. The mentally handicapped adult son is enormously hyperactive. He bounces around the house. He jumps around bumping into things and pulls doors off their hinges. He is very strong. They are suitably housed in terms of accommodation because they have enough bedrooms, a kitchen and a living room. However, we have been trying to get the family moved to more suitable accommodation for two or three years because they need outdoor space so that the adult son can have freedom to let off his energy without vandalising the home. That outdoor space must be enclosed so that the community and neighbourhood are not embarrassed.

A strict definition of suitable accommodation may not produce such an alternative because strictly two bedrooms are sufficient. There should be a discretion for the court to consider the definition of suitable accommodation. The court should be given a slightly wider brief in future and consider itself to have a slightly wider roving task to come to fair decisions in all cases and not push tenants out to what may not be a suitable alternative home.

Mr. Grist: I imagine that the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) will welcome

[Mr. Grist]

the terms of the Lord Chancellor's review which would go some way towards meeting the hon. Gentleman's demands, and we are considering that review at the moment.

We have already met the difficulty raised by the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley). The court will judge what is suitable for the tenant. It must be left to the court to decide. It is almost impossible to make a prescription and if we try to do that we shall find that ill justice will be done to many people, and a court would be prevented from righting such injustices in the future.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment made: No. 75, in page 6, line 30, leave out 'which is for the time being'
and insert
'to take effect at a time when it is'.—*[Mr. Waldegrave.]*

Mr. Waldegrave: I beg to move amendment No. 283, in page 6, line 32, leave out 'Ground 9 or Ground 10' and insert 'or Ground 9'.

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to consider the following: amendment No. 326, in schedule 2, page 80, leave out lines 28 to 35.

Government amendment No. 287.

Amendment No. 226, in page 80, line 30, leave out 'some rent lawfully due from the tenant is more than three months in arrears',
and insert
'at least three months rent lawfully due from the tenant is in arrears.'.

No. 237, in page 80, line 32, leave out lines 32 to 35.

No. 238, in page 80, line 37, at end insert—

'Ground 10A

Whether or not any rent is in arrears on the date on which proceedings for possession are begun, the tenant has persistently delayed paying rent which has become lawfully due.'.

Government amendment No. 289.

Amendment No. 327, in page 81, line 30, at end insert—

'Ground 17

Both at the date of the service of the notice under section 8 of this Act relating to the proceedings for possession and at the date of the hearing, some rent lawfully due from the tenant is more than three months in arrears.

Ground 18

Whether or not any rent is in arrears on the date on which proceedings for possession are begun, the tenant has persistently delayed paying rent which has become lawfully due.'

Mr. Waldegrave: This group of amendments honours important undertakings that we gave in Committee and I hope that Opposition Members will welcome them. Hon. Members will recall that we agreed to look again at the persistent arrears ground because it was argued in Committee that persistent arrears were sometimes the fault of delays in the housing benefit payments system. We listened to the arguments and were convinced by them, because such arrears would be outside the control of the tenant.

We have therefore decided that the ground should be made discretionary and several Oppposition Members and one or two of my hon. Friends argued for that. The amendment will enable the court to consider whether persistent delays are under the tenant's control.

We also agreed to have another look at ground 10 because the drafting was ambiguous. The more we looked at it, the more we saw that it could be read either way. The amendment makes it quite clear; we have spelt it out so that there can be no doubt. For this ground to apply, the tenant must be owing at least three months' rent at the date of the court hearing. If the tenant pays off any of the arrears before the hearing, the ground will not apply, and if it was the result of a housing benefit computer failure it would be open to the local authority to make a single, one-off payment into the court to bring the arrears back under three months.

I hope that the amendments will be welcomed by the Oppositon and alliance parties. They are intended to deal with the cogent arguments that were put forward in Committee.

Mr. Soley: I am grateful to the Minister for making those concessions. I thank him for his earlier comment, but I assure him that there are other derivatives of "Ben" besides "Benjamin". One of them is "Bennett". A second one is "Tam", which has a certain Scottish and Labour ring about it.

On amendments Nos. 237 and 238, am I right in thinking that the Minister is not happy about making the provision discretionary under ground 11? It was made discretionary in the Scottish Bill. I am not clear whether the Minister said that it will now be discretionary or mandatory. I welcome the other concessions that the Minister has made.

Mr. Simon Hughes: I, too, welcome the concessions. There was a substantial debate about the matter in Committee. I wish, however, to press the Minister on my amendments Nos. 326 and 327 that argue for discretion in relation to outstanding arrears of up to three months. The Minister said that if it was a housing benefit delay, it would be open to a local authority to make a single payment so that the total outstanding arrears would fall below three months.

A frequent problem is that people think that their rent is being paid when it is not being paid. That problem often arises at the beginning of a new financial year when the amount of rent is varied or when the amount of DHSS help is varied. It also arises when people think that other odds and ends are included in the rent. They think that the DHSS pays for everything, but central heating is not paid for by the Department. Tenants are unaware of that liability, and they have to settle the account. There may be entirely unpredictable and unforeseeable occasions when somebody finds himself three months in arrear. It may amount to £1 a week, the central heating part of the rent, or it may be that part of the rent that is not met by housing benefit and Government support. According to the Bill, the tenancy of such a person could be terminated.

The Minister has thought about it and the officials have done their work. The rest of the concessions are entirely acceptable, but in equity, and to ensure that the courts temper justice with mercy when somebody ought not to have a mandatory possession order made against him, that problem ought to be looked at again.

I do not expect the Minister to say immediately that he will meet that request. It will need to be considered, but I ask him to look at it. There is sufficient evidence to justify that request.

Mr. Waldegrave: I confirm to the hon. Members for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) and for Southwark and

Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) that we have not changed our mind. Three months' arrears remains a mandatory ground in the Bill.

We have to remember the other side of the coin. If a landlord has lost a large amount of money because of a bureaucratic foul-up, it is open to the tenant to go to one or other of those bits of bureaucracy and say, "My case is coming up in court. I shall automatically lose my tenancy if you do not deal with the matter." All that the bureaucracy has to do is to make one payment to bring the arrears down under three months.

I do not intend to make any further concessions. We would then go too far the other way. We have to remember that small landlords can be in extreme difficulties because somebody is avoiding paying his rent. We think that we have now got it about right.

6.15 pm

Ms. Primarolo: The Minister referred to bureaucratic bungles—to a fault by the DHSS or the local authority, or to failure to pay maintenance leading to an accumulation of arrears. Why are tenants being used as a battering ram against errors that they have not made? Even if the landlord has a genuine case, it is not right for him to use the tenant as a battering ram. We are seeking to protect tenants' rights. They should not be used as pawns when the Government seek to protect the interests of landlords, courts, local authorities or the Department of Health and Social Security. The Minister ought to think again and accept our amendments.

Mr. Waldegrave: We are trying to establish a reasonable balance. The hon. Lady is quite right when she says that we should not use tenants as a battering ram against bureaucratic failure, but the landlord should not have to pay because one part of the bureaucracy or another has failed to provide the money that it owes. It does not have to sort itself out properly. It simply has to make one payment to bring the arrears back under three months and then sort itself out. The DHSS or the housing benefit office must accept its liability and make one payment to bring the arrears back under three months. The tenancy is then safe.

Mr. Soley: The arrears provision was made discretionary in the Scottish Bill by means of ground 11. They got round the problem in that way. Why was it appropriate to make it discretionary in the Scottish Bill if it is not appropriate to make it discretionary in the Bill for England and Wales? If the argument were so forceful as to make the provision discretionary in the Scottish Bill, why are England and Wales so different? Why not meet the problem that is worrying the Minister and, quite rightly, is worrying my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, South (Ms. Primarolo) by dealing with it, if necessary, through the courts on a discretionary basis, should there be a dispute?

Mr. Waldegrave: There are a number of respects in which the housing legislation for Scotland differs from that for England and Wales. We have come to the conclusion that the concessions that we have made, plus the method that is open to the housing benefit office, if that should be necessary—although it very seldom is—achieves a reasonable balance between the tenant and the landlord. There are a number of respects in which Scottish law shows that the boot is on the other foot. We do not always follow Scottish legislation.

Amendment agreed to.

Schedule 2

Grounds for Possession of Dwelling-houses let on Assured Tenancies

Amendments made: No. 286 in page 78, leave out lines 32 to 34.

No. 16, in page 79, line 18, leave out

'assured tenancy is for a term certain'

and insert

'tenancy is a fixed term tenancy for a term'.

No. 17, in page 79, line 26, leave out

'assured tenancy is for a term certain'

and insert

'tenancy is a fixed term tenancy for a term'.—*[Mr. Waldegrave.]*

Mr. Waldegrave: I beg to move amendment No. 293, in page 79, line 43, after 'possession', insert

'or, if that landlord is a registered housing association or charitable housing trust, a superior landlord'.

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take the following: Government amendment No. 294.

Amendment No. 219, in page 80, line 15, at end insert:

'(e)suitable alternative accommodation is available for the tenant or will be available for him when the order for possession takes effect.'.

Amendment No. 220, in page 81, line 33, after 'Ground 1', insert 'and Ground 7'.

Amendment No. 221, in page 81, line 40, after 'Ground 1', insert 'or Ground 7'.

Mr. Waldegrave: The amendments deal with the question of suitable alternative accommodation. Opposition Members wanted us to make it a condition of the redevelopment ground for possession that there should be suitable alternative accommodation available for any displaced tenant. We thought that that was too restrictive. We do not want the ground to be so circumscribed that it is useless. Moreover, there is already a ground for possession where suitable alternative accommodation is available. I should emphasise that this ground can be used only in respect of assured tenancies, not for Rent Act tenancies and not if the landlord has bought the property over the head of an existing tenant, and only if the landlord has made every effort to ensure that the work cannot be done without displacing the tenant. It is not a ground that can be used lightly to evict. However, it must not be so hedged with restrictions that it is unusable, as clearly there are large areas in which we want to encourage sensible development.

Amendment No. 293 meets the undertaking that I gave in Committee to examine the amendment suggested by the empty property unit. I am glad to say that we have adopted the suggestion and extended the ground to superior landlords where the immediate landlord is a registered housing association or a charitable housing trust—a matter that the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) raised in Committee. I hope, as the unit believes, that the amendment will facilitate the use of short-life property, and that must be an objective for us all—in all cities and in London especially.

Amendment No. 294 redrafts the ground in certain ways. It covers joint tenants, so that it cannot be used

[Mr. Waldegrave]

where some of the tenants in an agreement antedated the purchase of a property by the landlord even though others came in after he acquired it. That is a useful additional protection for tenants.

The amendment also makes it clear that there may be alternative reasons why it is not possible to carry out the work without displacing the tenant. The original version set out a series of conditions, all of which had to be fulfilled before the ground could apply. This amendment makes the ground more flexible without, I believe, undermining the position of tenants in any way. I hope that the proposals will be welcomed by the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey and perhaps by my hon. Friend the Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire).

Mr. Battle: It strikes me as ironic that the schedule should be attached to a part of the Bill that refers to security of tenure, given that it deals with grounds for possession. Schedule 2 highlights the great trap for private tenants in the Bill. When the schedule was presented in Committee it showed a marked shift of rights from the private tenant to the landlord. Discretion was taken away from the courts and grounds for possession were made mandatory. I note that the Secretary of State is now present. We have had some welcome concessions on two or three of the earlier grounds. However, I suggest that Government amendment 293 represents a toughening of the original position. As I understand the proposal, a landlord who wants to develop a room in a house in which a tenant rents another room will have the right to claim that the builder has to walk through the tenant's room and that that gives grounds to evict the tenant. In that sense, the amendment extends and toughens ground 7 rather than conceding any of the points that we made about defending tenants' rights.

Ground 7 comes from the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954. Throughout the Committee stage we argued that the schedule took away tenants' rights under the 1977 Act and marked a shift away from tenants' rights. In Committee, the hon. Member for Mid-Staffordshire (Mr. Heddle) harked back to the 1954 Act, but it is worth remembering that that Act referred to commercial tenancies. It is not common for tenants to have an understanding of complex contractual law. They do not go through the fine print of the contract with their landlord—if they get a contract, that is.

When people need a home to rent they do not enter into proper contracts with landlords as a matter of free consent. They enter into contracts in which there is inequality of power between the contracting partners—the landlord and the tenant. The purpose of amendment No. 219 is to press the case that suitable alternative accommodation should be made available to ensure that ground 7 does not become a developers' charter, enabling the landlord to winkle out the tenant and gain possession so that he can redevelop the home only to let it at a higher rent, leaving the original tenant on the street.

We had a long debate in Committee in which the hon. Member for Mid-Staffordshire raised the point that the whole clause hinges on the word "intention". We must ask what is the intention of the landlord. Does he have a real intention to develop or does he simply propose to obtain planning permission or the suggestion of tenders to provide the necessary evidence to obtain a court order to evict without providing safeguards for tenants?

The Minister will say that ground 7 contains safeguards to prevent a developer from acquiring the freehold over the head of sitting tenants and then using the ground to evict them. The safeguard provides that neither the landlord seeking possession nor any landlord who owned the freehold since the tenancy was granted can have bought the freehold, as opposed to acquiring it by inheritance or gift. However, those safeguards can be bypassed. If the landlord is a company, there is nothing to stop the developer buying a majority shareholding in the landlord and then using ground 7.

In parenthesis, I remind hon. Members that the business expansion scheme proposal lays the clause wide open because the business expansion scheme offers incentives of £500,000. I would add that some of our anger at the way in which the Bill has been brought before us on Report is that it reflects the fact that the Government have made up housing policy piecemeal. The business expansion scheme was presumably being prepared for the Budget in March precisely when we were discussing the clause, yet we could not discuss the impact that it would have. The Bill should have been referred back to the Committee so that we could study the impact of the business expansion scheme on ground 7, because the BES provision buys developers into the Bill at tenants' expense. If the landlord is a company, or becomes a company with a grant under the new business expansion scheme, there is nothing to stop a developer buying a majority shareholding in that company and then using ground 7. There will have been no change in the identity of the landlord—the landlord is still the company—so the safeguard will not apply.

Whether the landlord is an individual or a company, there is nothing to stop a developer entering into an agreement with him under which the developer provides finance for so-called redevelopment. The clause is wide open for exploitation under the business expansion scheme provision. How will the clause close doors to future Rachmans or to the other individuals mentioned in Committee? The answer is that it will not; it will blast them wide open.

Under the clause as drafted, the tenant may be able to avoid possession by giving up that part of the home required by the landlord to carry out the improvement and redevelopment work. But if the landlord wants to arrange for the builder to walk through his room, that does not apply. The only safeguard that can be solidly built into the clause is the provision of suitable alternative accommodation. The scope for abuse by landlords using ground 7 to gain possession to sell rather than to develop and the vulnerability of sitting tenants to developers using ground 7 to sell or redevelop makes a mockery of the White Paper, which claimed that the Bill would give increased protection to tenants. Ground 7 will undermine tenants' protection and make a mockery of that claim.

I detect that a fracture is developing at the heart of the Government's housing policy. That fracture was evident in the Bill. Sometimes we were told to pay attention to the market because the brave winds of the market were being brought in to free the housing market and provide more housing. In Committee the hon. Member for Eastbourne

(Mr. Gow) reminded us often of the works of Milton Friedman who tried to define competitive capitalism. Milton Friedman said that it operates

"provided the transaction [within the market place] is bilaterally voluntary and informed exchange can bring about *co-ordination without coercion.*"

He put into italics the words:

"provided the transaction is bilaterally voluntary and informed".—[*Official Report, Standing Committee G,* 19 January 1988; c. 259.]

6.30 pm

Under ground 7 there is no equality. There is no bilateral, voluntary and informed contract between landlord and tenant. The power to evict is given to the landlord.

The Government's policy has been based on the philosophy of the social market. There is a fracture in the Government's policy in that the Minister has been underlining the word "social" in the phrase "social market economy". Although we have not yet seen it, he has offered us the social landlord and the social charter. I suspect that the Secretary of State has been underlining the word "market". Therefore, the Minister for Housing and Planning has been stressing the word "social" and the Secretary of State has been stressing the word "market" at the expense of the word "social". Those two things are totally incompatible and the Housing Bill is now emerging as a real hotch-potch.

If the Bill is designed to transform the private rented market, there is a responsibility to ensure that those who have to live in that transformed private rented market do not feel that they are among the most insecure in our society, barring the homeless who do not even merit a mention in the Bill. The Bill is a missed opportunity.

Mr. John Heddle (Mid-Staffordshire): I will not attempt to answer some of the points made by the hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Battle) except to say that earlier today he and I took part in a television programme on Channel 4 on this very subject. As always happens—I am sure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in your long and distinguished career you will have done the same—as soon as one steps out from the television studio, one kicks oneself for not having thought of the simple answer to what had appeared to be a tricky question when sitting before the camera. The hon. Member for Leeds, West said then that there was no mention of homelessness in the Bill. The House will recall that in the Employment Act 1988 there is no mention of unemployment. The purpose of employment Acts is to increase employment and the purpose of the Housing Bill is to increase the availability of housing. I am sure that when it receives Royal Assent it will do that.

I welcome my hon. Friend the Minister's fine tuning of the definition of "suitable alternative accommodation". I am sure that that is right because I believe that it will facilitate a better and more productive use of our existing housing stock. However, in the event of a disagreement or dispute between the landlord and the tenant as to the suitability of the alternative accommodation provided by the landlord, who acts as the final arbiter? I wonder whether my hon. Friend the Minister will consider that point during this Report stage.

Mr. Simon Hughes: Amendment No. 293 is welcome. The provisions of that amendment were tabled on an all-party basis in Committee by the hon. Members for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire), for Bootle (Mr. Roberts) and myself. We are members of the management committee of the empty property unit.

Mr. McCartney: Namedropper.

Mr. Hughes: No doubt if the hon. Member for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney) was a London Member he would be desperate to obtain a place on that management committee—*[Interruption.]*—and desperate to obtain accommodation.

I should like to pick up the points made by the hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Battle). Ground 7 is a ground for possession if there is to be a development of the building. I accept that it is limited because it does not apply to buildings acquired financially. It applies to buildings that are inherited or otherwise held. Nevertheless, it is a common occurrence that the landlord of privately owned property may wish to develop the property, demolish it, reconstruct it wholly or in part, or "carry out substantial works." The landlord may start to do that and leave the tenant with nowhere to go and no other offer of property from that landlord.

I accept that the Minister and the Secretary of State will say, quite reasonably, that the landlord may not own another property. That may be true. However, if that tenant could not have his or her interest sustained while the property was being redeveloped, probably for continued letting, would it not be right that that tenant should have access to a type of mobility exchange scheme that would require the landlord to provide suitable alternative accommodation? It may be accommodation obtained through another route and not property belonging to the landlord or property over which he has control.

There is another necessary qualification—that is, if the building was about to fall down or have a notice served on it by the local council. Clearly, one could not expect a tenant to remain in a property that was about to disappear. However, as the hon. Member for Leeds, West argued, it is unacceptable that at the whim of a landlord a tenant can be made homeless. The landlord may simply want to develop a building so as to provide more properties and generate more income and it is wrong that a tenant has no answer from the landlord or the court because the ground for possession is mandatory. The landlord can simply say, "I am sorry, but you will have to leave. We have no way of telling you where you should go and it is no longer possible for this to be your home."

It is often the case—not always—that the mandatory ground for possession of private property affects the old and the single. It is often the case that it is single pensioners or pensioner couples who, having lived for many years in a property, find themselves in such a position. Local authorities do not respond quickly and housing associations do not have anything available quickly. They are not willing to move until the person is actually homeless or very nearly homeless. It is an inhumane ground for possession if we do not try to do something to provide alternative accommodation for the tenant, and the landlord should be involved in that.

I would be grateful to hear the Minister's initial response to that. I wonder whether something could be done to protect tenants who find themselves in what would otherwise be a hopeless position.

Mr. Waldegrave: We had a prolonged debate on this matter in Committee and some of the same arguments have been produced today. There is a division across the Floor of the House. One of the reasons why so little property is brought into the rented sector and why so much property that could be rented is left empty is that landlords fear that it will be virtually impossible for them to gain reuse of the property if major development proposals come up.

We are trying to strike a balance throughout the Bill. The Opposition are arguing that tremendous obligations should be put on landlords to take responsibility for the housing of their tenants even if they are leaving the landlord business and perhaps taking part in an inner city development, which would be welcome. That would prevent landlords from letting and, if they do obtain possession of a property, it would encourage them to leave it empty rather than run the risk of any further developments being blocked. That is where we must try to achieve a balance in the Bill. We believe that ground 7 is right.

The hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Battle) asked how serious the intention to redevelop had to be. I hoped that I had shown in Committee that the courts carefully consider the seriousness of intention. I quoted a number of cases from the workings of commercial law, on which our proposal is based, to show that if a landlord wishes to terminate a business lease for redevelopment he must show the necessary intention not only by saying that he chooses to redevelop but by having planning permission and contracts let, assuming that he is charging market rents. If he is making further lettings, he is already charging market rents and does not experience the same pressure to get people out as landlords with Rent Act tenancies.

Mr. Battle *rose*——

Mr. Waldegrave: I fear that I will not convince Opposition Members about this matter. We believe that if we change the balance a little, properties will become available.

Mr. Battle: The clause is based on the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954. Under that Act, compensation is paid to business tenants who are being moved out, so why is there no compensation in the Bill for those who lost their homes?

Mr. Waldegrave: If I remember rightly, relocation costs can be paid——

Mr. Battle: Removal costs.

Mr. Waldegrave *rose*——

Mr. Heddle: Does my hon. Friend agree that under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 compensation is paid in place of providing suitable accommodation? It enables the displaced tenant to provide his own suitable accommodation.

Mr. Waldegrave: My hon. Friend is more learned about that matter than I am.

Mr. Simon Hughes: Will the Minister say whether in all cases such development would meet the objectives on which he and his colleagues are so keen—the reletting of property for residential use? I see that an answer is coming from behind the Minister. Is it not right that development for commerical purposes may not necessarily produce further accommodation for letting? If so, it is not easily defended on the ground that it will produce more private sector rented property.

Mr. Waldegrave: If land is being used not for the provision of homes but for another necessary inner city development, it is more unfair that the responsibility for accommodating tenants should lie in every case with the landlord. My hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham, East (Mr. Knowles) passed me a useful reminder that the existing assured tenancy scheme includes a redevelopment ground.

Mr. Boateng *rose*——

Mr. Waldegrave: We have spent many hours debating this matter, but there is a clear difference of philosophy. We believe that the burdens on landlords have contributed to the decline of the rented sector. Much of the empty property in inner cities is kept empty against the fear of redevelopment. We hope that we have dealt with that problem in the short term.

If we go back down this route, we shall be contributing to the continuance of empty property, and I would not want to urge the House to do that.

Mr. Boateng: I invite the Minister to give the first of what I suspect will be many honourable mentions in dispatches to his parliamentary private secretary.

Mr. McCartney: Hod-carrier.

Mr. Boateng: Hod-carrier is too crude and coarse an expression to describe the Minister's PPS. He performs a useful function, though it is not as constructive as that of a hod-carrier.

Once again, the Minister has been writhing and wriggling. We saw the hand motions, the tugging of the ear and the engaging smile that we all came to know so well in Committee. He will have to do much better. If he does not, he will be here for many hours.

Mr. Waldegrave: I think that I hold the record as a Minister—certainly during this century—for a continuous sitting of the House. I am happy to continue indefinitely. I wish that the hon. Gentleman would unfold his arms, because he is wearing a most remarkable tie. With his arms folded, we are not getting the full benefit of it.

6.45 pm

Mr. Allan Roberts: We are not happy with what the Minister has been saying about empty property. Local authorities are the Government's whipping boys. The Government always try to blame the housing shortage and the number of people in bed-and-breakfast accommodation on the fact that waiting lists are growing and on the fact that local authorities have properties standing empty. They always ignore the private sector and especially the houses standing empty that are under Government ownership.

Over the past 10 years I have campaigned to get empty properties into use. I have been known to propose legislation that criticised local authorities that unnecessarily kept properties empty. I, unlike the Government, have always tried to strike a balance.

In 1986 there were 111,600 houses in local authority ownership standing empty, but there were 493,200 houses empty in the private sector. By 1987, the number of houses in local authority ownership empty had reduced to

108,600, but there had been an increase in the private sector figure to 511,200. During that period, the Government's Housing Act 1980 provisions and the shorthold-tenancy provisions were in operation. The Government said that they would solve the problem and that all houses that landlords kept empty because they could not obtain vacant possession would come flooding back on to the market. The Minister is advancing the same fallacious arguments in these proposals.

Mr. Robin Squire (Hornchurch): As the hon. Gentleman has spoken in public in favour of greater use of empty property under different tenures and ownership, will he concede that if the Bill is passed without further comment about empty private property it is, none the less, perfectly valid to consider proposals for greater use of local authority property?

Mr. Roberts: As long as local authorities are not being unduly penalised or criticised unreasonably for not letting empty properties that could not be let because they did not have finance following the cuts in housing investment programmes to make empty properties available with the speed that they would like. I agree that we should be critical of local authorities that have properties standing empty unnecessarily. Simply to quote figures of properties in local authority ownership that are standing empty does not give the true picture. The Government quoted massive figures of properties standing empty in Liverpool. They were tenement blocks standing empty prior to demolition. Those figures were unfair and it was not right to pillory local authorities and make them the scapegoat for the Government's failure to allow sufficient houses to be built for people on waiting lists.

I shall give some figures from Sefton metropolitan district council. It is an important local authority and the constituency of Bootle falls within its boundaries. In Sefton 335 local authority houses and 113 houses owned by housing associations are standing empty. There are 6,333 standing empty in the private rented sector. That is a scandal in view of a waiting list of over 4,000. The local authority is doing an excellent job, even though since 1979 it has had a 78·3 per cent. cut in its housing investment programme allocations.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendments made: No. 294, in page 80 leave out lines 1 to 15 and insert—

'(a) the intended work cannot reasonably be carried out without the tenant giving up possession of the dwelling-house because—

(i) the tenant is not willing to agree to such a variation of the terms of the tenancy as would give such access and other facilities as would permit the intended work to be carried out, or

(ii) the nature of the intended work is such that no such variation is practicable, or

(iii) the tenant is not willing to accept an assured tenancy of such part only of the dwelling-house (in this sub-paragraph referred to as "the reduced part") as would leave in the possession of his landlord so much of the dwelling-house as would be reasonable to enable the intended work to be carried out and, where appropriate, as would give such access and other facilities over the reduced part as would permit the intended work to be carried out, or

(iv) the nature of the intended work is such that such a tenancy is not practicable; and

(b) either the landlord seeking possession acquired his interest in the dwelling-house before the grant of the tenancy or that interest was in existence at the time of that grant and neither that landlord (or, in the case of joint landlords, any of them) nor any other person who, alone or jointly with others, has acquired that interest since that time acquired it for money or money's worth.

For the purpose of this ground, if, immediately before the grant of the tenancy, the tenant to whom it was granted or, if it was granted to joint tenants, any of them was the tenant or one of the joint tenants under an earlier assured tenancy of the dwelling-house concerned, any reference in paragraph (b) above to the grant of the tenancy is a reference to the grant of that earlier assured tenancy.

For the purposes of this ground "registered housing association" has the same meaning as in the Housing Associations Act 1985 and "charitable housing trust" means a housing trust, within the meaning of that Act, which is a charity, within the meaning of the Charities Act 1960.'.

No. 19, in page 80, line 21, after 'landlord', insert 'or, in the case of joint landlords, any one of them.'

No. 287, in page 80 line 30, leave out from 'hearing' to end of line 35 and insert—

'(a) if rent is payable weekly or fortnightly, at least thirteen weeks' rent is unpaid;

(b) if rent is payable monthly, at least three months' rent is unpaid;

(c) if rent is payable quarterly, at least one quarter's rent is more than three months in arrears; and

(d) if rent is payable yearly, at least three months' rent is more than three months in arrears;

and for the purpose of this ground "rent" means rent lawfully due from the tenant'.

No. 288, in page 80, line 37, at end insert—

'Ground 10A

Suitable alternative accommodation is available for the tenant or will be available for him when the order for possession takes effect.'

No. 289, in page 80, line 44, at end insert—

'Ground 11A

Whether or not any rent is in arrears on the date on which proceedings for possession are begun, the tenant has persistently delayed paying rent which has become lawfully due.'.

No. 290, in page 81, line 33, leave out '1' and insert '10A'.

No. 291, in page 81, line 40, leave out '1' and insert '10A'.—*[Mr. Waldegrave.]*

Clause 8

NOTICE OF PROCEEDINGS FOR POSSESSION

Mr. Grist: I beg to move amendment No. 20, in page 7, line 4, at end insert

'and the proceedings are begun within the time limits stated in the notice in accordance with subsections (3) and (4) below'.

These two amendments are straightforward amendments to ensure that a landlord who serves notice under clause 8 that he intends to seek possession should bring proceedings within 12 months of having served the notice. This makes it quite clear that if a landlord serves notice he must have a genuine intention to start proceedings. He cannot serve notice merely to threaten his tenant. The tenant benefits in that he cannot have notice hanging over his head indefinitely. If the landlord does not start proceedings within 12 months of serving notice, the amendment removes the court's jurisdiction. These are sensible amendments and I hope that hon. Members will accept them.

Mr. Boateng: One can hardly see the benefit to a tenant of having this threat hanging over him for 12 months. Why not six months or three months? Twelve months gives ample time for a tenent to be threatened and harassed by

[Mr. Boateng]

his landlord. I see no reason, but perhaps the Government will give us one, for such an extended period to be given to a landlord.

Mr. Grist: The hon. Gentleman has put his finger on the reason. In our judgment, 12 months is reasonable for both parties. Clearly one could pick a different period of time but 12 months seems reasonable.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendments made: No. 67, in page 7, line 12, after 'one', insert 'in the prescribed form'.

No. 21, in page 7, line 19, at end insert: 'and

(c) those proceedings will not begin later than twelve months from the date of service of the notice'.

No. 284, in page 7, line 21, leave out '1 to 3, 6 to 8' and inset '2, 3, 6 to 8, 10A'.—*[Mr. Waldegrave.]*

Mr. Grist: I beg to move, amendment No. 22, in page 7, line 25, after 'of', insert 'service of'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): With this it will be convenient to discuss Government amendment No. 23.

Mr. Grist: These amendments to clause 8 are drafting amendments. When notice is served that the landlord intends to recover possession under grounds 1 to 3, 6 to 8 and 16 in schedule 2, the notice must specify that proceedings will not begin for two months. Amendment No. 22 makes it clear that the relevant date from which the two months starts is the date on which the notice is served. Similarly, amendment No. 23 makes it clear that it is the date on which notice is served which is the relevant date for the purposes of subsection 4(B). This establishes that the earliest date specified in the notice in the case of a periodic tenancy must not fall before the date on which a landlord's notice to quit would have taken effect if served on the date on which notice under clause 8 was served. These are straightforward amendments for the purposes of clarification.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment made: No. 23, in page 7, line 29 after 'of', insert 'service of'.

Clause 9

EXTENDED DISCRETION OF COURT IN POSSESSION CLAIMS

Mr. Waldegrave: I beg to move amendment No. 24, in page 8, line 29, after 'dwelling-house', insert '(a)'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider Government amendment No. 25.

Mr. Waldegrave: Perhaps I may comment briefly on parallelism with Scotland because on this occasion we propose to make a change that has been made in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1988. Perhaps I may correct the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley). The Scottish Bill does not make the three-months rent arrears ground discretionary. I should have known that but perhaps the hon. Gentleman should also have known it. We are moving in step on that matter and now propose to move in step on this matter.

The two amendments ensure that the court does not have the power to suspend possession or adjourn proceedings, as it does in ordinary assured tenancies, when it is considering a shorthold possession case. It may not adjourn proceedings or suspend execution of a possession order when it is satisfied that the landlord is entitled to possession on any of the mandatory grounds in schedule 2 to the Bill. Shorthold is a mandatory ground for repossession even though it does not appear in the list of mandatory grounds. It is of course a mandatory case for repossession under the Rent Act 1977—case 19. Clearly the court cannot have the power to suspend possession of a shorthold tenancy. It is the essence of a shorthold tenancy that the landlord is guaranteed possession provided he has served the correct notice. The amendments give effect to this, and I trust that hon. Members will accept that this must be so. It is logical that it should be so.

Mr. Tim Devlin (Stockton, South): These two amendments are small and technical and have been introduced by the Government at this late stage. Many of the amendments that we are dealing with could have been tabled by the Government much earlier. On a Bill related to the housing of the nation many Back Benchers who did not have an opportunity to speak on Committee want to speak on Report about the general nature of housing law. Unfortunately, we are constrained to sit on the Benches while a number of rather trivial technical points are introduced by the Government simply because the drafting has been inadequate. I make the point at this stage by way of protest.

Mr. McCartney: I thank the hon. Gentleman for giving way.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I think that the hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Devlin) had sat down. If the hon. Member for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney) wishes to make a speech he is free to do so.

Mr. McCartney: The points made by the hon. Member for Stockton, South were precisely the points that we detailed earlier. Perhaps he could tell the House how he voted when we divided the House earlier.

Question put and agreed to.

Amendment made: No. 25, in page 8, line 30, at end add 'or

(b) by virtue of subsection (1) or subsection (4) of section 19 below.'

Clause 11

PAYMENT OF REMOVAL EXPENSES IN CERTAIN CASES

Amendment made: No. 285, in page 9, line 6, leave out '1 or Ground 7' and insert '7 or Ground 10A'—*[Mr. Waldegrave.]*

Mr. Allan Roberts: I beg to move amendment No. 227, in page 9, line 9, at end insert—

'(1A) Where the order for possession relates to a dwelling house in respect of which structural modifications have been made for meeting the special needs of a disabled person (whether or not the tenant), then, if—

(a) a local authority having functions under section 29 of the National Assistance Act 1948 provided assistance; or

(b) such an authority would, if an application had been made, have provided assistance,

for making those modifications, the sum shall include an amount equal to the reasonable expenses incurred in making, in respect of a dwelling to which the disabled person removes, comparable modifications which are reasonably required for meeting the disabled person's special needs.'.

I shall be brief because the issues raised about this amendment were fully debated in Committee. This is a

repeat of amendment No. 167 moved by my hon. Friend the Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) and debated in the House on Tuesday 19 January.

Hon. Members might ask why if we debated it in Committee it is being debated again on Report. There are two reasons for that. First, it is a very important issue and relates to the removal expenses of replacing a disabled person's special needs in a new home. We are proposing to amend clause 11, page 9, line 9 and that clause deals with the circumstances and arrangements made when possession is sought of a home that is in public ownership and where the tenants, the residents of the home, are being rehoused elsewhere.

The amendment is before us again because of its importance and because it is necessary to protect the needs of the disabled. When expenses are incurred in the transfer, they should be paid if the money is to cover the cost of replacing a disabled person's special needs in a new home. If the home that a person is being thrown out of by the Government has been specially adapted for the disabled by means of some grant or other under the National Assistance Act, or by the local authority, it is not right that the disabled person should suffer. Some provision should be made. It is before us because it is an issue of principle that will affect, not a massive number of people, but a significant minority, who are some of the most vulnerable in our society. Those are the disabled people who need the adaptations to their home.

The other reason that the amendment is before us is that, if we had debated it in Committee and we had been given an unsatisfactory answer, we would have voted on it and that might have been that. If it had been debated in Committee and we had been given a satisfactory answer and the Minister had accepted the proposals, that would have been that.

However, this is what the Minister said in Committee in response to my hon. Friend the Member for Hammersmith:

"His amendments—if I have interpreted them correctly —raise a fair point which would need careful consideration. If the hon. Gentleman is content, we shall re-examine the matter and produce appropriate proposals."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee G*, 19 January 1988; c. 344.]

7 pm

On the basis of what the Minister then said, the amendment was withdrawn. He has not re-examined the matter and produced appropriate proposals. It is another example of the Minister ratting on an undertaking given in Committee. Nothing has been tabled by the Government. There are no proposals here to protect disabled persons in the same respect as the amendment that we moved in Committee and we now repeat. Therefore, we ask the Minister to stand by what he said in Committee and accept the amendment.

Mr. Waldegrave: I strongly rebut the suggestion that commitments have been made which have been broken, as has been said many times. They have not. I remember putting before the Committee the normal three types of commitment that any Minister gives. First, "If we agree it, we shall do what has been said". There have been several examples of that this afternoon. Secondly, "We shall have a look and see whether we can make that work". Thirdly, "That seems to be an interesting point, and, without commitment, we will look at it." This amendment falls into the third category.

I am sorry if this is boring my hon. Friend the Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Devlin) who may not be interested in these issues. However, to accede to the hon. Gentleman's request, I am strongly advised by those advisers in my Department—and we have specialist advisers on matters concerning the disabled—could paradoxically have the opposite effect to what he and we want. I must say that I would not have spotted that the first time he raised it. Nobody will doubt that modifications of this kind are often crucial to disabled people. That is common ground between us. However, the work cannot be carried out without the landlord's consent. That would be severely jeopardised if the landlord was then laying himself open to having to spend possibly tens of thousands of pounds if he obliged the tenant to move later on. It would not mean that he would fork out that money; he just would not allow the changes to be carried out in the first place. Surely it is better to continue with the present position where the disabled tenant is entitled to receive grants for replacement adaptation when he goes to his new house. The hon. Gentleman will know as well as I that, under the home improvement grant regime, disabled people are eligible to a grant of up to 90 per cent. from the housing department, with social services departments meeting the rest in cases of hardship.

We have considered this genuinely and discussed it with our disablement advisers. However, if we were to accept it, it has the paradoxical outcome that it might make it standard for landlords to refuse the work to be done in the first place and, therefore, disabled people would be worse off. That is a strong argument against accepting it.

Mr. George Howarth: In theory, what the Minister has said sounds all very well, that the local authority housing department can provide up to 90 per cent. and that the social services department can top up the rest. However, most hon. Members will be aware that, if the capital allocation is not there, there is often a waiting list that can stretch to two years or more. The reality is that people could find themselves in the position of moving and having to wait for that kind of assistance for a long time, during which time they will be subjected to some discomfort and difficulty.

The amendment proposed by my hon. Friend the Member for Bootle (Mr. Roberts) is in some way defective. However, the Government with all their resources and all the advice available to them could surely have found a formula that would have achieved precisely what my hon. Friend and others intended with the original amendment that went through the Committee. I am bound to say that I do not find the Minister's explanation so far entirely convincing.

Mr. Waldegrave: What the hon. Member for Knowsley, North (Mr. Howarth) has said is perfectly legitimate. He is pushing to get improvements, saying that more money should go into improvement grants and the disablement grants that are part of them. That is the right part of the system. There are about £40 million worth of disabled adaptation grants awarded each year. Doubtless, he and also many of my hon. Friends would like to see more. However, this change, which looks as though it would help, will make things worse.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 12

INCREASES OF RENT UNDER ASSURED PERIODIC TENANCIES

Mr. Soley: I beg to move amendment No. 180, in page 9, line 24, at end insert—

'(1A) This section does not apply to an assured tenancy which is an assured shorthold tenancy within the meaning of section 18 below.'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss the following amendments: No. 184, in page 10, line 5, leave out subsection (6).

No. 236, in page 10, line 7, at end insert—

'(6A) Nothing in this section (or section 13 below) affects the operation of any term of a tenancy which makes provision for an increase in rent (including provision whereby the rent for a particular period will or may be greater than that for an earlier period) by an amount specified in the tenancy contract or by a percentage there specified of an amount of rent payable under the tenancy.'.

No. 185, in clause 13, page 11, line 1, leave out subsection (5).

No. 181, in clause 18, page 12, line 42, at end insert 'and

(c) in respect of which either—

(i) a rent for the dwelling house is determined under section 20 below at the time the tenancy is granted; or

(ii) an applicant for the determination of a rent for the dwelling house is made by the landlord not later than 14 days after the grant of the tenancy and is not withdrawn.'.

No. 182, in page 14, line 16, leave out clause 20.

No. 235, in clause 20, page 14, line 16, leave out from 'below' to 'may' in line 20 and insert

'the tenant under an assured shorthold tenancy.'.

No. 321, in page 14, line 25, leave out subsection (2).

No. 322, in page 14, line 32, leave out subsection (3).

No. 323, in page 14, line 46, leave out from 'from' to first 'the' in line 47.

No. 183, in page 15, line 7, leave out clause 21.

New clause 14—*Extension of access to Rent Assessment Committee*—

'(1) Notwithstanding any provision in the terms of the tenancy, an application for the registration of a rent for a dwelling-house may at any time be made to the Rent Assessment Committee by the landlord or the tenant, or jointly by the landlord and the tenant, under an assured or assured shorthold tenancy of the dwelling-house.

(2) Any such application must be in the prescribed form and contain the prescribed particulars in addition to the rent which, it is sought to register.

(3) Subject to subsection (4) below, where a rent for a dwelling-house has been registered under this Part of this Act no application by the tenant alone or by the landlord alone for the registration of a different rent for that dwelling-house shall be entertained before the expiry of two years from the relevant date (as defined in subsection (5) below) except on the ground that, since that date, there has been such a change in—

(a) the condition of the dwelling-house (including the making of any improvement therein)

(b) the terms of the tenancy

(c) the quantity, quality or condition of any furniture provided for use under the tenancy (deterioration by fair wear and tear excluded), or

(d) any other circumstances taken into consideration when the rent was registered or confirmed, as to make the registered rent no longer the market rent.

(4) Notwithstanding anything in subsection (3) above, an application such as is mentioned in the subsection which is made by the landlord alone and is so made within the last 3 months of the period of 2 years referred to in that subsection may be entertained notwithstanding that period has not expired.

(5) In this section "the relevant date", in relation to rent which has been registered under this Part of this Act, means where on an application for the registration of different rent the registered rent has been confirmed, the date of that application or, if there was more than one such application, the date of the last of them.'.

New clause 24—*Reference of excessive rents to rent assessment committee (No.2)*—

'—(1) On receipt of an application under this section, the rent assessment committee for the registration area in which the dwelling house is situated shall determine the rent for the dwelling house.

(2) In making a determination under this section the rent assessment committee shall have particular regard to the right of the landlord to obtain possession of the dwelling house under Section 19 above, by setting the determined rent 20 per cent. below the rent which would apply had the letting been subject to an assured tenancy other than a shorthold tenancy.

(3) Where, on an application under this section a rent assessment committee makes a determination of a rent of a dwelling house—

(a) the determination shall have effect from the date of the determination;

(b) no further application may be made under this section with respect to the dwelling house until after the first anniversary of the date on which the determination takes effect.

(4) Where a rent for a dwelling house has been determined under this section, and the dwelling house is for the time being let under an assured shorthold tenancy; the rent so determined shall be the maximum recoverable rent.

(5) In section 20(8) of the Social Security Act 1986 (income related benefits) insert after "but"—

"(a) in determining the rent for housing benefit purposes the authority shall treat the rent assessment committees determination of a rent under section 20 of the Housing Act 1988 as the minimum eligible rent, and

(b) .".'

New clause 36—*Extending access to rent assessment committee*—

'(1) Notwithstanding any provision in the terms of the tenancy, an application for the registration of a rent for a dwelling-house may at any time be made to the Rent Assessment Committee by the landlord or the tenant, or jointly by the landlord and the tenant, under an assured or assured shorthold tenancy of the dwelling-house.

(2) Any such application must be in the prescribed form and contain the prescribed particulars in addition to the rent which it is sought to register.

(3) Subject to subsection (4) below, where a rent for a dwelling-house has been registered under this Part of this Act, no application by the tenant alone or by the landlord alone for the registration of a different rent for that dwelling-house shall be entertained before the expiry of two years from the relevant date (as defined in subsection (5) below) except on the grount that, since that date, there has been such a change in —

(a) the condition of the dwelling-house (including the making of any improvement therein);

(b) the terms of the tenancy;

(c) the quantity, quality or condition of any furniture provided for use under the tenancy (deterioration by fair wear and tear excluded): or

(d) any other circumstances taken into consideration when the rent was registered or confirmed,

as to make the registered rent no longer the market rent.

(4) Notwithstanding anything in subsection (3) above, an application such as is mentioned in that subsection which is made by the landlord alone and is so made within the last three months of the period of two years referred to in that subsection may be entertained notwithstanding that period has not expired.

(5) In this section "the relevant date" in relation to rent which has been registered under this Part of this Act, means—

(a) where on an application for the registration of different rent the registered rent has been confirmed, the date of that application or, if there was more than one such application, the date of the last of them;

(b) in any other case, the date on which the registration of rent took effect.

(6) Where a market rent for a dwelling-house is registered by the Rent Assessment Committee, the rent recoverable shall be limited to the rent so registered, and the amount by which the rent payable under the tenancy exceeds that limit shall, notwithstanding anything in the agreement, be irrecoverable from the tenant.

(7) Where a rent has been determined by the Rent Assessment Committee the rent so determined shall be the rent under the tenancy with effect from the date of determination or, if it appears to the Rent Assessment Committee that that would cause undue hardship to the tenant, with effect from such later date as the Committee direct.'.

Mr. Soley: We come to an important part of the Bill which deals primarily with rents, the way in which rents are set and assured shorthold tenancies. We do so in the context of the Government's central aim of the Bill, which is to provide an increase in the amount of property available for people to rent. We begin in the knowledge that the Government have so far singularly failed in that aim. We know that since 1980, when the Government first started to cut back on the Rent Act, no fewer than 1 million homes have gone from the rented sector, half of million of which have gone from the Government's much-loved private rented sector.

We know that the rate of decline is steeper than it has ever been, except when it declined so rapidly after the Conservative Government passed the Rent Act 1956. That was the steepest and fastest decline of all time. Most people know—including the Department of the Environment that has carried out research on the matter—that the majority of private landlords do not keep their properties empty because of Rent Acts. Only about 2·5 per cent. of people who own empty properties claim that the Rent Acts are a deterrent. The vast majority keep their properties empty either because they are intending to spend money on repairs or, more commonly, because they intend to sell them. I reiterate what I have said to the Government over a number of months. Until they do something about housing finance, they will not revive the rented sector. The collapse of the rented sector, especially the private rented sector, is caused by the absurd housing finance system in this country.

Mr. Winnick: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Soley: Yes, but I just say once again and clearly to the Government that we are willing to consider new ways of reforming housing finance in the recognition that any new or reformed system must be fairer both within the purchased and rented sectors, and between those sectors. Any reforms must be capable of being introduced in a way that does not cause economic distress to mortgage payers or to rent payers. We need to remember that in certain parts of the country there are more people in bed-and-breakfast accommodation because of mortgage defaulting than there are for other reasons.

Mr. Winnick: Ministers try to make excuses for what occurred under the Rent Act 1957, but there was a substantial reduction in rented accommodation in the private sector between the passing of the Rent Act and the incoming Labour Government in the autumn of 1964. Has my hon. Friend not read the proceedins on the Report stage and the Second Reading of the Rent Act, when the same kind of promises were made by Ministers, including Mr. Enoch Powell? They said that once the Bill became law, once deregulation occurred and landlords were not restricted, there would be an ample supply of rented accommodation. As we know, the opposite has happened.

Mr. Soley: My hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) is right to correct me. I said that the year of the Act was 1956 and it was, of course, 1957. It all has to do with housing finance.

My hon. Friend will know that the 1957 Act led to the introduction of the words "Rachman" and "Rachmanism" into the English language. No doubt, we will see that kind of thing returning with the Bill and all its works precisely because the supply of low-cost rented accommodation is drying up dramatically fast. At the same time, the Government are seeking to pass this Bill, which will make it easier for landlords to evict tenants. There will necessarily be an increase in the percentage of very bad landlords who use harassment to get people out. Such people are not really landlords—they are property speculators who want the property empty so they can sell it.

One need not look just at London because the figures apply, to a greater or lesser extent, across the country. In Dorset, for example, houses with two or three bedrooms sell for about £90,000. The average manual worker has a weekly wage of between £80 and £90. Surely nobody believes that such people can get mortgages to buy a house for £90,000. If, in the Secretary of State's famous words, "somebody has a spare house to let" in such an area and if that person knows that he can sell it for £90,000, he will also know that he can put the proceeds in a building society and receive about £200 per week in interest. One does not need to be an economic Tarzan to work out what the market rent will be in those circumstances. In areas such as mine, landlords expect to achieve a total of £1,000 per week in rent. That is what they can achieve either by letting the property as luxury flats or by cramming in as many people as possible, who will often pay £70 per week each and share a room. That is what is so fundamentally wrong. That is why the Bill will not work and why we have tabled this group of amendments.

Mrs. Teresa Gorman (Billericay): Does the hon. Gentleman agree that house prices have been chased up and are, as he says, difficult for ordinary people to afford, because such people cannot find anywhere to rent and are, therefore, forced into buying? The whole point of the Bill is that it will provide more opportunities for people to rent.

Mr. Soley: I saw the hon. Lady taking an interest in what I was saying. She has grasped the first point—that supply has been cut drastically—but she has not grasped the second point, which is that more new properties will not come on to the market. The supply of rented properties at the lower end of the market is decreasing.

Mrs. Gorman: Why?

at the lower end of the market is decreasing.

Mrs. Gorman: Why?

Mr. Soley: I am explaining why, if the hon. Lady will bear with me. In London alone, over half the lets are already outside the Rent Acts, yet the rate of decline of properties coming on to the market is accelerating; and that is because of housing finance. One can get more money by selling than one can by renting, without any of the hassle of being a landlord. It is no good pretending ——

Mrs. Gorman *rose*——

Mr. Soley: If the hon. Lady is going to say, "Let's take away all the hassle of being a landlord", I advise her that one would make eviction much easier and allow people to sell with vacant possession at a greater profit. If one then throws in the business expansion scheme which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has introduced, enormous profits can be made easily by people who choose to go into that area of activity, often with no experience of being a landlord.

If the hon. Lady wants to go into this further, she is welcome to read some of the comments that I made in Committee. I warned the Government that they had made a fundamental mistake. In a way, it is a curious mistake for a Government who claim to understand economic forces, and supply and demand. The supply of public housing in this country has been cut by two thirds since 1980—from about 90,000 completions to between 26,000 and 27,000; housing association starts are more or less marking time; and supply in the private sector has increased only slightly. It necessarily follows that there will be a combination of house price inflation plus accelerating rents.

If the Government go ahead with the Bill, there will not only be more harassment and evictions, but rent levels will go out of control. The Government talk about dealing

Ms. Mildred Gordon (Bow and Poplar): Does my hon. Friend agree that the end result of all the procedures that he has just outlined will be an increase in homelessness, especially in London? In Tower Hamlets, 1,200 people are already living in bed and breakfast accommodation. We have people sleeping in the streets and on the floors of friends' houses. However, under one schedule of the Bill people will lose their property if they have put up friends or relatives. In Tower Hamlets, we also have the notorious case of 10 Bengali families—66 people—sleeping in a church hall until today. They are now in bed and breakfast accommodation on a 24-hour basis because the children are in danger. Such things will be exacerbated by the Bill.

7.15 pm

Mr. Soley: My hon. Friend is right that such things will accelerate. I am glad that the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) also spoke out against what that council has done. We will all be presented with the problem of local authorities increasingly taking measures that will result in people living in church halls. People such as the Bishop of Stepney have said, "What sort of society does this?" They are right to ask that, because what is happening is appalling.

The Government try to dodge what is happening by saying, "What about empty council properties?" Local authorities have 2·5 per cent. of their housing stock empty. That compares with just over 3 per cent. for housing associations and just over 4 per cent. for the private sector. It pales into insignificance when compared with the figure of 6·9 per cent. for the Government sector. I warn the Government not to go down that road. We should deal with bad management, whether private, public, Government, local authority, housing association or anything else.

The Government cannot dodge their responsibilities. They put the pressure on the local authorities and made it virtually impossible for even the best local authorities to manage, but at the same time they cannot get their own house in order. The percentage of empty stock in the Government sector is twice that in almost every other sector.

Mr. Robert G. Hughes (Harrow, West): While we all deplore the fact that any property remains empty, whether owned by the Government, councils or in private hands, the fact that is uncomfortable for the hon. Gentleman is that empty council properties are concentrated in the areas of greatest need, in places such as Newham and Tower Hamlets. Opposition Members should seek to do something about that before complaining about the Government.

Mr. Soley: That issue is not a problem or embarrassment to me or I would not have raised it, but I have raised it and will continue to raise it in the media and to the embarrassment of the Government. Conservative Members are getting into difficulties because they cannot dodge the responsibility, not only for the figures for Government properties but for creating this situation. They should remember one basic fact. In 1979, hardly anyone was in bed and breakfast accommodation, whereas now the figures of the homeless in that position have literally doubled. In 1979, hardly anyone slept in cardboard boxes, except those with special problems such as those who were recovering from mental illness, alcoholics and drug addicts; in 1979 such people could always be found places—but not any more. Some people came to see me tonight in the House of Commons saying, "I do not have anywhere to sleep tonight." One could refer them to hostels and to places such as Centrepoint, but they are full. Such things have never happened before—and not only under Labour Governments. They did not happen even under previous Tory Governments. What have Conservative Members got to write home about?

Mr. Spearing *rose*——

Mr. Tony Banks *rose*——

Mrs. Gorman *rose*——

Mr. Soley: I give way to my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing).

Mr. Spearing: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for giving me the opportunity of putting the record straight about Newham. Is the hon. Member for Harrow, West (Mr. Hughes) not aware that 1,000 flats in defective tower blocks count towards that total? Such buildings were forced on local authorities by Governments of all political persuasions. The Secretary of State persists in including Taylor Woodrow blocks in that total, together with empty blocks which are having to be cleared for improvement purposes and those that are unfit because we do not have the money to repair them because the Government do not

allow us to use our own money. Why does the hon. Gentleman not insist that, when Secretaries of State make misleading statements, they bear such facts in mind?

Mr. Soley: My hon. Friend is right. I do not want to stray too far from the point although, in effect, this matter is part of the amendment, but it is true that, more than any other Government, the Macmillan Government—the only Tory Government who at least agreed with the idea of building enough homes to supply the need in this country—told local authorities to cut corners so that they could erect as many units as possible. It is also true that the present Government have the audacity—this applies to what the hon. Member for Harrow, West (Mr. Hughes) said—to have between 40 and 50 flats empty for up to nine years in my constituency. Some are Victorian cottages with gardens and four or five bedrooms, but the whole lot is being bulldozed to make way for landscaping and car parking around Wormwood Scrubs prison. That is what we get from the Government who then say, "What about the 2·5 per cent. of empty local authority properties" compared with the 6·9 per cent. of Government properties when their only answer is not to put people into their properties but to bulldoze them and put cars and trees there instead.

Mrs. Gorman: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for giving way. I wanted to talk about bed and breakfast, before the hon. Gentleman left that subject. I was on Westminster city council as vice chairman of housing for four years. I should like to point out to the hon. Gentleman that the increase in bed and breakfast accommodation since 1979 has been affected by two pieces of legislation, the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977 and the extension of housing benefit to the private sector.

I witnessed the enormous increase in the demand for bed and breakfast, ostensibly homelessness, which was directly related to the fact that those two pieces of legislation encouraged some people to make themselves homeless, and others to take on accommodation that was vastly beyond their means because they were under the impression that the council would pay. We were constantly unable to meet their demands, so the bed and breakfast circumstances developed out of those two pieces of legislation.

Mr. Soley: If I were representing the Conservative party on the committee of Westminster city council I would resign. Certainly I would not admit it here, as it is one of the most appalling housing authorities. What it has been doing is quite criminal. Perhaps I should be careful about my words, but its actions are quite unacceptable. When it keeps properties empty in order to try to flog them off, instead of putting in them people who are in bed and breakfast, the hon. Lady has only herself to blame if she finds that she is picking up the bill.

What is so atrocious about that judgment is that until the Government came to power hardly anyone was in bed and breakfast. That is a unique factor of this Government. The hon. Lady is really saying, "Let us get rid of the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act, and then, somehow or other, we will not be able to see the homeless." The fact that Centrepoint has shown in its report that no fewer than half the people who came to it had been in care and therefore have no homes to go back to does not trouble the hon. Lady. She thinks that they can get back into their cardboard boxes and stay there.

The amendments seek to do no more than to limit the damage that the Government are doing through the Bill. Amendment No. 180 ensures that rent setting for shortholds is subject only to clause 20, the assured shorthold tenancy procedure, and not to clause 12 which is the assured tenancy procedure. The assured shorthold procedure is, of course, at the heart of the Government's deregulation programme. It is as near as they can get to saying, "Let us do more of what we did in 1957. Let us go further down that same disastrous road.".

All new landlords have been given a choice. They can let under an assured tenancy at a rent which is negotiated between the landlord and the tenant and which has a slight degree of assurance above a shorthold tenancy—but is still vulnerable on the grounds referred to in the schedules to the Bill—or they can choose a shorthold letting with no security beyond six months but with a right to seek registration of an appropriate rent. The basis of the Government's thinking, as set out in various documents, including the White Paper, is that if they had assured tenancies, they believe that new properties would come flooding on to the market. There is no evidence that that would happen. It is their belief that because those people were letting with less security they should get less rent. But there is nothing to control the rent.

The majority of landlords will not use the assured tenancy. There is no point in doing so. If one is a landlord, it is far more sensible to use the shorthold tenancy and keep renewing it, as one can evict without going to court and without giving any reason after six months and one can charge the same rent. We are trying to limit that ability. The shorthold landlord has an absolute right to repossess; he does not need to give a reason but can evict at the end of six months, or an even shorter period.

Amendment No. 181 makes it necessary to have a rent determined for a shorthold tenancy, and if it is not determined an assured tenancy comes into effect. If the Government are serious about having lower rents for shorthold tenancies, they must accept that if rents are not lower an assured tenancy should result. It is meaningless to expect a tenant in a shorthold tenancy to apply to the rent assessment committee. First, what tenant will do that knowing that, whatever the rent assessment committee decides, the landlord will merely evict him? As soon as he makes that application he will be out. The landlord can do that without any problem.

We are trying to ensure a real difference between tenures. Amendment No. 182 and new clause 24 allow the rent assessment committee to determine a rent at 20 per cent. below the rent of a similar assured tenancy. The rent must also apply to the dwelling and not just to the tenant, because we must remember that the tenant changes. If the landlord was able to charge a lower rent and, as soon as the tenant moved out, to try the same trick again, clearly that would be unacceptable. There are many good landlords who are quite willing to honour the spirit of the law, but Conservative Members must grasp the fact—all the evidence is within the Department of the Environment—that all the evidence of abuse is in the private sector. It is very serious abuse and the Government's own inquiries have demonstrated that.

It is no surprise to find tenants of private landlords queuing up to get into council accommodation and housing associations because they know that they are better and more secure. That is why there is so much demand for those properties, yet, as I have already said,

[Mr. Soley]

the supply is being cut. The amendment also ensures the critical point that determined rents should be eligible for full housing benefit, as the other clever thing that the Government have slipped in is that the tenant will not necessarily be eligible for full housing benefit so that the desperate cases that so many hon. Members on both sides of the House have received recently will continue. Elderly people, handicapped people and others will continue having their housing benefit cut dramatically and eventually having the Government doing an about-turn for a limited period in a limited way so that the rent losses are maximised to £2·50—it can be more than that in certain circumstances—for two years at the most and probably only for one year. I have had a case of a 65-year-old diabetic lady having her housing benefit cut by £10·81 per week, from about £40 a week to about £30 a week. What are people supposed to do at that level of benefit?

That is what makes the Conservative party a basically immoral party. Whatever it does it cannot square the circle that there is something profoundly morally wrong when the Government can find £400 a week to give to millionaires yet they cannot find £10 a week to give to an elderly person who is already dependent on state support. That is what makes them profoundly and morally wrong and that is why they will have considerable difficulty in justifying such an act to the British people.

Amendment No. 183 simply ensures that shorthold tenants retain the right to go to the rent assessment committee and that removal of that right would have to be laid before Parliament. If we consider it a right, it should be protected, as we have learnt from bitter experience that under this Government we have to provide such protection.

Amendment No. 236 applies the wording of clause 24(5) of the Housing (Scotland) Bill. I hope that the Minister will be able to say that it is one example of Scottish legislation which he feels able to accept. It empowers a landlord to insert a rent review clause in a tenancy agreement and state a percentage increase or a specific increase instead of using a vague clause about increases.

Amendment No. 235 is exactly the same as Government amendment No. 44 to the Housing (Scotland) Bill, but I acknowledge, and the Minister probably already has spotted, that that is a fallback position for us. New clauses 14 and 36 extend access to the rent assessment committee to protect low-income tenants in the private sector by placing limits on rents charged by landlords. We do that by granting access to the committee at any time and limiting rents for assured tenancies and assured shorthold tenancies at market levels. Without that, low-income tenants would be denied access to the committee in certain circumstances. Amendments Nos. 184 and 185 are consequential.

So long as the Government cut the supply, the crisis in low-cost rented accommodation will increase, the problems in the south-east will escalate and house price inflation will continue to escalate. The next Labour Government will reintroduce a system in which rents are set independently of the landlord because while there is a shortage of supply there can be no alternative.

I predict that the Conservative Government will learn from the bitter experience of other people's sad cases, as they learnt in 1957, that it is nonsense to apply a simple market mechanism to housing as though it was a can of beans—as a Conservative Member described it—and one could simply go from one supermarket to another if one did not like one's landlord. Housing and land are not in elastic supply. If the Government are busy cutting the supply, the crisis will necessarily worsen. We shall reverse that in due course. Meanwhile, in order to limit the damage, I ask the House to accept our amendment.

7.30 pm

Mr. Waldegrave: The hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) has rehearsed the Labour party's hostility, which is well known, to increasing the supply of housing by getting the market to work and to helping people who need help to purchase in that market. That is the difference between us. We endlessly rehearsed the arguments about 1957, in Committee and elsewhere. It is worth drawing the attention of my hon. Friends to the fact that in 1957 the position was different in many key respects. First, there was no proper housing benefit system and, secondly, the Rent Act 1957 proposed to deregulate existing tenancies. I know that some of my hon. Friends would like to follow that route, but it was not shown to be wise when it was undertaken.

The hon. Gentleman speaks as if the present system has been a success, but it has not. He speaks as if the Rent Acts have driven out bad landlords—the successors to Mr. Rachman—but they have not. We all know that bad landlords still exist and it may well be that the widening gap between fair rents under the Rent Acts and the values of property has provided a doubled and redoubled incentive for bad landlords to get people out. But I hope that we can look with more agreement later to additional powers which will help local authorities to deal with bad landlords. The underlying cause of them is surely that, once a property has a Rent Act tenant in it, it becomes extremely uneconomic for the landlord. That is the consequence and the cause of unacceptable practices.

We cannot and should not attack the vested rights of those with Rent Act tenancies, but we can avoid making this mistake in future. I remind the hon. Gentleman, who is learned in the history of all this, that between the wars when the regime was one where new lets were decontrolled, although rent control existed after 1919 and continued for most other lettings, 1 million houses were built for rent. That met a large part of the need at the time, which was not unlike that which we have lived through. It was a time of major social change, major demands for the mobility of labour and major structural changes in the whole economy. It remains a fact that Britain is almost alone among the economies of western Europe in having no viable private rented sector, and the Government's purpose is to put that right.

We firmly oppose amendment No. 184 on the grounds that we seek to return to a system where the landlord and tenant should be free to make agreements and to vary them by agreement. We also oppose new clauses 24 and 36, which would provide that a rent determined by the rent assessment committee would be the statutory maximum recoverable rent. Again, that lies completely outside our intentions. If the landlord and tenant agree to change the rent, they should be free to do so.

Mr. Boateng: Does the Minister not recognise the point that we have made time and again: that there is no way that one can compare the position of somebody desperate for accommodation with that of somebody going into Tesco or Fine Fare and deciding whether to buy a bunch of bananas? There is a fundamental difference between the two. Someone looking for accommodation is not in a position of equality with someone owning it. It is fundamentally unfair in the midst of the current housing crisis to expect such people to behave as they might in a completely free market. This is not the real world; it is a nightmare world of the Government's creation which they are imposing on the current housing crisis and which will make it even worse.

Mr. Waldegrave: The best world to move towards is that which I think the hon. Member for Hammersmith referred to on Second Reading, when he quoted Mr. Aneurin Bevan as saying that the best form of rent control was three families chasing four lets or nine families chasing 10 lets. If we can increase the supply, that restores the equality which the hon. Member for Brent, South (Mr. Boateng) wants. In many parts, the pressures to which he rightly refers from his experience in London are not present and the market will work well. I am not for a moment saying that the solution to housing pressures in the high pressure areas will be solved by bringing up the private rented sector. It will make some contribution, especially where the market is under less pressure, but we must seek other methods, in ownership, shared ownership and the various forms of subsidised ownership in high-pressure areas. I do not disagree with him on that.

Mr. Battle: The Minister will remember that in Committee there was a particular case before the courts relating to Mr. Hoogstraten and that Members on both sides expressed anxiety about it. We were informed that the Government would examine the transcript because that landlord was cleared of all allegations which we might have thought were appropriate, given his practices. Our point was that the provisions of the Bill would make it even easier for that sort of activity to be undertaken and would not help to curtail it. How, as a result of the Minister's inquiries into that case, can he reassure us that we shall not return to the worst excesses of private landlordism?

Mr. Waldegrave: It is a little difficult to comment on a case when a jury has found a particular accused innocent, and I do not want to misuse the privilege of this House to do so. I invite the hon. Gentleman to read the judge's summing up of that case, as my officials and I have done, because he may be surprised by the outcome. Later we shall return to several measures, some of which will be welcomed by the Labour party, which will help to ensure that those unacceptable practices are made much more difficult.

At present there is no meeting of minds between us over this, but I hope that if over the next few years we can show that the marginalised private rented sector, which exists in many areas, can be strengthened by the arrival of new money, properly managed and providing good rented accommodation, we may find some meeting of minds.

Mr. Bradley: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Waldegrave: I shall give way when I have finished this little section.

I have no doubt that the hon. Member for Hammersmith does not wish to see good accommodation from whatever source which meets housing needs being driven from the market again. He has challenged us to see what will happen, and I accept that challenge. This Bill, with its safeguards, will over the next few years bring forward more rented accommodation, which will benefit not only the most vulnerable people, about whom he is rightly anxious, but mobile workers, managers and others in the modern economy.

We reject these amendments. I will have another look at amendment No. 235, if the hon. Member will not then accuse me of having been disgracefully making policy on the hoof, but the other amendments go to the heart of the Bill and would destroy its whole purpose. We reject them wholeheartedly.

Mr. Bradley: The Minister said that he would give way, so I was assuming that he has sat down to allow me to intervene.

Because of the time element, we have not gone into detail on new clause 14 but, picking up what the Minister said about our thrust in Committee being to try to shift the onus back to give rights and protection to the tenants against the landlord, the purpose of this new clause is to redress that balance and give some rights and security to the tenants. If the Minister believes his position to be correct, that there will be voluntary agreement between landlord and tenant, why will he not accept through new clause 14 access by the tenant to a rent assessment committee? If he is correct, there will be no great demand for access to a rent assessment committee by the tenant because voluntary agreement will have been reached between landlord and tenant. If he is so convinced that that voluntary agreement will be arrived at, surely he should allow the opportunity for that isolated case, in his world, in which the tenant may want to go to a rent assessment committee for protection of his position.

Mr. Waldegrave: It might be convenient if, with the leave of the House, I spoke again later to answer that and other points.

Mr. Simon Hughes: The Minister might care to add to the points that he will deal with the amendments in this group in my name, to which he did not allude in his response.

The Minister says that he believes—I am not sure whether he does believe—in deregulation of the private sector, the principal purpose being to bring back into use currently empty property. The solution to that problem is not in any way to be found in deregulating present privately let property. One of the mischiefs that the amendments that I have tabled seek to deal with in part is the suggestion that more property can be brought back into use by deregulating rents not only in relation to property currently empty but in relation to property that is currently let. Those people who are currently letting property presumably find that they are getting at least an adequate income by doing so; otherwise they would have stopped doing it when they had the opportunity.

If the Government told the House that their principal objective was to get empty properties in the private sector back into use and that they believed that less rent control was necessary in relation to that sector, their argument

[Mr. Simon Hughes]

would be more credible. The Secretary of State, in a press release published, I think, on the day the Bill was published—20 November 1987—said:

"The legislation would allow landlords to charge market rents on all new lettings. This is the key which will help unlock the doors of over 500,000 empty private properties in this country."

If that was the intention then, the Government should hold firm to it and use this part of the Bill only in relation to property at present empty; they should not have a market place free-for-all.

I would argue that the Minister has a case for saying that the present fair rent system works in a very unfair and arbitrary way. Academic studies have shown that it works differently in different parts of the country and that one cannot easily get to the bottom of how it works in any one place. But there is all the difference in the world between keeping some form of licensing or control system and doing away with it altogether, and the Government are proposing here to do away with it altogether.

The amendments that I have tabled, Nos. 321, 322, 323 and 324—I apologise for my cold.

Mr. George Howarth: Send for Dr. Owen.

7.45 pm

Mr. Hughes: I am trying to ignore a malicious suggestion from my right. I might send for a glass of water. It would be slightly more useful at the moment.

Mr. Howarth: This water will be more useful than Dr. Owen.

Mr. Hughes: Thank you very much.

The amendments that I have tabled seek to make the simple case that there should be an ability to go to a rent assessment committee at any time. It is imperative, if people are not to be completely priced out of the market, that the ability to regulate rents, as well as to have acceptable property, is preserved.

I ask the Minister to address these amendments and give an adequate, and I hope positive, reply.

Mr. George Howarth: The Minister peversely touched on the real reasons for this Bill when he said a few moments ago, talking about the inter-war period, that the difficulty has been the effect upon the provision of housing and the mobility of labour. It seems to me that everything about this Bill has to do with providing greater mobility. Certainly according to the utterances of the Secretary of State that has been a key factor in the development of this Bill.

The hon. Member for Billericay (Mrs. Gorman)—who I see has grown bored with this debate and left her seat—started to probe some of these issues. The Government will not create a real housing market, for many of the reasons that my hon. Friend the Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) gave earlier. The whole burden of public policy is working to support owner-occupation and to make it so attractive that, no matter how they change the terms, the advantage of being an owner-occupier will be great. This policy will be working for the people who cannot afford to enter that market. The only way to create the kind of market to which the Minister so frequently refers is by going down the road that the hon. Member for Billericay started to advocate, and the difficulty with that—as the Minister knows—is that so many people would be left outside the market living under cardbox sheets on the embankment that it would be unacceptable to the country as a whole.

That is the kernel of the difficulty that the Minister faces: the Secretary of State wants to go down the market road, but the Minister appears to be trying to modify the worst excesses of that. That is why the Bill is neither fish nor fowl—although it is foul in another sense. It will not achieve what it set out to do, nor will it make the position of existing or future tenants any better. The Bill is a mess and should be taken back.

Mr. Winnick: We are speaking against a background in which less than half a mile from here tonight people will once again be spending their sleeping hours in cardboard boxes. There are many thousands of people in squalid bed-and-breakfast accommodation, not only in London by any means, and the amount of housing misery is worse than for a very long time indeed. Ministers tell us, of course, that they are going to help to resolve the problem by deregulation, making the market more flexible, giving an incentive to landlords to rent, and all the rest of it.

Market rents will undoubtedly mean that many properties will be let at sums far in excess of that which a person would pay if he were able to obtain a mortgage. It is precisely because such people are not in a position to obtain a mortgage or to obtain local authority accommodation that they find themselves in those circumstances. Last November, advertisements appearing in the London *Evening Standard* showed that some properties were available for renting, ranging from £130 to £140 per week. There were a few one and two-bedroom flats available from £30 to £70 per week. Is the Minister telling the House that market rents will be less than that? The likelihood is that they will be more.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) referred to the Rent Act 1957. As I said in an intervention, Ministers made promises at the time that the Act would allow far greater flexibility in the housing market and provide more rented accommodation. That is very much the argument of the hon. Member for Billericay (Mrs. Gorman). I have some figures for the Minister on which he might like to comment. Between April 1951 and June 1956, before the Rent Act, the private rented sector lost 800,000 dwellings, which was an average loss of 160,000 per year. Between June 1957 and December 1961, the private rented sector lost 1·3 million dwellings, which was an average loss of 236,000 dwellings per year. Those figures are from the report of the 1971 Francis committee on the Rent Act.

Those figures illustrate that the last time a Tory Government deregulated, far from providing more rented accommodation, they ensured that a far larger number of rented dwellings were lost. That is why we take the view that the Bill is unlikely to provide more rented accommodation. Once landlords know that there is no ceiling on rents and that market values are to apply, they will charge the utmost. We are told that regulated tenants will be in no danger. However, once the property owner recognises that, when the regulated tenant leaves, the property can be relet at market rents or sold with vacant possession, the incentive will be there for Rachmanism, alsatian dogs, and all that we associate with the Rent Act 1957. This week, the Minister has been publicising the Bill's provisions against eviction and harassment and for

compensation. However, they will not be of much use to a tenant who is on the streets and unable to find accommodation, and who is in no position financially to obtain a mortgage.

That is why I and my hon. Friends believe this Bill to be totally inadequate. It will not in any way help those people whom I described at the beginning of my remarks, living in great misery and under stress in housing which is a disgrace to this country. We should at least provide certain basic safeguards.

When moving the amendment, my hon. Friend the Member for Hammersmith said that one essential safeguard related to shorthold tenants. I take the view, and it will be seen whether I am right or wrong, that most of the new tenancies created under the Bill will be shorthold. They will not be assured tenancies because landlords will take the view that their tenants should have the least amount of security. Why should they give them more protection and security? Tenants should have the opportunity to go before the rent assessment committee. That is an essential safeguard, and one that is far more important than the provisions which the Minister has been publicising this week. For that reason, I hope that my hon. Friend's amendment, and those grouped with it, will have the support of the House.

Mr. Boateng: I can be brief because I have been reflecting on the logic of the Government's proposals in the White Paper and the way in which they have been followed through in the Bill. I did not need to reflect long, because the Bill falls short when it comes to following through the minimal logic contained in the White Paper.

At its heart, the White Paper seemed to be proposing —and we saw in Committee how the Minister departed from this—that a distinction should be made between shorthold tenancies and assured tenancies. The logic of the White Paper, such as it was, envisaged a two-tier scheme, whereby the landlord chose between giving the tenant security of tenure and receiving a market rent or granting only minimal security but accepting a degree of rent control. As Government Members may have realised, the Bill does not achieve that. In practice, it is unlikely that there will be any significant difference between rent levels under the two schemes. What possible reason could a landlord ever have for granting an assured tenancy when he could grant a shorthold tenancy? The magic of the assured shorthold tenancy, from the point of view of the grubby little landlords whom the Government seek to placate with this measure, is that the only thing which is assured and short about it is the shortness of the assurance, so far as concerns the tenant. No sooner is he in than he will be out again, unless he negotiates a higher rent.

We want from the Minister the answers to three questions. They are all simple and it will not take me long to ask them. I hope that the people with notes for the Minister are ready to pass them down, although I see no sign of the hod carrier. First, what in practice will be the difference in rent levels between the two schemes? Will registered rents under the shorthold scheme be an average of 10, 20, or 30 per cent. below market levels? Secondly, why should a landlord choose to let on an assured shorthold tenancy? Thirdly, what incentive or protection will there be for a shorthold tenant to apply for his rent to be registered? In the last four or five minutes of this debate, may we have the Minister's answers to those three simple questions?

Mr. Waldegrave: I will end with the questions put by the hon. Member for Brent, South (Mr. Boateng), although they are not profound. The differences in rent levels will depend on the state of the market in a particular place. The answer to the question why someone should let for assured tenancies is that in many parts of the country, though not in large parts of the hon. Member's constituency where the market is in relative balance, house prices are falling, as the hon. Member for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney) knows. That creates its own problems. In the areas where there is more housing stock than there is demand, people will be looking for tenants. The boot will be on the other foot. I recognise that in the places where supply is constrained, the Bill will not solve all problems. In those places there will probably be little difference between the rent levels in shorthold and assured tenancies.

As for the hon. Member's third question, the answer is set out in the Bill. The rent assessment committee can assess a market rent. That is what it can impose in those conditions.

8 pm

Mr. Boateng: What about the second question? The Minister has moved ingeniously from the first to the third question. The question which he has failed to answer is why should a landlord choose to let an assured tenancy as opposed to a shorthold tenancy? Would the Minister do it?

Mr. Waldegrave: The hon. Member has suffered from a short attack of deafness. I answered that point. There will be plenty of places where the demand will not be of the kind that the hon. Member is used to dealing with in his constituency. There, tenants will be able to shop around. In those cases landlords will be competing to get good tenants. One thing a landlord will be able to offer is an assured tenancy. That is the answer to the hon. Gentleman's question. He should not base his judgment on the whole of the market or on the areas where high pressures mean that the landlord is in a seller's market.

New clauses 36 and 14, which are roughly the same, would both provide a facility for a tenant to apply to the rent assessment committee at any time rather than only in the specified circumstances laid down in clause 12. Obviously this goes to the heart of the principle that the parties should agree the initial rent between themselves for the entire term in the case of a fixed-term tenancy and for the first 12 months in the case of a periodic tenancy. That is why those amendments cannot be accepted.

As regards amendment No. 323, to require that the rent assessment committee's determination of a rent should in all cases be back-dated to the date of application would seem odd and unnecessarily rigid. Whether or not back-dating was justified would depend on the circumstances of the case. It would not seem fair that a landlord should be required to pay back substantial excess rent where the tenant had been responsible for delaying the proceedings. The right course is to leave the matter to the committee's discretion.

These are lesser matters than the matters of major disagreement between us. We agree that it is a major failing of the housing system that there are in the private rented sector about 500,000 empty properties; the hon.

[Mr. Waldegrave]

Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) quoted roughly the right figure. I do not believe that all those are kept off the market through fear of the Rent Acts, although a large proportion may be. All that the Opposition parties have argued is based on the premise that the system which they invented is working. It most patently is not. That is why we seek to reform it. We shall greatly help those who need homes by reforming it.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 168, Noes 218.

Division No. 346] **[8.02 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Buckley, George J.
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Doran, Frank
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Mildred
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Harman, Ms Harriet
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McTaggart, Bob
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Randall, Stuart
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Turner, Dennis
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Frank Cook.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bendall, Vivian
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Emery, Sir Peter
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David

Heddle, John
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knowles, Michael
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lawrence, Ivan
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Maclean, David
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
Major, Rt Hon John
Maples, John
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Needham, Richard
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Sims, Roger
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stokes, John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. Stephen Dorrell.

Question accordingly negatived.

Mr. Waldegrave: I beg to move amendment No. 28, in page 9, line 34, at end insert

'and

(c) if the rent under the tenancy has previously been increased by virtue of a notice under this subsection or a determination under section 13 below, the first anniversary of the date on which the increased rent took effect.'

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take Government amendment No. 29.

Mr. Waldegrave: As the Bill stands, subsection (5) of clause 12 provides that when a landlord has served a notice of increased rent under that clause he is precluded from serving a further notice for at least a year beginning on the date of service of the original notice. Bearing in mind that the actual increase in rent may not take place until some time after the notice has been served—for example, when the tenant made an application to the rent assessment committee and the committee exercised its power to defer the date of increase—the provision as drafted could create a situation in which a tenant is faced with two rent increases taking effect under these provisions in less than 12 months. It is wrong that that could happen.

On reflection, it seems to us that the 12-month limitation should more properly relate to the date of the actual rent increase rather than the date of service of the notice. That is what the two amendments taken together are designed to achieve. The effect will be to ensure that, once a rent increase has taken effect under the procedure in clauses 12 or 13, the tenant cannot be faced with a further increase for at least a year. Of course, the parties could agree between themselves an increase.

I hope that this amendment will be welcomed.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendments made: No. 15, in page 9, line 43, after 'tenant', insert

'by an application in the prescribed form'.

No. 29, in page 10, leave out lines 1 to 4.—*[Mr. Waldegrave.]*

Clause 13

Determination of rent by rent assessment committee

Mr. Grist: I beg to move amendment No. 30, in page 10 line 29, leave out 'an' and insert, 'a relevant'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take Government amendment No. 31.

8.15 pm

Mr. Grist: As drafted, clause 13(2) provides that, in determining the rent under an assured tenancy, the rent assessment committee is to take no account of any increase in value attributable to an improvement carried out in specified circumstances by a person who, at that time, was the tenant.

On reflection, it seems to us that the definition of improvement in this context needs to be drawn somewhat more tightly. It would seem inequitable that, when a tenant carries out improvements to a property and then subsequently surrenders his tenancy, a tenant under a subsequent letting should derive financial benefit from such improvements by virtue of the rent assessment committee being required to disregard them in determining the rent under the later tenancy.

We therefore propose to add to clause 13(2) a broadly similar provision to that in the comparable section of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954. That will have the effect of confining the disregard requirement, either to an improvement carried out during the tenancy to which the notice of rent increase relates, or, alternatively, to an improvement carried out not more than 21 years before the date of service of the notice, provided that at all times since the improvement was carried out the property has been let under an assured tenancy and, on the coming to the end of an assured tenancy at any time during that period, the tenant—or, in the case of joint tenants, at least one of them—did not quit the property.

Amendment agreed to.

[Mr. Grist]

Amendment made: No. 31, in page 10, line 39, at end add—

'( ) For the purposes of subsection (2)(b) above, in relation to a notice which is referred by a tenant as mentioned in subsection (1) above, an improvement is a relevant improvement if either it was carried out during the tenancy to which the notice relates or the following conditions are satisfied, namely—

(a) that it was carried out not more than twenty-one years before the date of service of the notice; and

(b) that, at all times during the period beginning when the improvement was carried out and ending on the date of service of the notice, the dwelling-house has been let under an assured tenancy; and

(c) that, on the coming to an end of an assured tenancy at any time during that period, the tenant (or, in the case of joint tenants, at least one of them) did not quit.'—*[Mr. Grist.]*

Mr. Grist: I beg to move amendment No. 32, in page 10, line 50, at end insert—

'( ) In any case where—

(a) a rent assessment committee have before them at the same time the reference of a notice under section 6(2) above relating to a tenancy (in this subsection referred to as "the section 6 reference") and the reference of a notice under section 12(2) above relating to the same tenancy (in this subsection referred to as "the section 12 reference"), and

(b) the date specified in the notice under section 6(2) above is not later than the first day of the new period specified in the notice under section 12(2) above, and

(c) the committee propose to hear the two references together,

the committee shall make a determination in relation to the section 6 reference before making their determination in relation to the section 12 reference and, accordingly, in such a case the reference in subsection (1)(c) above to the terms of the tenancy to which the notice relates shall be construed as a reference to those terms as varied by virtue of the determination made in relation to the section 6 reference.'

As drafted clause 13(1) provides for the rent assessment committee to determine the rent under an assured tenancy by reference to a notional tenancy, whose terms, other than in respect of the rent, are the same as those of the tenancy under consideration.

This amendment is designed to clarify the procedure to be followed by the rent assessment committee when it has before it a reference under clause 6 relating to the terms of a tenancy and a reference under clause 12 relating to the rent payable under that tenancy. The amendment provides that, when the date specified in the notice served under clause 6 is no later than the first day of the new period specified in the notice served under clause 12, and the rent assessment committee proposes, to consider the two references together, it shall make the determination of terms first and then proceed to determine the rent—as provided for in clause 13(1)—on the basis of the terms as varied by virtue of the determination previously made.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment made: No. 76, in page 11, line 13, at end insert

'or if the tenancy has come to an end'.

Clause 18

ASSURED SHORTHOLD TENANCIES

Mr. Waldegrave: I beg to move amendment No. 33, in page 12, line 38, at beginning insert

'Subject to subsection (2A) below'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss the following: amendment No. 229, in page 12, line 42, at end insert

'and

(c) which falls into one of the following categories—

(i) the tenant was not, immediately before the grant of the assured shorthold tenancy, a secure tenant of the same or substantially the same accommodation, or

(ii) the tenant was not, immediately before the grant of the assured shorthold tenancy, an assured tenant of the same or substantially the same accommodation.'.

Government amendment No. 34.

Mr. Waldegrave: The amendments stem from an interesting and important debate in Committee where the issue was whether there was a case for a provision which would prevent shorthold tenancies from being offered to existing assured tenants or to secure tenants who transferred to private sector landlords under some scheme or another. We acknowledged that the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) raised a legitimate point of interest and we said that we would consider it further.

I want first to consider the position of existing assured tenants. One of the basic principles of the new regime is that, once a tenant has been granted a full assured tenancy, he should have the benefit of long-term security of tenure of a kind broadly comparable to that currently available under the Rent Act 1977. We accept that an unscrupulous landlord might try to undermine that protection for the tenant by persuading him to accept a new tenancy that was designed by virtue of the shorthold procedures as a shorthold. An unwary tenant might agree to such a proposal without realising its full significance and thus forfeit his long-term security.

We believe that it is right to guard against that outcome by providing that a tenancy cannot qualify as a shorthold tenancy where it is granted to someone who was hitherto a full assured tenant and where the landlord immediately beforehand was the same person as the landlord granting the new tenancy. That is the purpose of amendments Nos. 33 and 34.

Amendment No. 229 has the same objective, but is unnecessary. Although I do not want to criticise, because the Government should have more drafting resources at their command, amendment No. 229 is slightly less generous because the shorthold prohibition would be confined to the accommodation currently occupied by the assured tenant. Under the Government's amendment, prohibition would apply to any property where the landlord is the same person.

Amendment No. 229 is unnecessary for an interesting reason. As the law stands, it would be technically impossible for a secure tenant transferring to a private landlord to be granted a legal shorthold tenancy. The landlord taking over public sector housing would not be able to grant legal tenancies to the occupants until the point at which he becomes a landlord—in other words, until he acquires a legal interest in the property. The instant that he becomes the landlord, he will be the landlord of an assured tenancy provided that the relevant conditions have been fulfilled under clause 36. There is a continuum. There is no time at which a shorthold can be inserted deliberately or by mistake.

By virtue of amendment No. 34, once the tenant has become an assured tenant, it would be possible for him to be granted a shorthold tenancy afterwards. There is

protection and I hope that the hon. Member for Hammersmith will believe that we have met the spirit of what he is trying to do.

Mr. Soley: I must confess that this is one of the third categories of commitment from the Minister. He said that he would consider the matter and he has gone further and accepted our proposal. Amendment No. 229 raises questions about the secure tenancy. I understand what the Minister has said. I will think about his comments because this is obviously a more technical matter than I had thought initially. Obviously that precludes returning to this other than in another place. However, I understand what the Minister says.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendments made: No.26, in page 12, line 44, leave out from 'prescribed' to end of line 45.

No. 34, in page 13, line 5, at end insert—

'(2A) Notwithstanding anything in subsection (1) above, where—

(a) immediately before a tenancy (in this subsection referred to as "the new tenancy") is granted, the person to whom it is granted or, as the case may be, at least one of the persons to whom it is granted was a tenant under an assured tenancy which was not a shorthold tenancy, and

(b) the new tenancy is granted by the person who, immediately before the beginning of the tenancy, was the landlord under the assured tenancy referred to in paragraph (a) above.

the new tenancy cannot be an assured shorthold tenancy.' —*[Mr. Waldegrave.]*

Clause 20

Reference of excessive rents to rent assessment committee

Mr. Waldegrave: I beg to move amendment No. 35, in page 14, line 20, leave out 'similar tenancies' and insert 'assured tenancies (whether shorthold or not)'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider Government amendments Nos. 36 and 37.

Mr. Waldegrave: These amendments relate to the basis on which the rent under a shorthold tenancy can be referred to the rent assessment committee and under which the committee can make a determination of rent under that tenancy if it considers it right. The procedure in clause 20 as drafted centres on a comparison between the rent payable under the shorthold tenancy in question and the rent payable under similar tenancies of similar dwelling houses elsewhere in the locality.

The effect would be to require that the rent payable under the shorthold be considered by reference only to rent payable under other shorthold tenancies. That point was argued in the Housing (Scotland) Bill. We have thought more about the matter and have concluded that the procedure is unnecessarily restrictive. It would seem right that, in considering the rent under a shorthold tenancy, the rent assessment committee should have the freedom to look at the evidence of other shortholds and that of the generality of assured tenancies, whether shorthold or not.

That will provide a wider frame of reference against which the shorthold rent can be assessed in particular, bearing in mind that one might expect shorthold rents to emerge at a somewhat lower level in many places than those for full assured tenancies. The new approach would enable the rent assessment committee to reduce the shorthold rent in a case where there was no evidence available in respect of other shortholds, but where it was clear that the rent in question was none the less significantly above the prevailing rent levels for assured tenancies. It would be odd if the rent assessment committee could not do that.

The procedure as amended will of course still require that the comparison be confined to tenancies of similar properties in the locality, but the change will introduce a wider degree of flexibility into the arrangements for reviewing shorthold rents. That can only work to the advantage of the shorthold tenant who has committed himself to paying rent which is clearly unreasonable in market terms. I hope on that basis that the amendment will meet with the approval of the House.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. Grist: I beg to move amendment No. 77, in page 14, line 27, leave out 'or section 13 above'.

This is a simple drafting amendment designed to delete from clause 20(2)(a) the cross-reference to clause 13. That reference is now redundant as a result of new subsection 20(2)(b) which was inserted in Committee.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendments made: No. 36, in page 14, line 36, leave out 'of similar tenancies'.

No. 37, in page 14, line 37, after 'locality', insert 'let on assured tenancies (whether shorthold or not)'.—*[Mr. Waldegrave.]*

Mr. Grist: I beg to move amendment No. 78, in page 15, line 6, at end insert

'and, accordingly, where subsection (4) of that section applies, any reference in subsection (4)(b) above to rent is a reference to rent exclusive of the amount attributable to rates'.

This is a purely technical amendment. Clause 20(5) extends to determinations of rent under clause 20 the provisions in clause 13 regarding the treatment of rates. The amendment simply inserts into clause 20 the necessary consequential reference to rates similar to a reference already included in the corresponding provision in clause 13.

Amendment agreed to.

Schedule 3

Agricultural Worker Conditions

Mr. Waldegrave: I beg to move amendment No. 38, in page 84, line 34 after 'residing', insert 'in the dwelling-house'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss Government amendments Nos. 39 and 71.

Mr. Waldegrave: Again, I hope that there will be no disagreement over this amendment. Schedule 3 describes the conditions that must be fulfilled for a tenancy or licence to qualify as an assured agricultural occupancy. I am not an expert on this because when the Committee discussed these matters I was engaged in the same kind of activity as that engaged in recently by the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley).

The agricultural worker condition may be fulfilled if the property concerned is occupied by the widow or widower of an assured agricultural occupancy on that person's death. Amendment No. 39 provides that a person living with the tenant as husband or wife shall be treated as a

[Mr. Waldegrave]

widow or widower in such a case. It brings the provision into line with changes that we are making elsewhere in the Bill by putting the unmarried partner on the same footing as the legal spouse.

Amendment No. 38 is essentially a drafting amendment to make it clear that, where it is a qualifying family member who may meet the agricultural worker condition, that family member must have been living in the property.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendments made: No. 39, in page 84, line 45 at end insert—

'(5) For the purposes of the preceding provisions of this paragraph a person who, immediately before the previous occupier's death, was living with the previous occupier as his or her wife or husband shall be treated as the widow or widower of the previous occupier.'

No. 71, in page 84, line 50, at end insert 'and'.—*[Mr. Waldegrave.]*

Clause 25

DAMAGES FOR UNLAWFUL EVICTION

Mr. Waldegrave: I beg to move amendment No. 262, in page 16, line 36, leave out

'or any person acting on his behalf'

and insert

'(in this section referred to as "the landlord in default") or any person acting on behalf of the landlord in default'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss Government amendments Nos. 263 to 267, 269, 271 and 273.

Mr. Waldegrave: This important group of amendments deals with strengthened powers to deal with harassment and related matters.

Clauses 25 and 26 provide a new civil right to compensation for a tenant who has been unlawfully evicted by his landlords or the landlord's agent. The compensation is based on the difference in the value of the landlord's interest in the building with and without the tenant. In Committee we undertook to widen those clauses to catch cases in which the eviction was carried out by a superior landlord or someone acting on his behalf. That could happen.

The amendments discharge that undertaking. They will be of particular help in cases where the superior landlord is about to require the reversion of the tenancy and therefore might have a large financial interest in getting the tenant out. The amendments will ensure that in those circumstances the tenant can benefit from any increase in the value of the superior landlord's interest in the building as a result of the eviction.

I hope that the House will forgive me if I say a few words about anti-harassment in general as an introduction to this group of amendments. We must ensure that landlords who harass their tenants do not profit from it. There has been widespread support for the measures in the Bill to strengthen the provisions, and for the new right to civil damages. The amendments will reinforce the provisions to which I have just referred. We intend to introduce amendments to widen the scope of clause 25 and to extend the basis on which damages are assessed under clause 26 to include development value and to widen the new criminal offence of harassment in clause 27. The hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) will probably welcome those amendments, although in some respects he may want us to go further.

8.30 pm

All the amendments strengthen the Bill and I am happy to acknowledge that in part they are due to the constructive criticisms that were made in Committee by both sides, many of them by Opposition Members. It is right that I should acknowledge that my officials have had a great deal of assistance from Shelter, the private tenants rights group, the Association of Tenancy Relations Officers and the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux. They have all made suggestions about how the Bill could be improved and, equally important, how it could be effectively enforced. Enforcement is important. We intend to mount a wide publicity campaign to tell tenants about the new provisions and about their rights generally. We must also discuss with local authorities how these matters can be carried forward.

Some landlords are so negligent in carrying out repairs that their failure to repair could clearly be interpreted as an attempt to drive out the tenant by neglect. In Committee I said that we intended to introduce amendments in another place. They have to be introduced in another place for reasons that I think the hon. Member for Hammersmith understands. They will strengthen local authorities' powers to get repairs done.

Some of the amendments will entail redefining the person who has control of the property in order to counter evasion. We intend also to amend the relevant sections of part XI of the Housing Act 1985 that deal with similar notices served on the owners of houses in multiple occupation in order to counter evasion of those notices by landlords. All the amendments will prove valuable in reinforcing the considerable powers that local authorities already possess.

Local authorities have powers, but tenants also have wide powers. It is not the absence of rights that prevents tenants from enforcing rights concerning repairs; it is often the cost and the fear of going to court. That is why we all welcome the proposals in the report of the Lord Chancellor's review body on civil justice, published on 7 June, for housing action as a low cost, informal method of bringing cases such as repairs to court.

Much of the disreputable activity with which these clauses are designed to deal takes place in houses that are in multiple occupation. Many of the poorest and most vulnerable members of society live in houses in multiple occupation, as our own research has shown. Local authorities have wide powers to deal with the poor conditions that are found in HMOs. They may repair them. They may set up a registration scheme to keep track of HMOs in their areas. They may impose management orders. They may also, where conditions are very bad, impose control orders. There is an environmental health adviser in the Department. He is touring the country and talking to local authorities to find out how these powers work in practice. It is clear that they could be improved in several respects.

My Department will be consulting local authorities and other interested organisations on a series of proposals to which we hope to give effect in the next Housing Bill. I think that I should be legitimately criticised if I introduced at this late stage a series of amendments that related to HMOs.

However, I wanted to address these points because a number of hon. Members, in particular the hon. Member for Cardiff, West (Mr. Morgan), made a number of them in Committee and I did not want him to think that we had forgotten about them. We shall propose a revised definition of an HMO. We shall propose that the management regulations on HMOs that apply basic minimum standards should apply to all HMOs. We shall also make proposals for simplifying and improving the control order procedure. We shall consult local authorities on the means of making the registration scheme more effective.

I have mentioned the control order procedure. Our guidance to local authorities will make it clear that the control order procedure and their compulsory purchase powers can be used in bad cases of harassment. Some local authorities have already successfully used those powers. I hope that the effect of the new provisions will be that there is a reduced need to consider such draconian steps in future, but the powers are there and we shall make sure that local authorities realise fully how many of them can be used.

I hope that the hon. Member for Hammersmith will forgive me for straying outside the scope of the amendments under discussion. I am aware that not all the problems have been tackled by these amendments. That is why I wanted slightly to widen the debate and to let him know that in due course we shall be consulting local authorities on HMO improvements. I hope that they will meet some of the points that he and his hon. Friends raised in Committee.

Mr. Soley: The Minister has conceded some of the points that we made in Committee, for which I am grateful. He has also said that he is willing to take action on houses in multiple occupation. They are an acute cause of concern. We shall await his proposals. However, we fear that the Government have underestimated the problems that a tenant faces in taking legal action. If he is faced with the threat of eviction, that alone is sufficient to make him drop any action that is designed to challenge the landlord. If he is in imminent danger of being evicted and he is successfully evicted and made homeless, the chances of him being able successfully to pursue a court case, however quick and easy that process may be, are minimal. We have to bear in mind the changes that are being made to legal aid. Not all these cases will be dealt with under the civil system that has been recommended by the Lord Chancellor. If one bears in mind the proposed changes to legal aid, some people will be in acute difficulties. All the evidence is that tenants have great difficulty in successfully pursuing actions against landlords. They are often better represented and they have far more money and stability with which to fight their case.

It was pointed out in Committee that it is not sufficient to talk about powers for local authorities. We need to talk about their duties. If a tenant goes to a local authority and says, "I am being harassed," and the local authority says to him, "We are sorry, but we do not have a tenancy relations officer, but you can see the environmental health officer, if you like," the environmental health officer will say to the tenant, "There are only one or two of us; we look into health factors in shops and factories and we do not have time to pursue your case." That tenant will therefore be left without any outside support. It happens in case after case. That is why we should prefer the amendment that is to be introduced in the other place to impose on local authorities a duty rather than just give them a power.

We shall want to look in detail at the amendment that is to be introduced in the other place. I hope that the Minister will take on board some of our anxieties. I hope that he will ensure that local authorities have both the power to act and the resources with which to deliver that action, thereby making it effective for a tenant to go to his local authority. By doing so, he will make life in his rented home very much more difficult than if he had done nothing.

Mr. Squire: A great deal of attention was rightly devoted in Committee to the clauses that deal with tightening up of the action that can be taken against rogue landlords. As my hon. Friend the Minister said, there was concern about this problem on both sides of the Committee. What he has said today will therefore be welcomed both inside and outside the House. Any tightening up that makes it less likely that tenants will be harassed and driven from their rightful home has to be welcomed.

I have been a member of the board of Shelter for six or seven years and I am grateful that my hon. Friend paid tribute to the help that Shelter has given to the Department. He is sufficiently realistic to know that the help that is being given is unlikely to remove all the reservations that Shelter has about the Bill, but I am having fruitful discussions with Shelter about its reservations. It is an important step, welcomed by Shelter and by many other organisations in housing.

The Minister mentioned houses in multiple occupation. In many cases the position is so bad that we would again find common ground across the Chamber if the Government introduced legislation to tackle the very worst at the earliest opportunity as many people live in the most squalid conditions imaginable. I look forward to seeing the detailed proposals that the Government have undertaken to introduce.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment made: No. 263, in page 16, line 40, leave out

'or any person on his behalf'

and insert

'(in this section referred to as "the landlord in default") or any person acting on behalf of the landlord in default'.

Mr. Tony Banks: I beg to move amendment No. 199, in page 16, line 44, leave out from the beginning to 'to' in line 3 on page 17 and insert—

(b) commits any act, or omits to act, or pursues a course of conduct which act, omission or course of conduct is likely to cause the residential occupier of any premises either—

(i) to give up his occupation of the premises or any part thereof, or

(ii) to refrain from exercising any right or pursuing any remedy in respect of the premises or any part thereof,

and such act, omission or course of conduct is likely'

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): With this it will be convenient to take the following: Government amendment No. 295, amendment No. 200, in page 17, line 34, leave out from 'that' to end of line 39 and insert

'the act, omission or course of conduct was the only means by which in all the circumstances he could have secured the health safety and welfare of the residential occupier, or that of

[Mr. Deputy Speaker]

the residential occupier of adjacent premises whilst making the least possible infringement of any part of this section in respect of the residential occupier.'

Government amendments Nos. 296 and 297 and amendment No. 201, in page 17, line 39, at end insert—

'(7A) It should be a defence for such a person to show that the act, omission or course of conduct occurred wholly accidently.

Mr. Banks: As the Minister said, we are dealing with the provisions of the Bill that cover harassment and the illegal eviction of private tenants. Notwithstanding the Minister's remarks and the support given by his hon. Friend the Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire), Labour Members do not believe that the Government amendments match the promises and good intentions stated in Committee. I do not deny that the Minister has many good intentions in that respect; as Tories go, he is quite a decent sort of fellow. That is probably why he is not going to last much longer at the Department of the Environment. I am sure that one of the main reasons for the excessively large gap between the end of the Committee stage and the beginning of the Report stage is that the Minister has been fighting the Secretary of State tooth and nail to try to give some semblance of reality to the promises that he made in Committee. He has undoubtedly won some minor victories. However, whereas the Minister says that the amendments afford private tenants protection against harassment and illegal eviction, we are absolutely convinced that they do not go far enough to realise the assurances that the Minister gave.

The Government are making much of their stated commitment to make war on bad landlords. I congratulate the Minister on his excellent manipulation of the press in his campaign recently. It would seem that his ability to get good publicity rivals only my own. I read in yesterday's edition of *The Guardian*, under the heading "Tenants Rights Strengthened", that the Minister was to give tenants new rights. Members of the press would do well to examine the wording of the legislation, which constitutes the enactment of the Government's promises. Of course, I understand that the average journalist was not at the front of the queue when brains were being handed out but if journalists read the Bill and the Government's amendments carefully they will realise that the Government's promises simply do not ring true. I believe that it will be just as hard to prove harassment and illegal eviction and gain compensation for the victims of those evils after the Bill becomes law as it was before.

8.45 pm

In addition, we should bear in mind the Bill's main thrust. It will decontrol the private rented market so that on new lettings landlords will be able to give short-term security under the new regime. They will be able to make shorthold lettings and charge market rents. When a landlord owns two houses side by side, one with a protected tenancy with a fair rent of, say, £40 a week and one with a new shorthold letting at, say £90 a week, there will be a temptation, although I put it no higher than that, to encourage the protected tenant to leave. Some landlords step well over that boundary of temptation and adopt courses of action deliberately designed to get the protected tenants out so that they can charge higher rents.

Hon. Members should bear in mind that that is exactly what happened in 1957 when the Government decontrolled the market in the Rent Act of that year. Many hon. Members have spoken of accounts of the promises and assurances given when that Bill was approaching the statute book. The 1957 Act did not cause a flood of new private rented accommodation to become available. As we know to our cost, and the Government now admit to their shame, it caused a massive increase in harassment epitomised by that evil person, Rachman.

When I spoke to the Opposition's amendments in Committee I began by quoting ministerial statements that showed, as I thought at the time, an honest intention on Ministers' part to tackle the problems of harassment and illegal eviction. On 12 January the Minister said:

"Bad landlords are in a minority but they form a significant group that must be dealt with."

He went on to say:

"We are agreed on the objective of trying to make life harder for bad landlords".—[*Official Report, Standing Committee G*, 12 January 1988; c. 73-76.]

It would appear that we were in agreement in words only because the undertakings given by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State that she would examine the concerns expressed in our amendments in Committee do not appear to have given rise to any Government amendment that really answers those concerns. I am not surprised that the Parliamentary Under-Secretary has been packed off to Finland. I do not know what she is doing there; perhaps she is studying igloo construction in case there is another winter of discontent. Frankly, our proceedings do not really suffer from the absence of Madam Woodentop. She gave assurances in her hurried attempts to move quickly on to the next brief, to which she stuck rigidly. But perhaps it is rather inelegant to think of the Under-Secretary sticking rigidly to her briefs. She could not understand what was going on. She made promises, hoping that we would then take the heat off and in many cases, in our naivety and gullibility, we believed her, just as we believed the Minister for Housing and Planning. What a lot of trouble that has got us into

Clauses 25 and 26 relate to a new civil claim for damages that arises if certain things happen: it must be a landlord or his agent who acts; the landlord or agent must commit a positive act; that act must interfere with the peace and comfort of the residential occupier; the tenant has to prove that that act was committed with the intention of getting him or her to leave; and finally, as a result of that act, the tenant must actually have left. When all those conditions are proven, a claim for damages arises. As the Minister said, that claim amounts to the difference between the value of the house with tenants and its value with vacant possession. The idea behind that, which Opposition Members fully support, is to confiscate from the landlord the profit from his crime.

We must examine, however, where private tenants' difficulties really lie. I am anxious that the two clauses that create the new claim for damages were frequently used by the Under-Secretary of State as a justification for not tightening the criminal law which we shall be considering under new clause 27. In implying that it would be easy for the tenant to obtain massive amounts of compensation by walking out of his or her accommodation and complaining of some trivial matter, she showed no understanding of harassment and illegal eviction. That is not really surprising, as she comes from Broxbourne. If she came to

the London borough of Newham she would see what harassment and illegal eviction mean to people in areas such as the east end of London. As I said, the hon. Lady showed little understanding of the Bill. She certainly showed no understanding of proceedings in court or of the insurmountable difficulties that many tenants face in trying to get any justice whatever from the courts.

The amendments draw attention to the holes in the clause as drafted. One of the problems that we have identified is addressed in amendment No. 199. In the clause as drafted, the landlord must commit a positive act that interferes with the peace and comfort of the tenant and forces him or her to leave the accommodation. I have come across many examples of harassment in my constituency in which no positive act has been involved but the landlord has nevertheless managed to make life extremely uncomfortable for the tenant. I quoted many examples in Committee drawn from my experience in the London borough of Newham. I intend to give a couple more this evening. I shall give only the first initial of the surname but the cases have all come from our housing officers.

Mrs. O is three months pregnant and lives with her husband and child in two rooms in a house in multiple occupation. There is plenty of evidence that the landlord intends her to leave. He has sent letters telling her to leave. He talks loudly in the hallway to other members of his family saying things such as, "I am not having these people in my house. I will get them out one way or another." There are no positive acts that can be linked to that intention. For example, he insists on the rent being paid in cash and will not give her a rent book. The law as it currently stands obliges landlords to supply rent books only to weekly tenants. That is absurd, as I am sure the Minister would agree. That landlord has ripped off the wallpaper in the hallway, has refused to repair the toilet, which does not flush, has refused to pay the gas bill and, as a result, the gas has been disconnected. Indeed, the gas bill was so high that the local authority refused to use its powers under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 to restore the supply. The electricity bill was not paid but, in that instance, the local authority did step in to ensure that the supply continued. Only last week the tenant received a letter from the Thames water authority threatening to distrain for non-payment of the water rates.

All those elements of the harassment of Mrs. O are omissions rather than acts. As we know, courts are interpreters of the literal word of the law in question. They pay no regard to well-intended verbiage from Ministers in Parliament. We know that judges are not permitted to look at *Hansard* in order to see what was in the minds of Ministers. They would be hard put to find that out as regards the Under-Secretary of State. However, they cannot find out the intentions behind legislation. All they can do is interpret the words of the legislation as it is presented to them.

The first aim of our amendment is to ensure that omissions as well as commissions fall within the remit of the definition of illegal eviction.

Another case in my constituency which did not result in prosecution by the local authority involved a tenant who went into hospital during complications in her pregnancy. While she was away the landlord removed the toilet. When she was to be discharged, the landlord refused to restore the amenities. An omission is not an offence in the criminal law as it stands and, subsequently, no action was taken. The hospital could not allow her to go back into her former accommodation because of the state of it. Therefore, after contacting the local authority the council picked up the client as homeless. The much-maligned local authorities, with all the responsibilities they continually receive from Government, also suffer criticisms and attacks from the Government and journalists.

In the end, it is the local authority that has to pick up the mess created by the social and economic policies of the Government. For example, I noticed that someone was evicted from a property owned by the Prince of Wales. The spokesperson for the Prince of Wales—I am sure that the Prince would not have agreed—said, "It is not our responsibility. Those people were in the accommodation illegally and were squatting." That is now a matter for the local authority and they will be housed as homeless. That is the attitude that even so-called responsible landlords take. One can well imagine the attitude that will be taken by the landlords who will be encouraged by this Bill if it becomes law.

Mr. Winnick: Does my hon. Friend agree that the possibility of harassment along the lines of the cases he has illustrated will become more acute? There are regulated tenants who, quite rightly, have the protection of the law under the Bill. However, once those tenants leave, the property will become deregulated and, as I said earlier, there is every opportunity and every incentive for would-be Rachmans to get the regulated tenants out. Once the accommodation is empty, it can be let at market rents or more or sold off with vacant possession.

Mr. Banks: My hon. Friend knows the Bill well and is an expert on housing. He is absolutely correct. I hope that he will spend some time pointing that out to journalists on *The Guardian*, who seem to be blinded by the Minister's charisma and ability to dress-up the unacceptable in a way that makes them believe that he has gained great victories for the protection of private tenants when he has done nothing of the sort.

I do not wish to confuse hon. Members by referring to the criminal law and civil law together as if the burden of proof in each case was the same. However, the definition of harassment in both has proved to have common problems when it comes to proving cases in court.

Another change proposed by our amendment is that it would include a course of conduct in the list of things that the court may consider, when taken together, to amount to harassment. A case in point occurred in Camden. I have quoted the case before. It involved daily actions of a landlord which wore down the nerves of a middle-aged lady tenant. There were instances where he peered through her windows, stored bicycles in her hallway, complained that she was opening the windows when they should be shut and that they were shut when they should be open. Not one of those incidents would amount to harassment within the definition in clause 25. However, put together they made that tenant's life hell. That is the sort of thing that landlords will get up to. If the Minister is serious about trying to do something about harassment and preventing illegal eviction, he should address his mind to such things. Such things are covered in our amendment.

The second improvement that our amendment brings to clause 25 is that, instead of requiring the tenant to prove that the landlord intended that the tenant should leave, it

[Mr. Banks]

will be sufficient for the tenant to show that the acts or omissions that constitute harassment were likely to cause a residential occupier to leave.

I should mention Government amendment No. 295 which was tabled yesterday. Think about it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We came out of Committee on 15 March and amendments were being tabled yesterday. What was the reason for the delay if it was not to try to blind us with the sheer weight of the amendments and hope that we would allow these things to go through unchallenged?

Mr. Boateng: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Banks: I know what my hon. Friend is going to say but I do not think I will be able to agree with him.

Mr. Boateng: My hon. Friend attributes malice to the Minister. He might do just as well to attribute incompetence to him and those who serve him.

Mr. Banks: I knew that I would disagree with my hon. Friend. I do not think that the Minister is incompetent. He has many incompetent people around him and his boss, the Secretary of State, is a paragon of incompetence. I believe that there is malice in this. Before you were fortunate enough to come into the Chamber, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we had a great deal of discussion about the fact that this Report stage is not a Report stage in the way that we constitutionally understood a Report stage to be. It is a re-run of the Committee stage. We are considering many matters that were not raised in Committee. I do not want to open up that old wound again. I have no doubt we shall return to it later.

Government amendment No. 295, which was tabled so late yesterday, goes some way down the road that we should like to take. I assume that that is why the Minister was locked in some arm-wrestling with the Secretary of State to table it. We know that the Secretary of State considers the Minister to be an unspeakable wet and a weakling who should be moved over as fast as possible. On that score, the Minister has our complete support. We shall stand shoulder to shoulder with him to resist the Secretary of State.

Government amendment No. 295 removes from clause 25 the most difficult test of requiring the tenant to prove that the landlord intended him to leave. It still requires the tenant to show the landlord's state of mind and that the landlord knew or had reasonable cause to believe that his conduct would cause the tenant to leave. I am pleased that the Government have taken this road, and I hope that they will be able to accept the rest of our argument about the amendment.

I want amendment No. 200 to be regarded as drawing attention to the looseness of the drafting of clause 25. The Government have promised much action against bad landlords and have been getting an unfairly favourable press about it. When the Government's promises are analysed in the text of the Bill, they do not amount to much.

9 pm

Clause 25(7) allows the landlord to raise the defence that he had reasonable cause to believe that the tenant had ceased to reside in the premises. Suppose the landlord waits until the tenant goes on holiday and writes a letter saying: "I think that you have left. If you do not respond within seven days, I shall assume that you have abandoned the premises." He might ask the neighbours "Have you seen Mr. and Mrs. Y?" Does he have reasonable cause to believe that they have left? I hope that the Minister will answer that question, because we need to be able to test the strength of the Government's intentions.

If the landlord has reasonable cause to believe that the tenant has left, he can change the locks, store the tenant's belongings and gain possession. This does not seem to be adequate law. We are asking for the defence that the landlord can raise to be restricted, first, to occasions when he can say that his actions were for the health, safety or welfare of the occupants or neighbours, or, secondly, to occasions when he can say that his actions were wholly accidental, as we propose in amendment No. 201.

In Committee, the Under-Secretary expressed concern that the landlord might need to disconnect services to carry out building works. The Under-Secretary had simple faith in the good intentions of all landlords. She thought that when a landlord broke down the door and regained possession he would do so merely as the act of a kind and charitable person to redecorate the house while the tenant was on holiday. I hope that our amendment will address this problem. It clearly states that where works are necessary to safeguard

"the health, safety and welfare" of the occupiers or neighbours, that will be an absolute defence to a claim for compensation.

Government amendments Nos. 296 and 297 also apply to this part of the Bill.

Harassment and illegal evictions are evils that strike at the heart of a tenant's well-being, comfort, health and security. A person cannot possibly concentrate on work, study, family or leisure if he is constantly in fear of losing his home because of unscrupulous speculation by his landlord. There are many bad landlords. We give examples of only one or two of them, such as Rachman. Rachmanism is alive and well and living in the east end and other parts of London. Indeed, he will thrive and prosper because of the Bill,

If the Minister and the Government are sincere in their wish to control unscrupulous landlords, they should recognise the failings of their proposals to deal with them and honour the commitments that the Minister gave time after time in Committee to strengthen the powers of the law to control the activities of such undesirable people. The Bill will give free rein to bad landlords

Mr. Simon Hughes: The case for strong law against bad landlords is overwhelming. It is more overwhelming when the rewards to be gained by them are greater. That is the reality of part 1 of the Bill. It will allow landlords to let at enormous rents and to obtain complete possession for development without the courts having discretion. Unless we have completely sound regulations, they will be able to continue to get away with harassment.

The debate is about one issue—where one draws the line in relation to harassment. Amendment No. 199 effectively makes the test objective. It suggests that we insert into clause 25 words that will enable the court to judge whether the act, omission or course of conduct of the landlord is likely to cause somebody to depart.

By contrast, Government amendment No. 95, which I accept is a slight improvement, leaves the test in the mind and therefore subjective in terms of the landlord. The

court would still have to find that the landlord knew or had reasonable cause to believe that his conduct was likely to be effective harassment of the tenant.

Absentee landlords or those employing agents or a series of people to "look after" their property could still get away with the sort of activity that I hope the whole House would condemn. That will happen if we do not have a much harder objective test. Although I accept and welcome the concession, a harsher and more objective test is still compatible with what the Minister would wish to see.

Some people leave premises not because of one horrendous event. They do not leave because the landlord came in and issued a single overwhelming threat; nor do they leave because of an incident in the middle of the night. Many of them leave as a result of the cumulative effect of the unacceptable behaviour of the landlord or his agents. Our key task is to make sure we give the courts power to say that any interference with what the common law of England calls the quiet enjoyment of tenants is unacceptable and should allow action and criminal proceeding to be taken against the landlord.

Mr. Boateng: One of the great evils of the legislation that we are considering and which we mulled over for many hours in Committee is not only that it fails to address the difficulties and problems in establishing sufficient grounds to secure conviction in the case of alleged harassment, but that it creates an atmosphere and an environment in which there is every incentive in terms of profit for the bad landlord to flourish. My hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) showed that quite clearly in his speech. It is in that context that we must look at the amendment and the evil and the mischief that it seeks to address.

When we do that we talk often about Rachman and hark back to a period in the 1950s and 1960s when that landlord was at the height of his infamy. In doing that we overlook the fact that many modern Rachmans are out and about and doing their work in London—even without the provisions in the Bill. That gives us cause for concern about what they are likely to do if the Bill becomes law. If we are unable effectively to control them at present, how can we control them when they are unleashed with the expectation of the profit that the Bill holds out to them?

No doubt the Minister of State has brought forward his safeguards in all good faith, but they will have very little effect. The constraints that exist in the Bill as it stands will not be sufficient to restrain bad landlords. While not going into areas that have already been examined by a jury, it is right that we should name and expose those who are in the business of exploiting and oppressing their tenants—the modern successors to Rachman.

It is right that I should name in this place the landlord who is by far the worst. He is a man called Hoogstraten, who has terrorised a whole section of our community in London by his actions. In relation to the particular incident that I shall relate to the House, I am indebted to the London Housing Forum for its excellent publication "Speaking Out", which gives a voice to the people of London in exposing men such as Hoogstraten. Ms. H, whose case I shall refer to, is entitled to be heard. We must learn lessons from her experience:

"Ms. H moved to her flat in Edgware Road, Westminster, as a short-term leaseholder only to discover that her head leaseholder was the notorious Hoogstraten.

The dispute between them began when the head leaseholder claimed rights over the garden area which has exclusively been used by the occupiers of Ms. H's present flat for the last 20 years, and is included on the land registry map of her flat".

Mr. Hoogstraten has a henchman named Bradshaw, who

"acquired the flat below Ms. H by harassing an elderly man out of the property, who still continued to pay rent, even until his death, though he was not living there. Harassment to persuade Ms. H to give up her rights to the garden then began."

All they wanted was her garden. They had to harass this woman of 20 years' occupancy to get it. Ms. H says this about Mr. Hoogstraten:

"Hoogstraten pushed me and spat in my face, he then pushed me towards my garden door. He accused me of being a prostitute, a cow and a slut. Mr. Bradshaw then said, 'I am moving down there' and pointed to flat A. He also said, 'when I move in your life won't be worth living'. I was in a state of shock."

Since that initial meeting between Ms. H, Bradshaw and Hoogstraten,

"other threats and incidents occurred. These have included threats of her 'ending up in a wheelchair', being nailed into her flat with 8" nails, with threats of 'cementing her in' to follow. 'Bradshaw was constantly banging on my window and doors and threatening me'. One time Bradshaw started piling furniture up outside her backdoor. Ms. H and a friend tried photographing these events by climbing up on to the roof. Bradshaw spotted them and hurled a massive slab of concrete at them. They turned and ducked but it hurt Mr. W's hand, who was consequently badly injured."

Ms. H further said:

"Ever since I met Mr. Hoogstraten and Mr. Bradshaw, I have been in constant fear of their action. I believe their conduct is designed to make me surrender my right to use the rear garden and even to induce me to leave my flat and live elsewhere. As a result of the actions of these two men I have stayed away from my home, lodging with friends, initially for about 6 weeks, and then returning to the flat for a short time only. In addition since the incidents began my health has suffered and most recently has been worsened because of the stress and fear I have to endure."

I do not believe for one moment that Ms. H is alone in her complaints against Hoogstraten. There will also be complaints against all the mini-Hoogstratens in our metropolis.

Finally, someone from Westminster council went to examine her flat. When he met Bradshaw, what did Bradshaw do? Men such as Bradshaw and Hoogstraten are so arrogant in their activities in our city that Bradshaw spat in the face of the representative of Westminster city council.

Following this particular incident, two years after all this began, Westminster council at last took action. However, it failed properly to draft the charge. As a result of that, it dropped the case. Ms. H says:

"I was completely devastated because if we'd got a conviction you feel like you've got protection, but this is like saying that nothing has happened, so carry on harassing".

That was Ms. H's experience as she told it to the inquiry of the London Housing Forum. It highlights the Hoogstratens and Bradshaws of this world. Something should be done about such people. They should be named in our newspapers. All sorts of things appear in our newspapers, but not often enough the names of the Hoogstratens and Bradshaws. They should be exposed.

9.15 pm

That evidence not only reveals the activities of those people but says something about the need to ensure that local authorities are in a proper position to respond to

[Mr. Boateng]

such evils and that they get their act together, not only in terms of efficiency, but in terms of the way in which such matters are prosecuted and the zeal with which they are prosecuted, and to ensure that they have the resources to do that.

The reality is that, whatever we pass tonight and even if the Bill is amended at this late stage by the Minister of State accepting our amendment as we urge him to do in London and throughout the country, legal departments, tenancy relations departments and the sections of housing departments that deal specifically with the private sector are being cut, cut and cut again. Unless that is stopped, there is no hope of even putting people in the appalling bed-and-breakfast accommodation in which council's are obliged to place them.

The Minister of State has had cause to say good things about my borough and about the way in which it tries to deal with the problem of homelessness. However, in my borough, the section of the council that deals with private sector housing is facing a cut of more than 60 per cent. in its budget and in the resources that are available to the council for dealing with the problems of private tenants. That is the result of the Government's policies relating to local authorities and their resources. The least that the Government can do on behalf of the people who suffer harassment in the private sector is accept our amendment. We would then not only have rhetoric against the Hoogstratens and the Bradshaws of this world; we would have action also.

Mr. Spearing: My hon. Friends the Members for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) and for Brent, South (Mr. Boateng) have provided an incontrovertible case for accepting what is, after all, only a modest change to the provisions whereby acts of omission can be included in the court proceedings.

I want to put to the Minister and the House what I believe to be the bare bones of the situation. They must be spelt out because hon. Members and anybody who has listened to the debate must have been gripped by the examples that have been given by my hon. Friends the Members for Newham, North-West and for Brent, South of the relatively small incentives that exist for landlords to get people out of their accommodation.

Clearly, the purpose behind the Bill is greatly to enlarge the differentials between different types of tenure and, therefore, automatically greatly to increase the incentives to people who may be able to change the tenure of one piece of accommodation with a sitting tenant. Those will be the results if the Bill is enacted. That is the logic of the Bill, which, as we demonstrated in Committee, does not provide or encourage the building of any further accommodation. Therefore, the differentials will increase and the premium on a "void", as I believe it is technically known in the housing world, will be that much greater. If I can use a well-known word to the Government, the return or reward for "enterprise" will be vastly enhanced.

I started to be involved in politics at a constituency level before the Milner Holland report and before the operations of Mr. Rachman and his cohorts were halted. I hope that the Minister will tell us how far the recommendations of that report will be covered by the Bill. The matter may have been discussed in Committee, but unless the findings of the Milner Holland committee are properly covered, and I very much doubt that they were, what is to prevent a return of the terrible things that happened in the late 1950s which were uncovered by that report?

I remind the Government that much of the Rachman operation happened in north Kensington, a place where political questions will be raised and choices made very shortly. It will be a good thing for some people to look at the Milner Holland report and see what was going on then. Will the Minister say whether the new law will cover the recommendations of that report?

I was involved in trying to help people who were being harassed. My hon. Friends have mentioned one or two examples. All sorts of relatively small things can happen. If I were a landlord, I might well be able to tell the tenant that I wanted to inspect the property or come in to see whether I was going to put in some new cupboards. I might go along at 10 o'clock or 11 o'clock at night or send along someone to whom I had given a letter of authority.

There are terrible problems with multi-occupancy. Multi-occupancy may not be quite as common as it once was, but many council houses still in municipal ownership which were bought up quite properly to house the homeless are multi-occupied and if they revert to private ownership, multi-occupancy and the evils that go with it in respect of harassment will return. As my hon. Friend the Member for Brent, South said, when there is multi-occupancy and an interest, all sorts of curious things can happen. Faults can occur in electricity supplies and gas taps and appliances are mysteriously switched on. Dustbins are sometimes overturned.

Some of us could just about cope with that, but the problem is that such landlords go for elderly people, and often elderly women living alone. They were the victims and I fear that they may be again. Cisterns mysteriously and constantly overflow, not always outside down the pipe; water comes down in awkward places at awkward times. I am giving a list of only some of the more obvious things. I do not want to take various ideas too far, but such actions were rife years ago and they still happen in certain places. Those are milder forms of harassment.

Mr. McCartney: In my constituency there is a Rachman landlord called Mr. Morrissey who owns houses in Platt Bridge and Abram. He recently had the electricity cut off to a multi-occupancy housing arrangement. When the residents approached me and the local authority for assistance, and the electricity board was called in to investigate, it was discovered that that Rachman landlord had attached the electricity to the outside street lamp and had been fiddling the electricity board, despite the fact that some tenants had been paying money into a meter in some rooms and other tenants had been paying him cash each week. The local authority stepped in in an emergency. Families and elderly people were without heating and lighting and without any basics because of the Rachmanlike activity of such a landlord. Unless the Government give the amendments active consideration, I suspect that that will continue and increase.

Mr. Spearing: I am afraid that my hon. Friend is right.

My second point is that in east London where the City style of living is moving eastwards, the differential between born and bred Londoners in traditional communities and people who are able to afford higher rents is becoming increasingly acute.

The London Docklands development corporation is producing luxury developments on the opposite side of the road to large council estates. Many people, particularly those in Newham, will not necessarily take up such opportunities, if they get them. The original landlords may be all right, but we do not know to whom they will sell. A filtering mechanism is written into the Bill, but only for the initial landlord. As far as I know, there is nothing for years to come about changes in the ownership of premises which are initially sold to approved persons. The constraints that the Minister thinks he has in the Bill may operate for owner No. 1, but as the property market zooms on, as it might well do, what is to prevent owners Nos. 3 and 4 from being of a different character? No legislation produced by this House or the other place could prevent a decline in standards in that respect.

Where there is a change of living style, the incentive for people to adopt even relatively mild practices grows greater. Accidents happen to cars, dogs appear in the street, people return to find windows broken and even the safety of children is in question. That is the sort of rag-bag private enterprise that we do not wish to see and I am sure that the Minister does not wish to see it either.

In view of the framing of the Bill and the way economics work, the Minister must include much stronger protection in the law, and I do not believe that he is doing so. Therefore, he should accept the Opposition amendment. Unless he does, the protections that he has in mind will not only not do the job now, but will not even move in that direction.

I have been having meetings with constituents about the Bill and at one somebody said, "What will the Government have us do? Camp out in Epping Forest?" Unless we are to have that, we must have the protections because we want to keep our traditional community in east London. Unless those protections are included in the Bill, there will be big trouble indeed.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): I was not a member of the Committee but I should like to say a few words about harassment and the problems facing private tenants.

My constituency has enormous housing stress, high unemployment and, paradoxically, an incredibly rapid increase in land and house prices. We are facing the sort of problem that we thought had gone away in the mid-1970s when protection from eviction, rent controls and protection of private tenants were introduced. Now we have such rapidly increasing house prices that landlords, who previously were relatively happy to let out part or all of their house as bed-sits, realise that they can make an absolute killing by evicting tenants or encouraging them to leave, and selling the property for redevelopment into so-called luxury flats, often of inferior workmanship.

Whatever the Minister may say about the codes of practice, recommendations and advice that he would give to landlords, he is deliberately encouraging a market economy and a property boom in London and the south-east. The victims are private tenants who are forced out of places where they have often lived for many years. If, instead of going straight home in his ministerial car tonight, the Minister stopped by Charing Cross station or crossed the bridge to Waterloo station and asked some of the poor people sleeping in cardboard boxes tonight, which is not a cold night, why they became homeless, he would find that many had had private tenancies which they lost. Because they were single people they were not eligible for rehousing by the appropriate local authority under the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977. They then went to bed and breakfast accommodation or tried to get lodgings of other sorts, and could not afford it. The property boom caught up with them and they were forced out of yet another place. Eventually they ended up homeless, sleeping on the streets, an absolute disgrace to this country and to the Government who put them on to the streets in the first place.

I hope that the Minister will recognise that, unless the tightest and strongest form of protection is given to all private tenants, as long as this property boom lasts they are the people who are vulnerable. It is not the articulate, able people who are able to use the law and get advice who suffer most. As my hon. Friends the Members for Brent, South (Mr. Boateng) and Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) have pointed out, it is often the old, the single and the vulnerable who are eased out by landlords, possibly in breach of existing law and of this law, because local authorities lack the resources to give them the back-up necessary and advice bureaux and law centres are under pressure for lack of funding. These are the people who are the victims of a horrible mixture of public spending cuts that take away the carefully constructed support mechanisms of the past 20 years and encourage a property boom in which such people are discarded, considered worthless and left to sleep on the streets.

The country deserves better of the House than to have those protections taken away. The House owes the people absolute and total protection from the ruthless Rachmans who are at this very moment licking their fingers with glee because they know that once this Bill has gone through, once the Finance Bill has gone through and once the business expansion scheme gravy train has got going they will make a fortune out of the misery of people living in private rented accommodation and soon to become unprotected, many of whom will end up living on the streets. Is that the kind of city and the kind of Government of which the Minister ought to be proud to be a member?

I hope that the House will support the Opposition's amendment and understand that we are serious about protecting the most vulnerable in our society, who at the moment are private sector tenants.

Mr. Waldegrave: No one doubts the sincerity or passion of many Opposition Members in drawing attention to the abuses which exist. It was—perhaps unusually for me—the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) who seemed to put his finger on the problem and in some sense to knock down one of the arguments put forward by some of his hon. Friends, including the hon. Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick), because these abuses are happening now. They are a product of the fact that for those renting accommodation there is no way of getting a return except by selling with vacant possession. That means that the minority of ruthless and wicked landlords follow that route, because they, like other landlords who do not follow that route, value vacant possession above all.

I am not arguing that the change in this Bill in itself makes this position either better or worse. It is the gap between the value of the property if the potentially statutorily protected tenant is not there and a free market that causes either loss if the landlord behaves well, or abuse if the landlord behaves badly. I will not disagree

[Mr. Waldegrave]

about that, but it is not logical to argue that by making it profitable for there to be private rented accommodation at market rents one is making matters worse. In the constituency of the hon. Member for Walsall, North and in the constituency of Newham——

Mr. Winnick *rose——*

Mr. Waldegrave: I think that the hon. Member had quite a good go—or any other area where house prices are moving up quickly these pressures are brought to bear. The only way to deal with them is to try to provide for the people in those areas who need housing within the housing association or council sector at rents that can be afforded. But that need is not met, as his party has shown since Milner Holland, by rent control, because this has produced these problems.

I am not going to be so rash as to refer off the top of my head to all the recommendations of Milner Holland. However, insofar as those recommendations were carried into force in the Labour Government's 1965 Act, we are going further in a number of respects, and that will be welcomed.

Mr. Winnick: It is perfectly true, as the Minister said, that abuses already occur. My hon. Friends the Members for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks), for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) and for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) gave that as one reason for homelessness. However, does the Minister not recognise that he will make the situation worse, and that the incentive for abuse will be even greater? If a property can be re-let at market rent once a regulated tenant leaves, there will be a tremendous incentive for would-be Rachmans.

Mr. Waldegrave: The hon. Member for Walsall, North has missed the point. As his hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North said, that incentive already exists. If anything, that incentive will be diminished because there will be the possibility of obtaining a tenancy at a market rent. Putting aside the impressive speech of the hon. Member for Brent, South (Mr. Boateng), it is important to consider whether the proposed amendments will actually introduce the kind of safeguards that Opposition Members want, make the law work better, and ensure the successful conviction of people who are difficult to convict at present.

In an area where the abuses are so horrible, it is difficult to look coolly at the law and I understand the passion felt by Opposition Members in that respect. However, it is an old saying that hard cases make bad law and so we must coolly consider whether we are making changes which will work. There is a strong case for saying that we have done so.

The hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) laid about him and said that a whole range of people, from *The Guardian* to my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State, did not understand anything about this subject. That is unfair, and it may be that they understand our proposals more clearly than the hon. Gentleman. The difference between the proposals of Opposition Members and our own is not quite so great as the hon. Member for Newham, North-West believes.

The starting point for all of this is the definitions in the Protection from Eviction Act 1977, which refer to

"acts calculated to interfere with the peace or comfort"

and so on, which are the words we have adopted for the Bill. The withdrawal of services, which is a technique to which one hon. Member referred, is specifically mentioned in all three provisions. It is clear to my advisers that courses of actions are included within the meaning of the word "acts" in this context, and could make the person guilty of harassment open to prosecution—there is no question about that.

Clauses 25 and 27 of the Bill use the words

"acts calculated to interfere with",

which clearly includes a course of conduct; the legal advice on that point is perfectly clear.

Turning to amendment No. 199, is it right that a landlord could be liable to damages—which, rightly, could be very large if he were properly convicted—if he did not intend to evict the tenant, did not know that his tenant would leave, and had no reasonable cause to believe that such would happen? Imagine the absurdity of a case where the prosecution could succeed, which would produce injustice the other way. We are no less keen to ensure convictions, but if we produce a law so draconian that it falls into disrepute and must be amended the other way, we shall not have done anything very sensible.

We began by committing ourselves to the scope of clause 25 and the capacity to secure convictions. The concept of intent was put to us but—and we sympathised with this—intent was too difficult to prove. Our amendments in clause 27 to the Protection from Eviction Act 1977 widen the scope to cover acts which the landlord knows, or has reasonable cause to believe, might cause a tenant to leave his home. Those could be just the courses of action and types of conduct to which Opposition Members have referred. That is why, by amendment 295, we are widening the scope of clause 25. I had hoped that Opposition Members would support that amendment because I am advised that it would help considerably to make convictions achievable.

Amendment No. 297 provides an additional defence for a landlord who can be sued for damages under the clause. Although it is unpopular to say so, occasionally the tenant harasses the landlord. Unlike the cases quoted tonight, I have had one or two in my constituency the other way round. We must not inadvertently cause injustice the other way. A landlord may withdraw services for reasons which are outside his control or which are not his fault. We should allow him to have a defence which the clause, as it stands, does not provide.

The changes which we have made will be shown to be important when cases are brought. Under the existing rents legislation we have had the very conditions which have caused some of the appalling cases that Opposition Members have rightly described. Some of the names that have been mentioned are famous. It has been depressing that we have not had enough convictions in the courts to drive those people out of business.

All the advice I have received strengthens my belief that the additional changes we are making will be beneficial. Let us not forget that in the first place we put a huge new power in the Bill—the right for a person to get damages if he can show that he has been evicted. That is an addition to the armoury. The changes will enable major steps to be taken to rid the country of some of the practices about which Opposition Members have rightly complained. I commend the Government amendments to the House.

Mr. Tony Banks: On behalf of the Opposition, I accept the good intentions of the Minister. We did that throughout the Committee stage, but I am afraid that good intentions are not enough. The Minister perhaps does not understand. Perhaps the sort of things that are going on are beyond his experience. The actions committed by landlords that are not caught by the Bill amount to harassment by another name. Far from being the odd dramatic example, the cases that we have quoted are symptomatic of conduct in many parts of the country, particularly in the decaying inner cities and in places where houses are in multiple occupation.

The Minister must understand that we are not trying to take an entrenched position. We are not saying that all landlords must by definition be in the wrong. The Minister knows that we are not comparing equal parties. The average landlord is in an immensely more powerful position than the average tenant. Therefore, the ability of the landlord to harass is inevitably far greater than that of the tenant to make trouble for the landlord. No doubt we could all point to one or two isolated examples of the latter, but we will come to them later.

Once again, good intentions do not necessarily make good legislation unless they are turned into cast-iron guarantees and assurances within the Bill. On this part of the Bill the assurances have not turned into guarantees. Therefore, we will press the amendment to a Division.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 174, Noes 211.

Division No. 347] **[9.43 pm**

AYES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Doran, Frank
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Mildred
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Harman, Ms Harriet
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Turner, Dennis
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Frank Cook.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bendall, Vivian
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry

Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Emery, Sir Peter
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Knowles, Michael
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lawrence, Ivan
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Maclean, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Maples, John
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Needham, Richard
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Sims, Roger
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stokes, John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. Alan Howarth.

Question accordingly negatived.

Amendments made: No. 295, in page 16, line 44, leave out 'with intent' and insert

'knowing or having reasonable cause to believe that the conduct is likely'.

No. 264, in page 17, line 10, after 'landlord', insert 'in default'.

No. 296, in page 17, line 35, after 'believe', insert '(a)'.

No. 297, in page 17, line 39, at end add

'or

(b) that, where the liability would otherwise arise by virtue only of the withdrawal or withholding of services, he had reasonable grounds for withdrawing or witholding the services in question.'.

No. 265, in page 17, line 48, at end insert

'and any superior landlord under whom that person derives title'.—*[Mr. Waldegrave.]*

Clause 26

THE MEASURE OF DAMAGES

Amendments made: No. 266, in page 18, line 11, leave out 'landlord's interest' and insert

'interest of the landlord in default'.

No. 267, in page 18, line 14, leave out 'the landlord's' and insert 'that'.—*[Mr. Waldegrave.]*

Mr. Waldegrave: I beg to move amendment No. 268, in page 18, line 17, leave out 'subsection (1) above' and insert 'this section'.

Mr. Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to discuss Government amendments Nos. 270, 272 and 274.

Mr. Waldegrave: Clause 26 sets out the basis on which the court is to assess damages when a landlord is found unlawfully to have evicted a tenant under clause 25.

As the clause stands, the court has to disregard any value that can be attributed to the potential development of the building. The matter was discussed in Committee, but it has also been discussed outside Parliament. The amendments are designed to allow development value to be taken into account in certain cases. They will increase the compensation that is available.

A common reason why landlords want to evict tenants from houses in multiple occupation is to convert the buildings into flats for sale. There may be large profits to be made, and the amendments should catch that sort of case. They allow any value resulting from works to the building that is within the general development order to be taken into account, as well as any value from changing the use of the building by increasing or reducing the number of residential units in it. I hope that hon. Members will accept that this is further evidence of the Government's determination to ensure that potentially very wicked behaviour does not pay. Although some people have wanted us to go further, some of the pressure groups involved, such as Shelter, have acknowledged that the amendments will be a great help.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendments made: No. 269, in page 18,, line 18 leave out 'landlord's interest' and insert

'interest of the landlord in default'.

No. 270, in page 18, line 20, at end add 'together with its curtilage.'.

No. 271, in page 18, line 23, leave out

'is selling his interest in the building in question'

and insert

'in default is selling his interest'.

No. 272, in page 18, line 27, leave out from first 'any' to end of line 29 and insert

'substantial development of any of the land in which the landlord's interest subsists or to demolish the whole or part of any building on that land.'.

No. 273, in page 18, line 30, leave out

'Subsection (8) of section 25 above'

and insert

'In this section "the landlord in default" has the same meaning as in section 25 above and subsection (8) of that section'.

No. 274, in page 18, leave out lines 34 and 35 and insert—

'(6) The reference in subsection (3)(c) above to substantial development of any of the land in which the landlord's interest subsists is a reference to any development other than—

(a) development for which planning permission is granted by a general development order for the time being in force and which is carried out so as to comply with any condition or limitation subject to which planning permission is so granted; or

(b) a change of use resulting in the building referred to in subsection (2) above or any part of it being used as, or as part of, one or more dwelling-houses;

and in this subsection "general development order" has the same meaning as in section 43(3) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 and other expressions have the same meaning as in that Act.'.—*[Mr. Waldegrave.]*

Clause 27

FURTHER OFFENCE OF HARASSMENT

The following amendment stood upon the Paper Amendment: No. 202, in page 18, line 39 leave out

The landlord for residential occupier or an agent of the landlord'" and insert 'Any person'.

Mr. Waldegrave: In the Government amendment we seek to strengthen the armoury that we have in place to deal with such problems.

It being Ten o'clock, further consideration of the Bill stood adjourned.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered,

That, at this day's sitting, the Housing Bill may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hour.—*[Mr. Ryder.]*

Housing Bill

As amended (in the Standing Committee) again considered.

Mr. Waldegrave: As I was saying, the amendment is an additional weapon in our armoury against bad landlords.

We acknowledge that the number of successful prosecutions under existing crimimal law has been comparatively small. There have been difficulties in getting convictions, and that is why in clause 27 we have introduced a new criminal offence, which involves having to prove not that the landlord intended to evict the tenant but merely that he knew that his actions would cause the tenant to leave or had reasonable cause to believe that they would do so. Government No. 292 extends the new criminal offence to actions by a superior landlord or his agent. It parallels our amendments to clauses 25 and 26 and the Opposition will welcome it.

The Opposition's amendment, amendment No. 202, is too wide because it applies the new offence to any person. We discussed the matter in Committee and we believe that there is a real risk that if we extend clause 27 as the amendment suggests, third parties whose behaviour is alleged by someone else to be anti-social, but which should certainly not be criminal, may be affected. One can imagine these powerful criminal sanctions applying in the difficult disputes between neighbours that we all hear of in our constituencies from time to time. While such disputes are a problem, they should not be dealt with by the criminal law, especially if it carries heavy sanctions such as two years in gaol.

While I understand what lies behind the Opposition's proposals, I fear that if we accepted their amendment we should find disputes between tenants becoming involved with the criminal law in a way that would not be satisfactory. I therefore hope that the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) will acknowledge that our widening of the provision is useful and that to go further would not necessarily be safe.

Mr. Tony Banks: I thought that I would be called first, Mr. Speaker, because amendment No. 202 is our amendment.

Mr. Speaker: I think that it was my mistake; I should have called the hon. Gentleman first. I remind the House that we are also considering Government amendment No. 292.

Mr. Banks: I beg to move amendment No. 202. I am a sort of stand-in Whip for the evening. As you know, Mr. Speaker, I was the Whip on the Bill; some litte problems arose but I am now back in a sort of temporary agency capacity. I realise that the hour is fairly late but these are serious matters which we should address. Ministers and hon. Members should not underestimate the seriousness with which we treat the Bill.

Amendment No. 202 relates to clause 27, which creates a new criminal offence of harassment, which applies if the landlord or his agent performs a positive act that interferes with the peace and comfort of the occupier or withholds services that he or she needs and if the landlord knows, or has reasonable cause to believe, that his conduct is likely to cause the occupier to leave. The novelty of the clause is that it does away with the need for the prosecution to prove intent.

After 10 years' experience of the Protection from Eviction Act 1977, tenants and their advisers are agreed that the most difficult element of that Act which renders it, in most cases, useless is the need for the prosecution to prove that the landlord intended, by his acts, that the tenant should leave. Our amendment contains a much more sensible approach. When the landlord has reasonable cause to believe that the likely consequence of his action will be that the tenant will leave, he will be guilty of an offence.

In clause 27 there is a strange departure from the form of words used in the Protection from Eviction Act 1977. Instead of the wording in section 1 which states:

"Any person . . . shall be guilty of the offence.",

the Bill requires the offence to be committed by the landlord or his agent. That is an unnecessary restriction and we cannot accept that our amendment is an unnecessary extension. When we are trying to deal with the rights of tenants, surely the benefit of doubt should always be given to the tenant. Therefore, we hope that the Minister will accept the amendment.

[Mr. Banks]

I shall give a quick example from the London borough of Newham.

Mr. Waldegrave: I am a little confused about the amendment to which the hon. Gentleman is speaking. Has he accepted my arguments on amendment No. 202? He seems to be speaking to amendment No. 203.

Mr. Banks: I am speaking to amendment No. 202.

I shall give an example from Newham, as ever. A house in multiple occuption in the Barking road was being investigated by the local housing office because the tenants were being charged excessive rents. There were five tenants in the house. The local housing office managed to contact four of them. The two joint tenants on the ground floor had their rent collected by a man called David. They had seen another man with him who they believed to be the owner. The sole tenant on the rear ground floor had seen a man he believed to be the owner, Mr. B. The rent was collected by his agent. The tenant did not know his name. The tenant in the first floor rear room knew that the agent was called David but he had never seen the owner. The tenant on the third floor was let the room by Mr. B who called round to the property with his brother David. As the Minister will appreciate, it was all very confusing.

Investigations carried out at the Land Registry under section 129 of the Land Registration Act 1925 were unhelpful. The register gave the name of the owner as a third unknown person and his address as that of the property itself. When the tenants sought to register their rents they started to have problems. They had no evidence that linked the people they knew with the unknown owner.

Tenants do not have the resources to investigate "agency" arrangements and the Minister must know that. If it is possible to prosecute directly the person who committed the acts of harassment, the evil may be stopped. It seems right that people who persecute tenants should be held responsible for those acts, even if they carry them out because they are paid by the landlord. Therefore, I ask the Minister to accept amendment No. 202.

Mr. Waldegrave: I am sorry that I misunderstood the early part of the hon. Gentleman's comments.

There is a problem. Let us use the common example of noise in which people are constantly making life a misery by playing loud music or making other noise. As amendment No. 202 is drafted, it would not have to be demonstrated that the person making the noise was acting on behalf of the landlord. If there were disputes between neighbours in a building, we would find that the weight of the criminal prosecution, which we are aiming at people acting as agents for the landlord, could be used on a tenant who was harassing another tenant.

I do not want to say that one tenant harassing another in a personal dispute is not a bad thing. However, there are other ways of trying to deal with that. In my constituency I find that disputes between neighbours are some of the most difficult disputes in which to become involved. But surely we do not want to hit one side of such a dispute with powers designed to deal with a landlord who is using harassment to get the tenant out and obtain possession of his property.

I sympathise with the hon. Gentleman's case but the amendment is too wide. We have to be able to demonstrate that the person is acting on behalf of the landlord. Amendment No. 202, as drafted, does not do that.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 27

FURTHER OFFENCE OF HARASSMENT

Mr. Tony Banks: I beg to move amendment No. 203, in page 18, line 41, leave out 'does acts calculated' and insert 'commits any act or omits to act or pursues any course of conduct, which act, omission, or course of conduct is likely.'

Mr. Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to take the following amendments:

No. 204, in page 19, line 5, leave out

'he knows, or has reasonable cause to believe, that'.

No. 205, in page 19, leave out lines 10 to 14, and insert —

'(3B) It shall be a defence for a person charged with an offence under subsection (3A) above—

(a) to prove that the act, omission or course of conduct was the only means by which in all the circumstances he could have secured the health, safety and welfare of the residential occupier, or that of the residential occupier of adjacent premises, whilst making the least possible infringement of any part of this section in respect the residential occupier; or

(b) to show that the act, omission or course of conduct occurred wholly accidentally'.

Mr. Banks: The amendments create a criminal offence of harassment where the landlord knew or had reasonable cause to believe that his actions would lead to the tenant leaving. The amendments are similar to ones that we tabled to clause 25, which creates a new civil claim for damages, so I do not intend to linger on the arguments.

We are now discussing the criminal law, so the prosecution must prove its case beyond all reasonable doubt. We therefore have that safeguard against frivolous prosecutions of trivial matters. We must ensure that we give adequate safeguards to vulnerable tenants against bad landlords.

The Bill is generous to landlords in the extreme. For new lettings, they can charge market rents, and if they let on shorthold agreements they can recover possession any time after the end of the initial period of the tenancy, which can be as little as six months. If landlords abuse the legal procedures whereby they can recover possession of their property with comparative ease, which is what the Bill is about, there can be no excuse for them. Only an irresponsible landlord would ignore the new powers that give him such a free hand in court and choose instead to inhabit the twilight land of winkling tenants out, which we believe will happen under the Bill. One must ask why they feel unable to entertain the scrutiny of the courts in their actions for possession. For example, are they avoiding tax or are they involved in mortgage fraud? There can only be a shady and unpleasant reason why they would not use the legal powers that they have been given with such a generous hand by the Government.

I ask the Minister to give something, however small, to tenants who at present are protected but who inevitably will become the targets of unscrupulous landlords seeking to get them out to let the property on new decontrolled rents, and to the new assured and shorthold tenants, who will have so few rights.

In the amendments we are asking for the bare minimum. Amendment No. 203 asks not only that positive acts should amount to criminal offences but the other methods of harassment that are employed by landlords in my constituency and others. Hon. Members have given such examples, and the Minister openly accepted that they happen because he knew that we had not made them up. My hon. Friend the Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) gave a litany based on his experiences of the east end and the devices that unscrupulous landlords use.

Amendment No. 204 asks the court to deduce that the likely consequences of the landlord's actions would be that the tenant would have to leave. The court would be able to examine the proximity of the events to the result and decide whether there is a causal link between them. I do not think that, as the Under-Secretary said in Committee, we shall have hundreds of poor innocent landlords in the dock as a result of that change. Proper evidence would still have to be presented to the court and the magistrate would have to decide whether the case was proven beyond all reasonable doubt. Evidently, for once, Labour Members have more faith in the court system than the Minister and the Government.

Amendment No. 205 tries to define the reasonable defences that a landlord may raise. We do not wish to penalise a landlord who is making proper arrangements to do repairs. It would be nonsense to do so and we made that clear in Committee and now on Report. I regret that that is the easiest way to harass a tenant but not be caught.

I should be interested to hear what other reasonable courses of conduct the Government suggest a landlord might take and risk committing the offence of harassment. Our amendment reasonably lists the appropriate defences that a landlord might use. It gives a clear signal to landlords that conduct that interferes with the peace and comfort of tenants is not acceptable to Labour Members or, I hope, to the Government.

Mr. Winnick: It is always a pleasure to intervene after a speech by my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) and I know that he always appreciates my interventions—or so he tells me.

10.15 pm

There has been a great deal of publicity and we have already heard in the debate about the Minister's wish to protect tenants and about the legal steps in the Bill. If the Minister is really determind to stamp out the type of Rachmanism about which my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West has just spoken, our amendments would be accepted. I know the views of the Secretary of State and that the amendments are not acceptable to the Government. Perhaps I am wrong but I suspect that the Minister's boss rather than the Minister has vetoed the amendments. The Minister is considered to be something of a wet in such matters and perhaps he would have recognised our genuine concern and accepted that what we are asking for is modest.

I should like to repeat the point that I made earlier. These amendments are necessary for the protection of tenants who will become assured tenants and even more necessary for people who will become shorthold tenants. One of our worries, understandable in view of what occurred under the Tory's 1957 Act, is the present position of regulated tenants. The Minister has dismissed my anxiety and has said that some abuse is occurring now. We recognise that, but tenants who remain regulated when the Bill becomes law will contine to have their rents regulated and they will not be market rents.

Many such tenants, especially in places such as London, will be at great risk from their landlords. That is because the landlords will know that their tenants can be forced out legally and that the houses can be rented out again at market rents. The lettings would automatically be on market rents and on assured tenancies or, more than likely, on shorthold tenancies. That is all the more reason why tenants who will continue to have protection and who have every right to remain in their accommodation should be protected in law. The entire answer to giving such protection would be to leave the situation as it is.

There is no doubt that the Bill will become law. An amendment that will protect the interests of regulated tenants and enable them to remain in their accommodation within the law is certainly welcome. Such an amendment would prevent tenants from ending up in squalid accommodation or in bed-and-breakfast hostels.

Mr. Waldegrave: I strongly disagree with the hon. Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) that the best thing to do and the solution to all the problems is to leave things as they are. As some of his hon. Friends have eloquently explained, the present situation is far from satisfactory.

We looked again at this after a similar discussion in Committee. The amendment proposes an incredibly wide automatic use of the criminal law. A landlord who does not repair a dwelling and thereby causes the tenant to leave would not have to know that the tenant intended to leave. He would find himself committing an offence even if he did not know the outcome of his actions. Amendment No. 205 provides a defence, but it is very narrow and one must remember that we cannot introduce the full panoply of the criminal law without very great care.

It would be quite wrong to introduce a criminal offence that could be proved almost automatically by the omission of something. In many cases the landlord would not have had any intention of committing an offence nor any knowledge of the tenant's reaction. It is not enough just to say that, if he proves that it was accidental, he has a defence. He has to know what would be in the tenant's mind. If he guesses wrong, he finds himself in gaol for a criminal offence. I think that this is too wide.

Mr. Tony Banks: It is not as if the tenant will go to court, and the landlord will automatically be locked up or penalised, simply because the tenant attends. The Minister makes it sound as though it would be a matter of straightforward procedure and that the tenant will prove the point in that way. The whole idea of this going through the courts is that one has to prove a case beyond reasonable doubt. We have some faith in the courts and, therefore, if the case being mounted by the tenant does not stand up, of course the magistrate will not find in favour of the tenant. I do not think it is automatic.

Mr. Waldegrave: With respect, the hon. Gentleman is defining a possible criminal act which in the words of his own amendment would be committed if the person

"acts or omits to act or pursues any course of conduct, which act, omission, or course of conduct is likely"

to have the effect of making the tenant leave.

I agree that the conviction is not automatic, but the commission of the offence is, which is what we must be

[Mr. Waldegrave]

concerned about in the House. It is then up to the police to catch the criminal. The landlord would automatically have committed a criminal offence without having any intention of damaging the tenant. It really is too wide.

There are problems here about not getting the repairs done. I argue that that is not an issue where we should use the criminal law. Rather, we should strengthen, as we are strengthening elsewhere, the capacity of local authorities to make stiffer repair orders and so forth that can be properly designed to deal with that problem.

Amendment negatived.

Amendment made: No. 292, in page 19, line 22, at end insert

'and any superior landlord under whom that person derives title'.—*[Mr. Waldegrave.]*

Clause 28

VARIATION OF SCOPE OF 1977 SS.3 AND 4

Mr. Tony Banks: I beg to move amendment No. 206, in page 19, leave out lines 23 to 26.

Mr. Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss the following amendments: No. 207, in page 19, line 27, leave out 'that section' and insert

'section 3 of the 1977 Act (prohibition of eviction without due process of law)'

No. 208, in page 19, line 30, leave out the words 'other than an excluded licence,'.

No. 209, in page 19, leave out lines 35 to 43.

No. 210, in page 20, line 4, leave out '(other than an excluded licence)'.

No. 211, in page 20, line 9, leave out clause 29.

Government amendment No. 40.

No. 230, in clause 29, page 20, line 17, leave out 'or a member of the owner's family (whether or not in common with other persons.'.

No. 234, in page 20, line 21, leave out 'also at the time it comes to an end' and insert 'at all times since then'.

Government amendment No. 41.

No. 231, in page 20, line 22, leave out 'or a member of his family'.

Government amendments Nos. 42 to 47.

Mr. Banks: These amendments relate to clauses 28 and 29 which change the Rent Act 1977. We have accepted that clauses 25, 26 and 27 and the amendments that the Government have moved tighten the law—but, as we have said, not as much as we would like—against illegal eviction. It seems a depressingly inevitable consequence that the Government could not give something to tenants without, of course, wanting to take something from them at the same time. In clauses 28 and 29, they take the most basic protection from certain tenants and licensees: the right to proper notice and an order from the court when evicting tenants and licensees in certain circumstances.

Those circumstances are, first, if the tenant is sharing certain living accommodation with the landlord or a member of the landlord's family at the beginning and ending of the tenancy; secondly, if the tenancy or licence was granted as a temporary expedient to a person who entered the accommodation as a squatter; thirdly, holiday lets; fourthly, hostels provided by statutory or voluntary bodies; and, fifthly, anyone else whom the Secretary of State names.

We believe that this seriously undermines the protection from arbitrary eviction that tenants are entitled to expect. We are not asking that the landlord should not be able to obtain possession of his property in certain circumstances, only that there should be proper scrutiny of the facts when possession is sought. For example, are the Government really saying that people living in hostels, possibly having been discharged from institutions dealing with drink or drug dependency problems, should be evicted on to the streets without any protection whatsoever from the courts? If the Government's response is to say that they do not expect hostels to evict residents in such a way, what is the point in giving them the power to do so? One does not give powers to certain institutions and agencies without expecting them to use them at some time in the future.

I turn now to the vexed question of holiday lets. I have often thought, Mr. Speaker, about what you could get for a holiday let of your premises when you go away. You are not even listening, Mr. Speaker—*[Interruption.]* Ah, yes, Mr. Speaker, I was saying that holiday lets are the largest category of sham lettings. As we all know, genuine holiday lets do not create security of tenure, but removing the need for a court order makes shams even more attractive to landlords wishing to abuse the system because the court hearing is usually the only point at which the sham can be tested.

I give the Minister of State a good example. Nurses working at the Royal Free hospital in Hampstead were let rooms on holiday let agreements in the street opposite the hospital. At the end of the six months of the let, it was extended by a further six months. After taking advice, the nurses applied for fair rents to be registered on the premises. The landlord then applied to the courts for possession, but the court upheld the nurses' claim that it was a sham and that they had a protected tenancy. That was because they had the ability to go to court and that is why we feel that it is wrong that that ability should be taken away.

Resident landlords of houses in multiple occupation regularly keep a room locked and vacant for, they say, their own use which, if the clauses remain unchanged, will make bogus residency claims harder to disprove as evictions will take place without any court hearings. Obviously, resident landlords who no longer have a reasonable relationship with their tenants will want to obtain possession, but as the tenants do not have full security a possession order could be reasonably and easily obtained. However, in our experience it is more often the landlord who makes petty rules and regulations and generally makes life unpleasant for the tenant rather than the other way round.

I give the Minister another brief example. A student renting a room from a resident landlord in Canterbury was told that she could not have friends to visit or jointly study, that she should not come in after 10 pm or use the bathroom after 9 pm and that she had to vacate the room at weekends if the landlord had any family coming to stay. She was constantly made aware by the landlord that any infringement of those rules or any other disagreement with him would lead to eviction. She was therefore in a state of agitation up to and during her final exams.

The forms of tenure being removed from the law would not be the first choice for those with any real choice in the decisions about their housing. However, such tenures will be the only option for people who, because of age, disability, income or ethnic origin, have no real choice about the accommodation that they occupy. The Minister must know that that is often the case. Such people should not be further penalised by the removal of the vestige of protection that they have at the moment.

The Government are already allowing landlords easier access to courts for possession proceedings, and required notice periods have been reduced. Our amendments do not seek full security for such tenures. We seek only to ensure that the courts are still involved before evictions take place. Excluded tenures would be an incentive to create shams, which are notoriously difficult to prove once the tenant has been evicted. Where possession proceedings are not being brought, the tenant has no easy access to the court to show that a sham is in operation. Tenants would have to predict their landlords' actions and go to court for declarations of protected tenancies, leaving themselves open to harassment and early eviction. Alternatively, they would have to fight their case after they had been evicted, when not only would the facts be difficult to prove, but legal aid would be difficult to obtain.

I am sure that, on reflection, the Minister will accept that it is unreasonable to remove what minimal protection already exists in such specific examples and I am sure that he will now be willing to accept our amendments.

Mr. Waldegrave: As a result of the discussions in Committee we believed that one matter needed amendment. I hope that the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) will welcome that fact, although I do not accept some of his other points. The hon. Gentleman will remember that we undertook in Committee—I know that the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) will remember this—to have another look at the situation where the resident landlord is said to be sharing and the tenant is excluded because he is sharing with a member of the resident landlord's family. That seemed to us to be quite an easy form of abuse. A resident landlord could scatter members of his family round and about. We have dealt with that in amendments Nos. 40 to 47.

Although hon. Members on both sides of the House will approve of the provisions of clause 28 in general, and the strengthening of the Protection from Eviction Act which they represent, we must be careful that as we extend the Bill to cover licences by making the position of licensees far stronger, which we are doing, we do not produce any problems or difficulties. It is inevitable that, if we are to strengthen the position of licensees in general, we have to consider one or two exceptions, and we have done that.

It has been put to me by a number of bodies involved that it would make the management of hostels impossible if hostel authorities had to get a court order to evict a resident who did not want to move. It might even mean that they had to get a court order to move a resident within the hostel.

10.30 pm

Mr. Simon Hughes: I know that the Minister has been approached by the National Federation of Housing Associations about hostels and licences. Does he intend to apply the same approach in the private sector as in the social sector to hostel users and the difficulties involved in such licences?

Mr. Waldegrave: We shall come to another matter regarding hostels, which I had better not quote from memory at this time of night in case I get it wrong. As the hon. Gentleman knows, I have been in touch with the NFHA and have visited some of the hostels in my constituency and talked through some of the problems and tried to meet them. We shall have to make another amendment in another place fully to deal with the question, but we shall come back to it.

We want to encourage resident landlords properly to use their property and to let spare accommodation. We know that they will not do that if it means sharing with someone they cannot easily remove if relations deteriorate. We must all have heard such constituency stories; I certainly have.

Hon. Members accept that in general the resident landlord exclusion is justified and the extension of the provision to cases in which a tenant or licensee shares accommodation with a member of the landlord's or licensor's family was more difficult. We want to cover cases in which the property is sub-divided in such a way that the tenant shares with a family member—say, the landlord's mother—in one part of the house and the landlord lives in another part of the house. We have not quite achieved that and that is why we have tabled amendments.

The hon. Member for Newham, North-West raised the matter of holiday lets. There has been a problem with holiday lets. We strongly argue the converse of the arguments that were put to us by the Opposition. Shorthold and market rents will make the incentive for sham holiday lets disappear, and that abuse will go of its own accord when the Bill is passed. It would be monstrous for someone making a genuine holiday letting to have to get a court order to evict a holidaymaker who outstayed his let. In many parts of the country where holiday letting is a key part of the rural economy that would produce very severe problems.

Mr. Tony Banks: Has the Minister any evidence, any hard statistics, about genuine holiday lets which do not create any security of tenancy ending up with the landlord having to go to court to get the tenant out? Do any statistics show such abuse?

Mr. Waldegrave: I shall check and find out whether there are, but obviously it would be wrong to do anything that would encourage such abuse. More important, the case that the hon. Member for Newham, North-West described would have been answered by shorthold. Presumably the landlord would have let on shorthold and not needed to use the mechanism of a sham holiday-let.

I ask hon. Members to recognise that the widened provisions of the Protection from Eviction Act cannot be sensible if there are no excluded licences and I ask them to reject the Opposition amendments and to accept our amendments which meet the commitment that we made in Committee.

Mr. Tony Banks: We are bitterly disappointed at the Minister's failure to accept a reasonable set of amendments, but on this occasion we shall not press the amendment to a vote.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 29

EXCLUDED TENANCIES AND LICENCES

Amendments made: No. 40, in page 20, line 16, leave out from 'occupier' to 'and' in line 19 and insert

'shares any accommodation with the landlord or licensor'.

No. 41, in page 20, line 22, leave out

'owner or a member of his family'

and insert 'landlord or licensor'.

No. 42, in page 20, line 24, leave out from 'the' to 'formed' in line 25 and insert 'shared accommodation'.

No. 43, in page 20, line 25, at end add—

'(2A) A tenancy or licence is also excluded if—

(a) under its terms the occupier shares any accommodation with a member of the family of the landlord or licensor:

(b) immediately before the tenancy or licence was granted and also at the time it comes to an end, the member of the family of the landlord or licensor occupied as his only or principal home premises of which the whole or part of the shared accommodation formed part; and

(c) immediately before the tenancy or licence was granted and also at the time it comes to an end, the landlord or licensor occupied as his only or principal home premises in the same building as the shared accommodation and that building is not a purpose-built block of flats.

(2B) For the purposes of subsections (2) and (2A) above, an occupier shares accommodation with another person if he has the use of it in common with that person (whether or not also in common with others) and any reference in those subsections to shared accommodation shall be construed accordingly, and if, in relation to any tenancy or licence, there is at any time more than one person who is the landlord or licensor, any reference in those subsections to the landlord or licensor shall be construed as a reference to any one of those persons.'.

No. 44, in page 20, line 26, leave out 'subsection (2)' and insert 'subsections (2) to (2B)'.

No. 45, in page 20, leave out lines 30 to 34.

No. 46, in page 20, line 36, at end insert

'and

(d) "purpose-built block of flats" has the same meaning as in Part III of Schedule 1 to the Housing Act 1988'.

No. 47, in page 20, line 39, leave out '(2)' and insert '(2A)'.—*[Mr. Waldegrave.]*

Clause 30

NOTICE TO QUIT ETC.

Mr. Grist: I beg to move amendment No. 27, in page 21, line 37, leave out 'of premises occupied' and insert 'to occupy premises'.

The new subsection (1A) which clause 30 inserts into section 5 of the Protection from Eviction Act 1977 requires an owner to give four weeks' notice to terminate a periodic licence. This parallels the existing provision in section 5(1) that four weeks' notice must be given to bring a periodic tenancy to an end. This amendment brings subsection (1A) more closely into line with section 5(1) by providing that the dwelling does not have to be occupied for the notice requirement to apply.

Amendment agreed to.

Further consideration of the Bill adjourned.—*[Mr. Kenneth Carlisle.]*

Bill, as amended (in the Standing Committee), to be further considered tomorrow.

Railway Accident (Colwich Junction)

Motion made and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Kenneth Carlisle.]*

10.35 pm

Mr. John Heddle (Mid-Staffordshire): I am most grateful for this opportunity to raise on the Adjournment the subject of the Department of Transport's report on the rail accident which occurred at Colwich junction in the middle of my Mid-Staffordshire constituency on 19 September 1986.

I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Minister for Public Transport for kindly being in the Chamber to reply to this debate, and I say that with the utmost sincerity because he has attended most diligently to the parliamentary questions that I have tabled in the intervening period on this matter. When the Department's inspector's report was published on 31 March 1988 he took the trouble to give me a copy at the same time as it was released to the press. For that I am extremely grateful because the press regionally and locally in Staffordshire and the west midlands paid particularly close attention and interest to the outcome of the report on the crash.

For the record I shall remind the House what occurred. There was a collision on a main railway line running from Euston to Liverpool at 28 minutes past six on Friday 19 September 1986 between the Euston to Manchester express train and a Liverpool to Euston express train in the London midland region of British Rail at a place called Colwich junction. The opening paragraphs of the report state:

"the 17.00 Euston to Manchester Piccadilly express passenger train, electrically hauled and consisting of 13 vehicles"

was

"diverted from the Down Fast line to the Down Slow line some 800 yards from the switch diamonds forming the Junction between the Down Slow-Down Manchester line and the Up Crewe-Euston line and ran past the signal protecting the Junction at Danger, coming to a stand, or nearly so, with the locomotive straddling the switch diamonds of the Junction, 259 yards beyond the signal."

The other train was the 17.20 Liverpool to Euston express passenger train, again electrically hauled, but containing 12 carriages. The report continues:

"It was travelling under clear signals at a speed of 95-100 mile/h on the Up West Coast Main Line closely approaching Colwich Junction when, without time for the driver to apply the brakes, the locomotive of the Manchester train was seen ahead astride the junction."

The two trains collided—obviously, since they were both express trains—with tremendous force. They were derailed, all wheels, and turned over on their sides. The pictures in the national press the following day and on the 9 o'clock news that evening were quite horrendous.

At this point I would like to place on record—it has been done at other times and in other places—the gratitude of my constituents and, I know, of the families involved in the crash with whom I have been in touch to all the emergency services—the ambulance service, the nursing services, the various hospitals in the Mid-Staffordshire health authority and the police. I would like to pay a particular tribute to my constituents in the villages of Colwich, Great Haywood, Little Haywood and Rugeley who took families and others involved in the collision into their homes to provide comfort and temporary accommodation.

Out of 373 passengers on the Manchester train and 500 passengers on the Liverpool train, 75 were injured, and the driver of one of the trains was tragically killed. It was a mercy that only one person was killed.

As I understand it, my hon. Friend instructed the railway inspectorate in the Department of Transport, on 22 September, to launch an inquiry and prepare a report on the events of that evening of 19 September. That report was sent to the Department of Transport on 29 February this year and, as I have reminded the House, published on 31 March. I do not wish to dwell in detail on the report; it is a very technical and, to my inexperienced and unschooled eye—my knowledge of railways, apart from commuting regularly from Euston to Birmingham International, derives from playing with my Hornby Dublo some years ago now—most extensively and comprehensively prepared. I am quite sure that my hon. Friend, who knows much more about these matters, because of his departmental responsibilities, will agree with that. I have learnt a great deal from having read the report thoroughly, but it raises a few disturbing questions regarding the conduct of certain aspects of British Rail's relationship with some of its employees, and other matters, and I felt it right to bring these to the attention of the House and to seek an assurance from my hon. Friend that some lessons will be learnt from this tragedy.

First, I cannot understand why it should have taken 18 months to prepare a report. I have said that it is a report of considerable comprehensiveness and thoroughness, but 18 months strikes me as a very long time, and I will explain why the delay has caused anguish to a number of people closely connected with the collision in a moment. I think it is a long time because, on the first Friday of March of last year, some six months after the Colwich crash, there was an even more horrendous collision—that of the Herald of Free Enterprise in Zeebrugge. The report in that respect, also commissioned by my hon. Friend's Department, was published on 24 July of last year, just four months after the collision. I find it difficult, therefore, to understand why the Colwich junction crash report took 18 months.

When a representative of the regional press, having read on the Order Paper that this Adjournment debate was to be held, made contact with British Rail, I understand that he was told that 18 months was par for the course. Those are the words that have been reported to me. If that is true, I find it a disturbing element of apathy, and I hope that my hon. Friend, if such a collision occurred again and he was in a position to instruct his inspectorate, would ensure that it prepared its report rather more swiftly. I say that because the report entirely exonerates from blame the driver of one of the express trains. I refer to Driver Eric Goode, who, as I have said, tragically died in the crash. He was a constituent not of mine but of the hon. Member for Crewe and Nantwich (Mrs. Dunwoody). She hoped to be present to make a brief intervention this evening, but I have received a note from the Message Board indicating that she has been detained at Heathrow on her way back from a conference in Rome.

I had the privilege of meeting Driver Goode's widow at a memorial service which the BBC's religious affairs department staged in Colwich church three months after the tragedy. She has kept in touch with me ever since. I believe it to be true that very little contact was made by British Rail—and I have raised this point with my hon. Friend in the past—during the passage of the inquiry. If my information is correct, Driver Goode's widow has still not received a copy of the inspector's report.

Because of the publicity attracted by my campaign to persuade the authorities to speed up the inspector's report, by way of tabling written questions in the intervening period, the family of the signalman most directly involved at the particular point in the railway line concerned was also under considerable pressure between the time of the crash and the publication of the inspector's report. The report makes reference to him. He lives in the constituency of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence). That signalman, as with Driver Goode, is totally exonerated from any blame or responsibility for what occurred. However, the clouds of suspicion and guilt which hung over those two families during the period of the report's production must have been unbearable and intolerable. Anything that can be done to expedite inquiries of that nature, as happened in the case of the Zeebrugge disaster, must be to the benefit of those most directly involved.

I turn to the inspector's conclusions. First, the blame for the collision was placed, sadly and tragically, but fairly and squarely, on the shoulders of the driver of the other express train. One can, from a close inspection of the report, glean the information that he broke a number of rules, including having in his cabin a British Rail employee who should not have been allowed there.

I am concerned to be assured that the driver—and I shall not mention his name because that would be inappropriate—if he is still employed by British Rail, should not be driving express trains. I draw a comparison with someone who causes an accident on the M1 or M6, and who may as a result be convicted of driving carelessly, dangerously or recklessly, and banned from driving for a time or even for life. In a case of this nature, where there was clearly a breach of rules—and dare I suggest that there may have been an element of negligence—the public has a right to know whether the person responsible is still entrusted with driving trains, be they goods trains, suburban trains or express trains.

The recommendation of the inspector at paragraph 83 was:

"The reduction in the number of motive power inspectors, as part of the general 'slimming' down of the railway staff, is, in my opinion, a retrograde step which can only lead to less efficient supervision on vital safety matters."

I am not sufficiently technically qualified—indeed, I am not technically qualified at all—to know what a motive power inspector is, but clearly he is of considerable importance in ensuring the safety of the rolling stock. If there has been a general slimming down of such personnel, that must have a bearing on the safety of our rolling stock. I invite my hon. Friend, when he replies, to tell me the present position.

I also wish to draw the attention of the House to paragraph 84 of the inspector's recommendations, which is very disturbing:

"In addition, this accident emphasises the importance of the continual updating of the British Railways Rule Book, together with associated safety documents. I find the fact that Section C Clause 3.1.1. was not amended or expanded from its original issue dealing with Yellow Flashing Aspects on the approaches to diverging junctions in 1977 until after and resulting from this accident in 1986 most disturbing".

To me that means that British Rail's rule book had not been updated for 11 years until these recommendations were published. I hesitate to think what the position might

[Mr. John Heddle]

be today if the Colwich crash had not occurred. I wonder when British Rail would have got round to updating the rule book—presumably every engine driver's working manual. I ask my hon. Friend to obtain assurances, if possible, (a) that the rule book has been updated, and (b) that express train drivers familiarise themselves with it at regular intervals.

The final point which attracts my attention, and one which disturbs me greatly, is contained in paragraph 86:

"A considerable part of this Report has dealt with the braking of train 1H20 immediately prior to the collision. Despite invoking the braking experts of the Director of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering and the Director of Research, also carrying out two sets of speed and braking tests using the coaches actually involved in the collision, or where that was not possible, similar coaches, I am still not completely convinced that the braking after the emergency brake application by"—

the driver who was subsequently found to be guilty—

"was as effective as one would have expected. Considerable attention has been paid to the effect of the operation of wheel slide prevention equipment on MkIII coaches and, while I accept that the Lucas Girling equipment, as fitted to the coaches on train 1H20, has not been found to suffer from spurious cyclic activity, I accept the evidence of Senior Technician Morgan that he heard considerable wheel slide prevention activity as the MkIII coaches passed Colwich Signal Box."

The fact that the inspector was not completely convinced that the braking after the emergency brake application by the driver was as effective as it might have been leads me to suggest to my hon. Friend that members of the travelling public have a right to be assured that all possible attention is paid to these braking systems, however sophisticated they may be, to ensure that if such a crash ever occurred again it would not draw the sort of adverse comment that I have just quoted.

I raise these points and invite my hon. Friend's comments simply to ensure that we as Members of Parliament can scrutinise as far as possible the activities and the management of British Rail and other nationalised bodies. If I had written to the chairman of British Rail or to the person specifically responsible for the inquiry, I would probably not have got as full, frank and direct a reply as I shall get from my hon. Friend the Minister. I am most grateful for the opportunity to raise the issue.

10.54 pm

The Minister for Public Transport (Mr. David Mitchell): My hon. Friend will be aware that the functions of the railway inspectorate of the Department of Transport involve the inspection and approval of new railway works and the investigation of railway accidents.

Of course, principal responsibility for railway safety rests with the railway operators themselves. The British Railways Board has a duty under section 3(1) of the Transport Act 1962 to have due regard to efficiency, economy and safety of operation, and it is always conscious of that.

My hon. Friend will also know that the inquiry into the Colwich collision was held under section 7 of the Regulation of Railways Act 1871. Any recommendations made by the inspector in his report are not statutorily binding, and thus British Rail is not forced to adopt them. It is an accepted practice, however, that the British Railways Board gives due consideration to the report as a whole, and to the recommendations in particular. The member of the board responsible for safety, David Rayner, will reply to the Secretary of State in due course —it normally takes two or three months—commenting on the report and the action that the board proposes to take on the recommendations. I say that because my hon. Friend may find the context helpful.

My hon. Friend has referred to the cause of the accident. I confirm that the immediate cause of the collision was that the driver of the Euston-Manchester train passed the signal protecting Colwich junction at danger and, despite making an emergency application of the brakes shortly before reaching the signal, failed to bring the train to a halt until the locomotive was on the actual junction.

The reason for the driver passing the signal at danger was his ignorance of the meaning of the flashing yellow aspects and the associated signals approaching Colwich junction. It was the first time he had driven over the route since the signalling had been altered and flashing yellow aspects introduced on the approach to the cross-over from the down fast to the down slow line on the approach to the junction. The driver had received and signed for two weekly notices the month before the accident which gave details of the signalling alterations, but he had not read them. Had he studied them, there is little doubt that he would not have mistaken the meaning of the signals and would have braked so that he came to a halt before the signal protecting the junction.

I shall deal separately with braking, a possible contributory cause to the accident.

I join my hon. Friend in congratulating the emergency services on the efficiency with which they evacuated those involved. In particular, I praise the exemplary action of Signalman Millward, who was on duty in the Colwich signal box. He was completely unable to prevent the accident, but, immediately it occurred, he took all the necessary steps to stop all approaching trains and alert the emergency services. I understand that he subsequently found it a strain to work in that signal box and that he has been moved to another signal box in the area where he is more settled.

As my inspector has stated, the death of Driver Goode, the driver of the Liverpool-Euston train, was particularly tragic, as he had no chance to protect himself. I am sorry also to learn that his widow has recently died. Although it was in no way his duty, throughout his inquiry, my inspector kept in touch with Mrs. Goode and her son Stewart, the latter expressing gratitude on behalf of his mother for the sympathetic attitude shown to the family. I am also assured that the regional operations manager of London midland region personally visited Mrs. Goode after the accident and ensured that the welfare department was providing all the necessary help. I hope that my hon. Friend will be glad to receive that assurance.

My hon. Friend mentioned the delay in publishing the report. He questioned the 18-month time scale and asked whether it was par for the course. The answer is no. The normal time scale is about half that. My hon. Friend has asked me several questions about that matter.

I should explain that the delay in completing the report was due to the extensive technical investigations that had to be carried out. The responsibility for delaying the publication of the report until the technical investigation had been completed lies with the inspector who held the inquiry. I believe that he acted correctly in trying to determine by all means possible why the brakes appeared

not to operate as efficiently as usual when the driver made an emergency brake application. These investigations included carrying out a number of speed-brake tests with trains as similar as possible to the Euston-Manchester express involved in the accident. When those tests proved inconclusive, he arranged for a special working party of the directorate of mechanical and electrical engineering and the research directorate, British Railways Board, to carry out further investigations in depth into the braking of the train and the possible effect of the malfunctioning or the excessive operation of the wheel slide prevention equipment fitted to the Mark III coaches—in layman's terms, a device to prevent skidding. The inspector was closely associated with those investigations and it was only at the end of last year that he accepted that no definite results could be obtained to explain the apparent poor braking of the Manchester express. He then produced his report as rapidly as possible.

My hon. Friend raised a number of other specific points, particularly with regard to the question of the position of the driver of the train who was at fault. I am sure that my hon. Friend is aware that any disciplinary action taken by British Railways concerning its staff is a matter entirely for the railway management, and it would be quite wrong for me to comment on the action taken over the driver of the Euston-Manchester train. I understand, however, that the driver, after a long period of sickness, has now been reinstated as a driver, but is now confined to shunting and other local duties.

My hon. Friend also raised the question of the motive power inspectors. I noticed that the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) nodded knowingly at that point because he thought that that was a sign that the Government have been cutting corners. I shall show the hon. Gentleman and my hon. Friend that there is no truth in such an assertion. The report emphasises the importance of motive power inspectors who travel in the cab to check the correct handling of locomotives by drivers and their knowledge of the "road" generally, and signalling in particular.

I understand that there are difficulties in computing the number of motive power inspectors who carry out this function because some of them also instruct drivers. I now understand that the number of inspectors involved has in fact remained much the same for several years, but because the number of drivers has declined the number of inspectors in relation to the number of drivers has actually increased, and the standard of supervision has improved. I am sure that the House will be glad to have that information and correction to the inspector's report.

My hon. Friend also referred to the updating of the rule book. He drew attention to the inspector's remarks about the importance of continual updating of the British Railways rule book and his recommendation that more attention should be paid to updating rules and other relevant safety documents.

As the report states, the rule dealing with the use and meaning of signal aspects, including flashing yellow ones, was altered on 4 April 1987, clarifying the meaning of main aspects. Since then, the board has issued a complete revision of the rule book which came into effect on 4 June 1988. That too clarifies the meaning of signalling aspects, and I am sure the board will heed my inspector's recommendation and pay special attention to keeping the rules up to date.

I refer finally to braking. Somewhat against the clock I must state that, despite extensive investigations into the braking of the Euston-Manchester train, including two sets of speed and braking tests carried out with the coaches actually involved, the inspector has not been completely convinced of the reason why braking after the emergency brake application was not as effective as it was expected to be.

The full emergency application of the brakes is likely to introduce wheel slide even on dry rails, particularly if adhesion is reduced by any contaminant. That would activate the wheel slide prevention equipment where fitted. Therefore, there must be some reason to believe that it was not mechanical failure that caused the wheel slide mechanism to operate and therefore to slow the effectiveness of the emergency application of brakes. We can never know for certain, but possibly there was some matter on the surface of the track that acted as a lubricant and therefore led to skidding. The reaction of the mechanism, perfectly properly, tried to prevent that skidding from continuing. That led the inspector to recommend that, in the full emergency application of brakes, all brakes should be fully applied even if wheel slide occurs and wheel flats are made on the wheels. The inspector recommends the fitting of equipment to eliminate automatically the operation of the wheel slide prevention equipment in the event of an emergency brake application being made.

That is a somewhat technical explanation. I hope that my hon. Friend will find it helpful. I am grateful to him for raising the matter this evening and giving me the opportunity to explain to him and to the House the background to the four key matters that he raised that arise from the report.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at five minutes past Eleven o'clock.

House of Commons

Friday 10 June 1988

The House met at half-past Nine o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Women's Health

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Peter Lloyd.]*

9.36 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mrs. Edwina Currie): This is, I believe, the first debate on women's health called in Government time for a long while, and I believe that it shows how far we have come on this important topic. In a moment I shall outline some of the major improvements that we have seen in the last year or so, and some aspects on which I want to take matters forward.

Women have been receiving advice on their health and welfare for a long time. Here is the columnist of *Home Companion* magazine of 12 November 1898, writing in answer to two correspondents:

"In your trouble, 'AM', you have my sympathy, and though I can hardly tell you how to become as thin and wan as a willow, I can at least tell you how you can reduce your form to graceful proportions. Take plenty of vigorous exercise and I advise you especially to try bicycling . . . And here comes 'Dorothy' who wants to know how she can grow stout. Laugh, and grow fat, 'Dorothy'. A good laugh promotes digestion and tends to lengthen life."

All good advice!

Modern problems have also been around for a long time. This is "Meg", writing to *Woman's Weekly* in June 1918—the date is significant:

"I should very much like to have your opinion on the modern woman's craze for smoking. One hears so much for and against the habit. A few years ago when I was in Paris, I asked a Frenchman if he admired a woman who smoked. He replied: 'Well, I should not like my wife to smoke, and would not allow her to.'"

The answer would not satisfy us today:

"I don't approve of men taking this kind of tone, as if their wives were small children; but at the same time, I think Meg's words are worth attention from another point of view. Tobacco is getting very short and we are told it will have to be rationed. Think of what that will mean to our soldiers and sailors. Girls, every packet of cigarettes you buy to smoke yourselves leaves a packet less for our fighting men!"

But yesterday's agony aunts had a different attitude on other subjects. Here is one letter, coyly signed "Wavelet", on the problems of cycling, in *Home Chat* magazine of April 1897:

"On a recent cycle ride, I was overtaken by another cyclist who told me one of my tyres was soft, and offered to blow it up for me. I accepted his offer. Since then, when we meet, he bows. Yesterday, I had a note asking me to take a ride with him on Sunday week. He appears to be a gentleman, but I don't know what to do with regard to this request."

The answer was very firm:

"Give the letter to your parents, who will no doubt so deal with it that this very impertinent young man will not take such a liberty again."

The obvious question to ask is why women's health? Why not health in general? Is it not somewhat artificial to separate out "women's health", along with "women's issues", "women's rights" and other, as *Private Eye* would put it, "loony feminist nonsense"? I am no feminist. When I was asked to take on responsibility for women's health in 1986 I wondered whether, apart from maternity, there were indeed any separate issues. There are two answers: we should look at women's health because it is completely different from men's health at almost every stage in our lives, and because many aspects of women's health and women's role in the health of their families have perhaps received far less attention in the past then they merited, not just from men but also from the women.

The differences start from the first day. More boy babies are born, but relatively more girls survive: we do not know why. Women outnumber men in every age group after middle age and the imbalance slowly increases throughout later life, until women form two thirds of the age group above 75. Thus, illnesses that increase with age affect far more women than men, and women account for the majority of in-patients in the National Health Service—that does not apply to acute care only. Women outnumber men in most age groups in diagnoses of mental illness in England; for every three men admitted to NHS mental illness hospitals and units in 1986 there were four women. Even if elderly people—75 and above—are excluded, the ratio is two men to three women. In fact, admission rates for women outnumber those for men in most of the main diagnostic groups in mental illness. The main exceptions are schizophrenia, and drug and alcohol-related mental illness—although for the latter two, women are beginning to catch up.

Women's health is different. Women tend to suffer from different ailments, and not just the obvious ones associated with reproduction. Among the preventable diseases, our main killer in this country is heart disease. It is mostly men, however, who die of heart disease. Women in middle age are on the whole far less affected than men by diseases of the cardiovascular system, unless, of course they are foolish enough to be smoking while on the pill, when their risk of a heart attack rises 10 times. In middle age, women are more likely to be victims of cancer, particularly breast cancer. It follows therefore, that health campaigns for women that may help to improve their chances of reaching a healthy and happy old age are significantly different from those for men.

Let us consider some issues of concern to women. The major killer of women before their time in the United Kingdom is breast cancer. About 250,000 women every year in the United Kingdom get a breast lump—90 per cent. are benign but 24,000 are cancer and 15,000 women die each year from this disease. That is more than seven times as many as from cervical cancer, which is probably the better known disease. The survival rate is improving. Sixty four per cent.—nearly two thirds—survive longer than five years now following first diagnosis of breast cancer, and there should be a real improvement in survival in the next decade. Although much research is under way, there is no clear causal link between breast cancer and environment or lifestyle. Therefore, apart from women with a family history of the disease, who can be warned to be especially vigilant, there is as yet no good advice we can give women on how to avoid it. That is one reason why we have developed the breast cancer screening programme. If we cannot avoid the disease—primary prevention—then the next best is to find it as early as possible and treat it while still curable—secondary prevention.

Many hon. Members will know that the NHS is setting up a national breast cancer screening service over the three years to 1990. The programme traces its origins to a working group that was set up in July 1985 on behalf of United Kingdom Health Ministers. The group was chaired by Professor Sir Patrick Forrest from Edinburgh. In February 1987, the then Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Member for Sutton Coldfield (Mr. Fowler), announced the Government's acceptance of the proposals in the Forrest group's report.

The Forrest report concluded that screening women aged 50 to 64 by mammography every three years should eventually reduce the deaths from breast cancer by at least one third. That is several thousand women. The NHS breast cancer screening service will do what he recommended, and provide a computerised call and recall system to screen women in the age group 50 to 64 by mammography with screening for women of 65 and over if requested.

We are often asked, why not younger women? As a younger woman I assure the House that, if there was any evidence that screening would help, that would have been taken into account, but there is insufficient evidence to show that mass screening for younger women is effective in significantly reducing mortality, and more research is under way. Younger women at special risk—for example if there is a family history of breast cancer—may be offered mammography if referred by their general practitioner. Hon. Members may already know that 88 per cent. of all deaths from this cancer occur in the over-50s and its incidence in young women is far less common.

I am glad to report that the programme is making excellent progress. Each of the 14 English regional health authorities was asked to set up its first screening centre by the end of March 1988. In fact, 17 centres have now been set up—of which four will provide training for staff from the whole programme—and nearly all have now started screening. This afternoon, I shall be visiting the London training centre at King's college hospital and the first inner London screening unit at Camberwell.

By 1990, we expect to have about 100 centres nationwide, each covering a population of about half a million people. Mobile caravans will be used for screening in some areas. We hope to announce all the details about the remaining centres before the recess. The programme must be developed relatively slowly because of the need to train staff and to provide back-up facilities for diagnosis, treatment, counselling and after-care. The initial response has been excellent—in some places over 80 per cent. of the first women responded to their screening invitation. That is very encouraging.

Between 1987-88, the last financial year, and 1989-90, on current plans, nearly £55 million will have been provided to set up and run the screening centres including staff training, development of computer software, health education and counselling and support for patients. A service on the same lines is being developed in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This will be the first nationwide comprehensive breast cancer screening service in the world. We are well ahead of all our partners in the European Community and there are no comparable programmes in nations such as the United States, which spends far more on health than we do. Our system will save many lives and we should be proud of what we are doing and aware of the massive investment which demonstrates the Government's commitment.

We have taken a similar approach to cervical cancer. It is far less common than breast cancer, with about one seventh the number of deaths per year. In 1986, 2,004 women died of cervical cancer in England and Wales. It has been linked in research to smoking and to the number of sexual partners. The significant factor, however, is that this cancer has a relatively long detectable pre-cancerous stage, during which the condition is 100 per cent. curable. Cervical cancer was one of the first cancers for which that was true. We believe that the cancer screening programme that we are implementing should save most of those 2,004 lives. All district health authorities in England have implemented computerised call and recall systems. That has been an enormous task. It has meant providing 750 visual display unit terminals; making an investment of £10 million in information technology and computerising 35 million records. The result of that may mean that we shall have a completely computerised system to assist us in all sorts of preventable screening work in future, which, of course, will also cover men.

As a result of the effort, all DHAs are now able to call women who have never been screened before, as well as recalling women who have previously had smear tests; and within five years the system will have invited all women in the age range 20 to 64 who are registered with a GP—all those we can reach, which is around 13 million women. Programmes for cervical cancer screening on similar lines are being implemented in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

A mass screening programme of a kind has existed since 1966. Its value is shown in the fact that deaths from cervical cancer have fallen by 14 per cent. in the 10 years to 1986, the year for which we have the latest figures. Without the existing system, we believe that deaths would have been much higher and could have risen. The efforts of the Government will ensure much more systematic screening and this should further increase the effectiveness of the services against cancer. Again, Britain is well ahead of the rest of the European Community on this programme and—apart from Scandinavia—is the first major country in the world to implement such a nationwide programme.

We should not underestimate the huge scale of the effort required to detect cervical cancer. Last year, about 4 million smears were done. Many of these were repeats or were done outside the screening programme. About 150,000 were abnormal, but again many were repeats. Most of the abnormal ones showed up non-cancerous infections of varying degrees of severity. Therefore, we are picking up many gynaecological conditions through this system. About 4,000 new cases of cervical cancer are reported each year, many of which do not come through the screening service at all. As I have said there are about 2,000 deaths each year, mostly among older women. It follows that the incidence of this cancer is tiny—a handful of cases in each district health authority each year.

It is important that health care professionals, especially doctors, are aware of these data so that they can reassure women with abnormal smears that the odds are that the condition is not cancer, and whatever it is, it is likely to be treatable. This programme is intended not to alarm people: but to reassure them.

There is one point to make about all our cancer screening programmes. All this money and effort will be wasted if we women do not use the systems properly. There is no need to approach one's doctor or hospital for a test

[Mrs. Edwina Currie]

unless there are symptoms. Everyone will be called in time, and we hope that everyone will respond. If there are symptoms—a breast lump, or a discharge, or anything unusual—the woman should see her doctor at once. She does not need to wait.

Incidentally, it is up to us as patients to ensure that the computer knows where to find us. Now that we have computerised every register in Britain, we are coming up against the problem that some of the registers are inaccurate to an unacceptable degree. If we move house, we should ensure that, along with the post office and the gas board, the doctor knows our new address. In these ways we will have a cost-effective and confident service and save lives.

I should like to deal with one or two matters on the cervical cancer programme about which women have written to me. I have no doubt that the hon. Ladies in the House will raise these points, so perhaps I can take the opportunity now to deal with them. Many women want to know why we do not reduce the recommended time interval between smear tests from five years to three years. The guidance that we issued in January says:

"recall should be at least every five years".

Most deaths occur in women who have never had a smear test. We know that a five-year screening programme can reduce deaths among women screened by an estimated 84 per cent.

For this reason, we believe that increasing the proportion of women being screened at all should take precedence over increasing the frequency of screening. In terms of saving lives, we are trying to get from a very low figure to 84 per cent.—and we are not there yet. That accords with advice given to us by Professor Jocelyn Chamberlain and her team at the DHSS cancer screening evaluation unit, which is based at the Royal Marsden hospital in Sutton.

We are not pressing health authorities to recall women more frequently than at five-year intervals, but we will not hinder them from doing so. I know that some district health authorities have decided to recall after three years. Before DHAs move from five-year screening to three-year screening I would expect them to have satisfied themselves on two points. First, they should be getting a high response from the women in the eligible age range, but particularly from older women who have never been screened before. Secondly, they should be able to run the system smoothly without laboratory backlogs or delays in diagnosis and treatment. We monitor laboratory backlogs very closely.

I see that my hon. Friend the Member for Winchester (Mr. Browne) is in the Chamber, and no doubt he will tell us about one or two laboratory backlogs in his area. As I say, we monitor the backlogs very closely and have been pressing districts to take action where there is a persistent problem. Three quarters of district health authorities do not have any backlog to report.

If we did not insist on these rules, there is a risk that we would overload the laboratories. The same, keen women would come in to be tested repeatedly and we would miss many of the women most at risk and might waste everybody's time and money.

There are other cancers which affect women. The most worrying of these is lung cancer which is rapidly rising. Since 1979, the death rate from lung cancer among men in the United Kingdom has dropped by 6 per cent. but among women it has risen by 27 per cent., and that is causing considerable alarm. Lung cancer is the second largest cancer killer of women in this country and accounted for 11,000 dead women last year. It looks set to overtake the major cancer killer—breast cancer. The survival rate over five years of women with lung cancer is very poor—betwen 3 and 13 per cent. according to age.

Cigarettes offer women more than the long-term worries about cancer. They interfere with hormone levels in both men and women, and on average lead to the menopause five years earlier. Nobody believes me about that but that is what the research shows. Smoking is regarded as having a role in the increased incidence of osteoporosis. I have mentioned the well-documented link between cervical cancer and smoking. A recent study in the United States of America has suggested that just a few cigarettes a day doubles our risk of heart problems. Worst of all we know that, among pregnant women who smoke, the risk of perinatal mortality is 28 per cent. higher than for a non-smoker. It is also associated with a significant reduction in birth weight by as much as half a pound. The effect of smoking on the baby can be both rapid and devastating.

I suppose that many women believe that smoking keeps them slim, but there are sensible ways to keep one's weight at a healthy level without taking up a habit that stands a good chance of doing irreparable damage to one's health and the health of one's baby. Some people say they smoke to deal with stress, but there are healthy options to deal with stress and most people, including most doctors, have found other ways.

For all these reasons we are very concerned about patterns of smoking behaviour among girls and young women. Smoking has been falling in older women in recent years, but that had not been happening among women under the age of 25. Among secondary schoolchildren in England and Wales, who fortunately still smoke far less than their parents, girl smokers outnumber boys by nearly two to one. As I said in a debate on 23 October, we commissioned research on this to try to find what influences the behaviour of girls in this way. Preliminary results suggest that girls are influenced in a different way from boys.

I have asked the Health Education Council to look at a sustained programme of health education aimed at young people. We have accepted the Froggatt report which recommended:

"It is essential that more smokers are encouraged to stop smoking; and that non-smokers are strongly discouraged from starting".

We are now considering how best to take that forward. I am pleased to see that the Royal College of Nursing, the largest trade union in the National Health Service, representing about 250,000 women, recently adopted a no smoking policy, as has the Royal College of Midwives and the Health Visitors' Association, both of which have a preponderance of women members. In the DHSS, where we employ about 100,000 people, the majority of them female, I understand that no smoking policy guidelines will soon be issued to local social security offices with the support of the trade unions. We look to see considerable progress there to help all our excellent staff work in a smoke-free atmosphere.

In ways like these we shall continue to do what we can to promote health education and disease prevention campaigns such as those for women's cancer. We watch with interest developments for screening for other

conditions such as ovarian cancer, although we are nowhere near a sound, accurate system that we could use nationwide.

Similarly, we are keen to encourage the development of laboratory tests which are less demanding of scarce staff than the current smear test reading method. However, as my right hon. Friend the Minister of Health said in the Adjournment debate on the organisation Quest for a Test for Cancer on 13 May, any new test we adopt must be cheap, effective, fast, accurate and robust. By robust we mean that it should be capable of being performed in different types of laboratories and by operators with varied levels of skills. I am hopeful that some automated system will come in before too long. I was impressed that a recent meeting of our scientific advisers had 13 such proposals to consider, some of which looked promising.

It might be helpful if I say a word about the growing involvement of the private sector in screening programmes, which we welcome. For a long time preventive medicine was the poor relation in the NHS and we have much catching up to do. The private and non profit-making sectors stepped in to fill the gap and have developed their schemes to the benefit of their millions of members. I understand that more than 150 clinics of various kinds are now in operation. There are two main points I would make to them and their customers.

First, it is not enough to offer simply a testing service. Proper arrangements should be made for laboratory services and to notify the woman's GP that she has been tested and of the results, subject to her consent. That is intended to avoid unnecessary repetition of tests especially as the National Health Service gets it own screening services up and running. Further sensible arrangements should be made for the care, counselling and treatment of women and they should be explained to the customer when she first comes. This also applies to occupational health screening, such as the splendid system that I saw at the Post Office last week, which uses the services, where required, of AMI International and thus relieves the National Health Service of the burden entirely.

Secondly, those setting up such screening systems should be well aware of the good medical reasons why we do not screen younger women for breast cancer. In women under 35, for example, the condition is rare, but benign lumps and cysts are very common. The mammogram used under these circumstances is likely to pick up a high level of false positives, leading to unnecessary anguish until the all-clear is obtained and, worse, possibly to unnecessary treatment. Mr. Ian Fentiman of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund unit at Guy's hospital has expressed his concern about that matter, and I share it. I hope that the reputable companies involved will take note.

We are pleased that the private sector is taking steps to provide a quality assurance scheme supported by a system of registration, inspection and approval. We shall watch that development with interest.

There is no doubt about the growing interest in women's health inside the House and among the population at large. This has led my Department to respond by organising a full-day conference on the subject on 22 June. The many subjects covered will include the cancers that I have mentioned, but the afternoon session will look at conditions which do not kill, but from which millions of women suffer, often silently, such as mental illness—in which women outnumber men—the menopause—problems associated with which were regarded until quite recently as either imaginary or untreatable—and osteoporosis, the thinning of the bones, which is increasingly filling accident and emergency departments and orthopaedic beds. There will be a session on puerperal psychosis, which is an appalling mental illness that affects some women after childbirth and can vanish as quickly as it came, leaving havoc in its wake in the woman's family. The conference is designed to have learned speakers sharing the latest information with lay people, including representatives of more than 50 women's organisations, and press representatives who write on women's issues and health. Many hon. Members and Members of the other place have accepted invitations to attend.

Since some important new issues will be covered on that day, it will be apparent that the Government want to move the discussion on. We have put our efforts against cancer on a sound footing, but now we must turn our attention elsewhere. Osteoporosis, for example, is a condition which probably affects one woman in four, and is clearly linked to falls in hormone levels after the menopause.

Ms. Harriet Harman (Peckham): Is the Minister aware that, because of cuts in the district health authority's budget, a consultant in Sheffield has taken out a bank overdraft to keep his unit, which conducts care and research into osteoporosis, going? I welcome the Minister's concern about this issue, but will she ensure that he is given money to run the unit and so that he can pay off his overdraft?

Mrs. Currie: The hon. Lady should beware of challenging me on such topics. I had a healthy supper with the extremely eminent physician concerned on Tuesday night. We discussed some of the circumstances surrounding his work. The press has been less aware of the fact that he receives £700,000 for his research from the Medical Research Council. It was suggested that he might like to discuss what he will want to do in the future with the regional health authority, the district health authority and the Medical Research Council. I believe that that is now happening. The reason why I had supper with him was that I have invited him to be one of the speakers at the conference. The work being done on osteoporosis in units such as the MRC-funded one in Sheffield is important, and I have conveyed that interest to the health authorities concerned. I hope that that answers the hon. Lady's question.

Osteoporosis is 10 times commoner among women than men, and among older women it often shows itself as dowager's hump. Women can lose as much as 6 inches in height a year as spinal bones collapse. One realises, when looking around our towns and villages, how many women suffer from that painful and disabling condition. I see that my hon. Friend the Member for Billericay (Mrs. Gorman) is in her place primed to give the answer. She is aware of the close interest that my Department is taking in the work of the Amarant trust, which she chairs, and which advocates hormone replacement therapy. My hon. Friend will, I know, understand our caution about any treatment which involves drug therapy over a long period. I hope that she will also feel able to support and advocate those preventive measures, which are emerging from research, as the best advice to women, particularly before they reach menopause: do not smoke and stay physically active so that the bone mass is maintained. There is evidence that bone mass is significantly greater among women who take

[Mrs. Currie]

regular exercise than among those who do not. Even for post-menopausal women, exercise can slow down the rate of loss, or even reverse it somewhat. So, I am afraid that it is on with the tracksuits girls, and leave those fags at home, and I invite all hon. Members to join me. Incidentally, HRT, where appropriate, is available on the National Health Service. Patients are not obliged to seek private treatment.

Among the other organisations that are interested and involved, we help the National Osteoporosis Society, the Women's Aid Federation,—the battered wives organisation—and Maternity Alliance. We grant-aid the Widows Advisory Trust, the Miscarriage Association and many other organisations. Our male colleagues would be surprised if they saw a list of the wide range of groups concerned with women's health that we support.

The other main chunk of work carried out for women, which has experienced important developments lately, is maternity care. As it will not be one of the subjects discussed at the women's conference, I shall spend a few moments considering it. Since 1981, following the Social Services Select Committee report on perinatal mortality, vigorous efforts have been made to improve services. We set up the maternity services advisory committee, which published three reports under the title "Maternity Care in Action". The first, in 1982, was entitled "Antenatal Care", the second, in 1984, was entitled "Care during Childbirth", and the third, in 1985, was entitled "Postnatal and Neonatal Care". Those reports are a comprehensive guide to good practice and a plan for action for health authorities.

The resulting improvements in perinatal mortality are well-known. Between 1979 and 1987, the death rate among babies in the first month after birth dropped from 14·6 per 1,000 live births to 8·9 per 1,000 live births. It is more revealing if we look at absolute numbers. In 1979, there were just over 600,000 births and nearly 5,000 stillbirths, whereas in 1987 there were 645,000 births—many more pregnancies went to full term—and only 3,200 stillbirths. Far more babies are being born alive. We had therefore about 40,000 more babies to care for last year than in 1979.

Similarly, the chances of survival of tiny, low-birthweight babies have improved dramatically. In 1976, there were 38,000 births below 2·5 kg—about 5·5 lb—of whom 84 per cent. survived. In 1987, there were over 45,000 births below 2·5 kg, of whom 92 per cent. survived. Many thousands more tiny babies now survive every year. The amount of care needed to achieve that success is enormous. The object of the exercise is a healthy baby and a contented mother and family.

Over a 10-year period—indeed, a 20-year period—some matters have not improved. In 1976, the number of low-birthweight babies born alive represented about 6·5 per cent. of the total. In 1986, it was 6·8 per cent. The figure has been about 7 per cent. for over 20 years. The failure of the these statistics to change is a matter of considerable concern. Low-birthweight babies are far more likely to be sick babies in the future. They have a far higher death rate in the first few months of life, when they seem especially prone to infections.

In some parts of the country, such as Leeds, which I visited last year, the proportion of low-birthweight babies is over 9 per cent., yet in Scandinavia it is 3 per cent. In Scandinavia, a higher proportion of babies go to full term and are born at full weight. We do not know why our figures are so high, except that perhaps there is a link with smoking. A drop in the birthweight of the baby and increased perinatal mortality are directly linked to the number of cigarettes smoked. Therefore, heavy smoking is likely to produce a stronger effect.

We undertook a survey of health authority maternity care in 1985 following the MSAC reports, but we propose to write again to the district health authorities in England and ask how they are implementing MSAC. This time we shall particularly look at the antenatal care side and at the levels of care in the community. We are looking for responses within less than 12 months.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing (Moray): The hon. Lady referred to care within the community. Is she aware of the deep concern in rural parts of England, Wales and Scotland about the large number of general practitioner units that have been closed that offered very effective neonatal and maternity care to women, without their having to travel long distances to high-tech centres?

Mrs. Currie: Yes, I recognise that fact. When we receive responses to our new survey of antenatal care, we shall consider the extent to which we can provide out-patient care as close to home as possible, while at the same time enabling women to have access to the latest facilities in the services that are most appropriate to them. There may need to be more of a division between facilities. I shall refer later to isolated units.

Much of the improvement in baby mortality is well known. What is less well known is the sharp drop in the death rate of women in childbirth that has accompanied all these improvements. Forty years ago, when I was born, the number of births a year was roughly the same as it is now, but some 700 women died in or soon after childbirth. Even 10 years ago it was 74, a rate of 12 per 100,000 live births. Now it is seven per 100,000 live births, but, at 45 cases in the most recent year for which we have figures, it is still too many. Nevertheless, it shows a continued improvement.

We have given a lot of thought to this subject and we have done a lot of work on it. I attribute much of this welcome change and the drop in the death rate of babies and mothers to our efforts in maternity care. It has involved far more women giving birth in hospital. Most now follow the recommendation that births should take place in modern hospitals that provide a full range of services, including anaesthetics and a paediatrician on call. I recognise that, where they still exist, people say that they like small, isolated maternity units, but we are still advised to move away from delivering women in such units.

Such advice was included in a recent publication of the National Birthday Trust Fund. I believe that it is wise to continue to take that advice. Fewer women and fewer babies are dying. The results have convinced me. I am also convinced that it should be possible—that in fact it is essential—to provide modern maternity care in a way that is both professional and friendly. I say that firmly.

I referred to sick babies. When a child is ill, the presence in hospital of the mother or another close relative may be an essential element in the child's recovery. I agree firmly with the National Association for the Welfare of Children in Hospital on these matters. I hope to be able to issue new draft guidelines for consultation within the next four weeks which will update those issued in 1972. The hon.

Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) knows that that fulfils a promise that I made in Committee on the Health and Medicines Bill.

The last topic that I want to cover is still concerned with women and their babies. It is breast feeding. This week, we made an announcement that is of considerable significance. Since 1980, the proportion of women breast feeding has stood at around two thirds, but the most recent survey in 1985 showed that, while 85 per cent. of educated and social classes 1 and 2 women breast-feed their babies, only 45 per cent. of social class 5 do, which is rather the reverse of what I should have expected. In January, we published the latest report on infant feeding from the Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy, entitled "Present Day Practice in Infant Feeding: Third Report." It affirms:

"Breast feeding from a woman who is in good health and nutritional status provides a complete food which is unique to the species. There is no better nutrition for healthy infants both at term and during the early months of life."

The significance of that for us today is that there is plenty of medical evidence that natural feeding is better for both the baby and the mother. It returns her to normal far more quickly. It also helps to cement a very special bond between her and her baby, to their mutual advantage. I have to confess that it is also very nice, so we want to promote it.

I have therefore agreed to support a new initiative to promote breast feeding around the country by the National Childbirth Trust's breast feeding promotion group, the La Leche League and the Association of Breastfeeding Mothers. We will grant aid these bodies for a sustained campaign among health professionals and mothers. We expect to spend at least £100,000 over the next two years. In addition, the infant and diatetic foods association of the Food and Drink Federation, whose members make infant formulae, have agreed this week to provide an additional £30,000 this year, and possibly next year as well, to help with the printing and dissemination of suitable breast-feeding literature, posters and so on. I think that that is a remarkable gesture, and I congratulate and thank the association.

But the manufacturers have done more. They have agreed to phase out by the end of this year all free samples and subsidised supplies of baby milk to hospitals, thus closing an important loophole. The bottle and teat manufacturers have agreed to consult on ending their advertising to the general public along the same lines as the baby milk manufacturers. I accept with gratitude the good wishes of the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North (Ms. Walley), who is smiling. All these changes bring us into line with the World Health Organisation's requirements on marketing breast milk substitutes, promulgated in 1981 and strengthened in 1986. We shall be revising the relevant NHS circular. We intend to issue the new version in the autumn when the manufacturers issue a revised complementary marketing code—I hope in time for a major seminar on 18 October—which will launch the new breast-feeding promotion initiative.

Ms. Harman: Does the hon. Lady accept that one of the concerns of midwives is that the shortage of midwives, and the extra pressure in maternity units because of the cuts in maternity beds at a time when the number of births is increasing, means that midwives do not have the time to help mothers to establish breast feeding? We welcome the hon. Lady's interest and concern and we share her concern about the drop in the percentage of women who are breast feeding their children, but that makes it crucial for midwives to have enough time to help mothers to establish breast feeding. They feel, and I share their view, that they do not have enough time because of the growing crisis in maternity wards that has been caused by financial pressures.

Mrs. Currie: As the hon. Lady knows, because I have responded to these points on numerous occasions, the number of midwives is increasing. What is more important, the proportion of qualified staff has risen sharply. Therefore, I am content that the National Health Service and the professional side are devoting the appropriate level of resources to this subject. We must ensure that the health professionals realise how important and valuable it is to assist women.

However, the evidence suggests that much of the help, support and encouragement for breast feeding comes best from other women in the same neighbourhood and with the same accents who have been doing it and who are therefore conscious of the pleasure that it gives and of some of the difficulties—and how to overcome them. In that sense, I hope that the new campaign will be directed at both the professionals and, through the voluntary movement, at the women concerned.

We think that we can make considerable progress. Then we shall be able truly to say that we will be promoting breast feeding as best for both the baby and the mother. I cannot conceal my delight that we are making progress in this way on an entirely voluntary basis. It puts us well ahead of the rest of the European Community and most of the developed world.

We are most emphatically not complacent. There are still far too few women who never book their confinement and who first appear in an advanced stage of labour, often too late to save their baby. There are still too many women who die in childbirth. There are far too many women who have never had a cervical smear test, and I fear that there will be always some who refuse. There are too many doctors who dismiss women's menopausal symptoms, and too few of them advise their women patients on how to avoid thinning bones—osteoporosis—in the first place.

There are too many women, particularly among the young, who dismiss our warnings about smoking. Most of all, there are still far too many women who suffer in silence when they should be seeking help. Often they wait until it is too late. The House should firmly reject the notion that a responsible women cares for her family's health but neglects her own. Today's wife and mother knows that her family need her to be fit and well, as does her employer, if she is to meet the increasing demands that are now placed upon women in this country. Our health is in our hands. I hope that all generations of women will in future take a positive and informed interest in their own health.

The programmes that I have outlined make me feel very proud. I think that we in Britain are lucky to have these opportunities, and I commend the programmes to the House.

10.19 am

Ms. Jo Richardson (Barking): My hon. Friends and I are glad that the Government have chosen the subject of women's health for debate. I do not denigrate the value of Friday debates but in some ways wish that the debate could have been held in prime time during the week, when more hon. Members could have been here; I know that

[Ms. Jo Richardson]

many hon. Members have to get away on Fridays. Nevertheless, I am glad to see that a representative number of hon. Members are present.

Doubtless the Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security will recall that we had a debate about cervical cancer screening during our recent proceedings on the Health and Medicines Bill. We now have the opportunity to consider all aspects of women's health and to identify and discuss some of the problems facing women, especially women who have little money and who are hampered in trying to live a healthy life. I am a little disappointed that in the catalogue that the Minister gave us, she took a rather blinkered view in some respects; she confined her remarks to the medical aspects of women's health without considering the social causes that often lead to women's ill health. Nevertheless, the fact that the Government have chosen women's health as the subject of this debate is an acknowledgement of the fact that they have begun to take it much more seriously. In that regard, I pay tribute to my hon. Friends the Members for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) who did much as shadow Minister for Health and to my hon. Friend the Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) who is doing much now to push the Minister to accept various schemes.

I begin by firmly dismissing the Minister's oft-expressed contention that many of the problems of women's health are women's own fault. The hon. Lady is very fond of expressing herself in lurid language. She has not done so today, but she would acknowledge that she frequently does. I wonder whether she realises just how hurtful that lurid language is to women struggling in an unjust society to maintain their families and to keep them together, to find and keep a job and to cope with bad working and housing conditions. For women who are home workers the last two often go together. There was an interesting article in last Sunday's edition of *The Observer* dealing with the problems, including health problems, facing home workers. I shall do no more than quote the remarks of a women whose case was cited in that article:

"I used to work a 90-hour week to get the money I needed to live. My daughters used to come in from school, eat and start sewing . . . We were absolutely desperate for money . . . I challenge anybody to check, sew and label a dozen sweaters at the rate they set and earn more than 66p an hour."

The Minister may think that that quotation is irrelevant to a debate about women's health. However, poverty is one of the conditions that take a toll on women's health. Judging by her speech, the hon. Lady does not even begin to understand that. I hope that she will not mind my reminding her that on 11 March 1985, before she was a Minister, she made a speech on unemployment and industrial policies. She advocated the employment of part-time women workers as opposed to male full-time workers, who she said had all the protection of employment legislation. She also said that full-time male workers

"will probably receive holidays and so on."—[*Official Report*, 11 March 1985; Vol. 75, c. 87.]

The implication is that women can work without the benefit of a yearly break that might help their health. The Government have removed what minimal protection women had and fulfilled the Minister's hopes as expressed in that speech by decreasing the rights of workers and the obligations of employers. They have increased the risks to women in terms of stress, which has a profound effect on their health.

I shall deal briefly with women's health in connection with work and I hope that my hon. Friends will discuss the matter at greater length. The 9·5 million women now in work account for 45 per cent. of the work force. At work women often cope with equipment designed specifically for men. They suffer from the same health problems at work as men but they are also subject to specific problems such as tendonitis and to the scandals of VDUs. Those are just two of the problems that predominantly affect women. When shopping, I have often noticed the problems faced by women at the check-out and I have discussed those problems with them. They often have to sit in an awkward position on a swivel stool handing goods from the basket on to the counter with one hand and using the other to check up the price. I have noticed that many of them rub their shoulders and complain of back ache. All such factors cause women stress and strain and bad health.

All too often women's work does not end at the factory gate or the door of the shop. Most women still have the sole or major responsibility for looking after the home and many are carers who care for the old, the sick and the young. In recent years many reports have highlighted the problems arising from those circumstances. It is to their credit that most trade unions—notably, the National Union of Public Employees—are taking up with employers issues such as stress and its effect on women's health.

The Minister for Health (Mr. Tony Newton): I have a genuine point, which is not a point of argument. I want to solicit further information. Unless my ears misled me, the hon. Lady referred to the "scandals of VDUs". I would like to know what she meant. As I understand it, a great deal of the clerical work that women used to do—for example that involving heavy filing cabinets—has been made infinitely easier by access to modern technology and the equipment that goes with it.

Ms. Richardson: I shall gladly elaborate. I agree that I used a shorthand phrase, perhaps I should have explained more fully what I meant by the scandals of VDUs. We accept that VDUs have decreased the work load and made the work easier than it was with the old filing and call and recall system. However, I am sure that it will not have escaped the attention of the Minister for Health that VDUs involve health hazards. I do not think that enough is done to ensure that employers take that into account.

The Ministers are looking puzzled. Sitting for too long in front of a VDU can affect health. There is a risk to a woman's reproductive capabilities. I am amazed that the Minister looks surprised to hear that fact, because it is common knowledge. Indeed, many unions and employers have a written agreement limiting the number of hours that someone can sit in front of a VDU, precisely because of that risk. That is what I meant by "scandal", but perhaps I should have said "hazard". It is certainly something that must be borne in mind.

Before the Minister's welcome interruption I was discussing problems at work. The Government have compounded the difficulties facing women through their attacks on maternity rights and parental leave. The

Government preside over legislation designed specifically to encourage low wages and, in some cases, dangerous conditions, and to erode the rights of individuals.

Work should offer the opportunity of better health screening and education and should enhance women's lives. Instead, during the past nine years much gained in previous years has been eroded. On a number of recent occasions, and certainly at some length today, the Under-Secretary has berated women for smoking. She did not refer to drinking today, although she has referred to that and other habits on many occasions. I was stunned when I heard her attributing smoking to the desire of women to keep slim. It is a long time since I heard that one. Most of the women I know who smoke do so because they are under some stress. They do not necessarily want to smoke. I smoke, and I do so because I like it—but that is my problem. I certainly do not do it because of stress.

Many women smoke because of stress caused by poor housing or work or family problems. They smoke not to keep slim but because they are nervous and under stress, and smoking provides some form of release for them. I am a little surprised that the hon. Lady did not acknowledge that. Indeed, it is downright offensive to talk about women in the way that she did and to blame them for seeking relief from tensions that, in many ways, the Government have forced upon them. After all, the Government capitulate to the tobacco and alcohol businesses whenever there is a call for action against advertisements deliberately aimed at the young and at women. Blaming the victim is an obnoxious practice and is always an unproductive and futile exercise.

Does the hon. Lady really believe that women are less aware than men of health risks, or that they are more difficult to educate than men? Does she believe that they are simply more reckless or feckless than men about the lifestyle and health of themselves and their families? I hope that she does not believe that; I cannot believe that she does. However, that is the logical interpretation of some of her outbursts that sometimes, although I am sure she does not mean them to be so, sound almost sexist—until, that is, we place them in the context of the rest of the Government's policies.

The Secretary of State for Social Services presides over a social security system founded on the Victorian values of the deserving and the undeserving poor, while the hon. Lady wants to found the Health Service on the values of the deserving and the undeserving sick. Unlike Conservative Members, the Opposition want all women to have the best available health case and health opportunities, regardless of ability to pay.

The hon. Lady proudly mentioned the role of the private sector in breast cancer screening. I accept that it has a role, but I should prefer all such screening to be carried out within the NHS. A letter dated 4 January 1988 from the London hospital Whitechapel, addressed to one of my constituents, has caused me some surprise. It refers to the first stage of an ovarian cancer screening project in which my constituent had participated. It said that the project had yielded valuable and exciting results that would shortly be published in *The Lancet*. It said that it would dramatically improve the outlook for the 4,000 women a year who died from ovarian cancer.

To my amazement, the letter's writer said:

"There are two ways in particular that early participants in the project such as yourself can ensure its continuation: (1) By helping us to raise sufficient money to complete the project by selling tickets for our 1988 raffle."

It is amazing that a woman who has taken part in a project to help her health and that of other women should be asked to buy a raffle ticket so that other women can also participate. Is that private health care, semi-private health care, supported health care or sponsored health care? We should fund such projects properly and not depend upon people buying raffle tickets.

The Government must fully provide properly resourced services that genuinely promote health, as well as meeting the needs of women when they are sick. Promoting good health means challenging the causes of ill health, such as poor diet, poor housing and homelessness. What about the hundreds and thousands of women currently living in bed-and-breakfast accommodation? That is hardly a healthy life. They are expected to care for their families in one room and they have to leave the accommodation and stay out all day. I do not know how they can be expected to provide a healthy diet in such circumstances. The Government do very little to help those problems. Other causes of ill health are unemployment, unsafe and stressful working conditions in the workplace and at home, the dual load of unemployment and caring responsibilities and poverty and powerlessness.

Every health study has shown that poverty is one of the most important factors influencing life and health chances, so we should not increase the poverty of those who are already the poorest in our society. The Government's record is second to that of no Government this century, as is shown by the first increase on the infant mortality rate since 1970. An article in *The Health Services Journal* headed:

"Why are our babies dying?"

states:

"A rise in the infant death rate in England and Wales—the first since 1970—is causing concern among community service managers and staff. The most recent figures from the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (OPCS) show that the number of deaths of children under the age of one, internationally accepted as an important indicator of health and social conditions, rose from 9·4 per 1,000 births to 9·6, an increase from 6,141 deaths in 1985 to 6,313 in 1986 . . . but initial response from health professionals suggests that social deprivation, not gaps in medical services, is the underlying cause."

Mrs. Currie: The hon. Lady should know that we shall shortly have to hand more recent figures that show that mortality rates have dropped again. They have dropped below what the trend line would have been. That is precisely why I am now so concerned about smoking behaviour in young women. They are the only group whose smoking behaviour is increasing. As I demonstrated, the effect on the baby is immediate and devastating. It helps to cause perinatal mortality and reduce the chances of babies who are born alive.

Ms. Richardson: Again, the hon. Lady has blamed young women who smoke. Smoking may be a contributory factor, but she has not answered the point, which was that health professionals believe that

"social deprivation, not gaps in medical services, is the underlying cause"

of the increase in that period. I am still amazed that the hon. Lady has not taken that fact into account.

During Prime Minister's Question Time yesterday, there were references to a report from the Low Pay Unit and the Child Poverty Action Group. It showed that between 1979 and 1985—I acknowledge that it was three years ago—the number of people below pension age living

[Ms. Richardson]

on or below the poverty line rose from 2·9 million to 6·54 million, a rise of 120 per cent. It is no good the Government saying as they tried to do yesterday, that it is an old report and that things have got better since then. I promise the hon. Lady that things have not got better since then. The figures have not dropped—in fact, they will get worse. With the poll tax, more people will drop into the poverty trap.

The hon. Lady referred with pride to working with the Maternity Alliance and other organisations. I am glad that she acknowledges their worth. Four years ago, the Maternity Alliance produced a report called "Poverty in Pregnancy". The report looked in detail at the basic requirements for a healthy, nutritional diet for pregnant women. It concluded that pregnant women whose income came from benefits and those in very low wage families had incomes which were clearly insufficient to buy an adequate diet which would ensure their own and their babies' future good health. It estimated that benefits needed to be increased by at least one third, that the maternity grant needed to be restored to its original value, which at that time would have been £125, and that the seriously inadequate welfare foods policy needed radical improvement.

We have certainly had radical change since then, but we have not had radical improvement. The social security review has cut benefits and removed one of the most vulnerable groups—the under-16s—from any benefit. At one time, the maternity grant, albeit at a low level, was universal. It is now available only to those who are on benefit. Free school meals have gone, and welfare foods have been cut.

Does the Under-Secretary really believe that such actions—and by her own Department, too—are the right way to ensure that women have a good start for themselves and their families and have a healthy life?

The feminisation of poverty is not a new phenomenom. The hon. Lady quoted some women's journals from perhaps 100 years ago. At the beginning of the century, 60 per cent. of all Poor Law recipients were women. In 1988, 60 per cent. of all income support recipients are women. It is truly staggering that things have not changed over 88 years. Three quarters of the low paid are women. Yesterday's copy of *The Independent* contained a whole page of little bits on regional trends that were recently published by the Government. The article is headed:

"Women's pay still lags behind"

An extract states:

"Progress towards equal pay appears extremely slow. Women's pay still lags far behind men in every part of the country, irrespective of prosperity.

The highest-paid women are in the South-east, where average weekly earnings are £167·60p, is well short of the earnings of the worst-paid men, who are in Northern Ireland and take home an average of £190·40p.

Women in manual jobs fare worst of all, averaging only £115·30 a week—£70 less than their male counterparts. Although these are full-time jobs, more than half the women so employed in East Anglia and Northern Ireland earn less than £100."

All those factors are relevant to our discussion about women's health. Thousands of women actually have to earn their poverty by working in the NHS and related local authority community services and subsequently get as a bonus ill health and a lack of opportunity to choose a healthier lifestyle. I refer to nurses, therapists, administrators, technical workers, caterers, cleaners, laundry workers, home helps, day care and respite care workers, and, of course, the millions of unpaid carers at home, who are often isolated and unsupported in caring for their loved ones and who had to fight the Government through the European courts for financial recognition. All such people are low paid and below the threshold laid down by the Council of Europe.

We have just received an important report from the Policy Studies Institute on doctors and their careers. That report was commissioned by the DHSS. *[Interruption.]* The Under-Secretary points to herself. It was commissioned by her. I hope that she is interested in the results. So far, I have managed to read only the shortened version, as the longer one rather defeated me in the time available.

The pattern of discrimination and career prospects for women doctors mirrors the picture that we see everywhere. If there is a hierarchy, women are in powerless positions. If there is a grading structure, women are at the bottom of it. If there are pay differentials, women are on the lowest rates. The description of the effects on women doctors of working in the Health Service hold true of women in all professions and all women working in health and community services. The report states:

"Exhausting and stressful hours of work"—

Perhaps hon. Ladies will include the House of Commons in this—

"disrupted or non-existent family and social life, endless exams, the repeated scramble for short-term jobs that involve moving around the country, inflexible career structures and the increasing importance of patronage from powerful, and usually, male senior doctors, all conspire against women."

With the addition of a few substitute words, we could adapt that paragraph to refer to the House of Commons. However, that is a quote about women doctors, though it applies across the board in most professions. Yet, as we know, access to a woman doctor is now one of the most frequent requests that women voice with regard to their own health needs. Information on the availability of a woman GP is one of the most frequent responses made by a family practitioner committee, yet the Government's White Paper, "Promoting Better Health" will threaten the availability of women GPs and the services they offer. I do not know whether the Minister has seen the response of Women in Medicine. I assume that she has. It is a responsible organisation of women doctors and says that many of the proposals threaten the availability of women GPs and the services they offer.

"The White Paper does not recognise or reward those aspects of work, often done by women GPs, which cannot be easily measured, such as the many forms of counselling. Instead, its emphasis is on a few countable targets, eg immunisations and cervical smears. Indeed, women could well be employed specifically to work in these limited areas of practice. They would lose job satisfaction, be inaccessible for consultation on other matters, and their wide range of skills would be wasted.

Changes in the way doctors are paid would encourage GPs to have more patients on their books. This would mean less time could be spent with each individual. Women, for a variety of reasons, on average consult their doctors more often than men do, and with more complicated problems. They, therefore, would be the hardest hit. . . .

Proposed changes threaten to remove valuable allowances from doctors who work reduced hours."

I hope that the Minister will take those views into account.

Support among women throughout the country for well woman centres has grown enormously. The services are run by women for women. Health education and mutual

aid are provided in a positive and supportive manner. Well woman centres adopt an approach which encompasses the whole person rather than a set of symptoms. The whole person in her environment and its impact on her health is considered. That includes income, access to child care and community care, employment or unemployment, housing conditions, diet and the availability of healthy food in local shops and the sufficiency of income to buy it. All of those matters can be discussed in a well women centre.

I know that the Minister is a avid fan of healthy food. We all are, or ought to be.

Mrs. Currie: Yes.

Mrs. Teresa Gorman (Billericay): I like hamburgers.

Ms. Richardson: So do I, but we must remember that traditional healthy food such as wholemeal bread is more expensive than the white plastic bread which most families have to buy. When the Minister talks about healthy food, she sometimes ignores many women's poverty.

A friend of mine lived in Brixton until recently—she moved because she changed jobs. She is a vegetarian, and tells me that she found it extremely difficult to buy her kind of healthy food in Brixton. Wholemeal bread and yoghurt for example, were difficult to find in the supermarkets because they are too expensive for the people of Lambeth to buy.

I did not hear the programme, but I understand that the Minister was on the radio yesterday introducing a recipe book. I do not know whether she wrote it herself, but I understand that it costs £14, which is quite a lot.

Mrs. Currie: It is a book for caterers.

Ms Richardson: I suppose that we are not intended to see it.

Mrs. Currie: The hon. Lady may not be aware that the book of recipes that we launched yesterday is not really intended for the general public—it is a caterers' book. Caterers repeatedly request that we provide recipes that accord with the latest recommendations. We have done just that.

Ms. Richardson: Perhaps we can have one in the House of Commons. It sounds a good idea and I hope that caterers in hospitals, who the hon. Lady says have asked her to produce the book, will be able to afford the ingredients on their reduced funding. We should not simply say that people should buy healthy food—we must remember its cost.

The development of mobile and workplace health care and screening facilities are another development of women's own work and campaigning to improve the quality and quantity of health services. I pay tribute to the work of women in what may loosely be called the women's health movement and to the trade unions who have played an important role in persuading employers to make workplace screening available. It has often been a long and difficult task, as the campaign for workplace screening in the House shows. We are now to have it at last.

I trust that our next success will be workplace child care, out-of-school care and parental and family leave as of right. One day we may get this place into shape. An integrated approach to economic, social and health policies is essential if we are to promote good health and well-being for all women. That is what the Government and the hon. Lady are failing to do.

One-day seminars and one-off conferences are utterly insufficient. I apologise to the Minister for being unable, for very good reasons, to come to her conference on Wednesday. I know that she was anxious to make her announcement. I do not believe that such conferences have the power to embark on the cross-departmental action that is needed. They are useful in their own way—I am not patronising them or putting them down—but I would have preferred it if the hon. Lady had called a cross-departmental conference to consider the medical aspects of women's health, and the social causes of their problems to see how we can bring the whole thing together.

Women are the majority of NHS consumers because of their own health and because of their caring responsibilities for others. A wide range of health care needs and problems are experienced exclusively by women, such as maternity needs, menopause, pre-menstrual syndrome, post-natal depression and problems arising from use of the contraceptive pill or the intra-uterine device. In spite of the catalogue that the Minister gave us in that respect, the Government's policies are robbing and short changing women.

The NHS collects no data on the ethnic origin of patients, so the extent to which it meets the needs of women from ethnic minorities is difficult to judge. We know, however, that research on conditions such as sickle cell anaemia and thalassaemia, which are life-threatening in some cases, has been given a low priority.

Similarly, we have been too slow to respond to the needs of women for whom English is not their first language. As we all know, communication between doctor, nurse and patient is essential to confidence and good care. The London borough of Hackney is an excellent example of good practice. Its multi-ethnic women's health project employs five part-time workers, speaking Turkish, Urdu, Gujerati and Bengali. That ensures two-way communication, not just to explain the procedures to patients, but to assist in an exchange and dialogue between health workers and patients.

The Government's policies have cynically and deliberately engineered a crisis in the Health Service so that they can introduce market forces and further privatisation into our health system. The impact on women's health of those policies has already been dramatic and detrimental. Hospital and bed closures have reduced gynaecology beds by 10 per cent. obstetric beds by 8 per cent. and GP maternity beds by 40 per cent. The lengthening waiting list, as a result of the loss of beds for children and elderly patients, means that women are providing even more care at home, losing work time and income and suffering even greater stress.

Last Friday a woman came to see me about her 78-year-old mother whose legs had finally given way so that she could no longer walk. The mother weighs 17 stone. She is confined to bed. She needs a bed from which there is a hoist so that she can pull herself up, and then her 78-year-old husband can help her on to the bed pan. That is a fairly familiar story. A nurse visits three times a day simply to help with those bodily functions. However, most of the caring is down to the 78-year-old husband and the daughter.

I spoke to the health visitor on Monday. She said, "It is a tragedy, Ms. Richardson, that we do not have more of these beds readily available." We must depend on people such as my constituent, the daughter, who not only has to do these extra duties, as well as trying to maintain a full

[Ms. Richardson]

time job to keep her own family, but who feels a terrible sense of guilt about her mother—guilt that, perhaps, she has not done enough. We too infrequently acknowledge the great debt which we owe carers in our society, who have saved the health and community services so much money.

Special care baby units have suffered an 8 per cent. cut. The crisis in community care is rapidly approaching a position of community neglect.

The cervical cancer screening programme on which the Under-Secretary has given a lot of information is, frankly, a shambles. I have written to the hon. Lady telling her that I have already received information on this matter. For example, I am told that in Winchester and Basingstoke the computer call and recall system that came into operation only on 1 April this year is already out of action and cannot be restored because of lack of resources. I am also informed that call and recall letters will not be sent out, regardless of the problems with the computer, because the laboratories cannot cope with the backlog of smears already awaiting inspection. The hon. Lady must know that this is a pattern that is occurring all over the country.

There are similar fears about the much-publicised initiatives on breast cancer screening. Experts in that sector have already said—as they have about cervical screening—that the age at which screening begins should be lower. Today the Minister tried to justify why that should not be so. However, on balance I prefer to agree with the experts. We must aim for three-yearly intervals between screenings rather than five yearly. As I have said, I hope that the Under-Secretary will also look carefully at the shortage of specially trained radiologists and surgeons. All those matters cast grave doubts on the quality of that service.

While such doubts and uncertainties remain, thousands of women will continue to die needlessly. Money—the one thing the Government never want to discuss in debates on the National Health Service—is the major answer: money for training, money for more staff, money for laboratories and clinics, and money for further and continuing research. I am sure that the hon. Lady did not intend to delude women into thinking that all is now well with the programmes for cervical and breast cancer screening, but she appeared to suggest that. That would be unfair. Many of the women whom the hon. Lady wants to see screened will not even be called for screening until 1992. Will she tell us how many women will not be called until 1992? I am sure that she does not know the answer. Perhaps it is incalculable.

Mrs. Currie: Perhaps the hon. Lady might do the sums for herself. I said to her that through the screening service we expected to make contact with about 13 million women in this country. We expect to call them in approximately equal tranches over a five-year period. I also said that anyone who has never been called for screening—I have made this point on many occasions—can come in at any time. We tell people that if they are symptomless, there is no need to worry. I am content with that. It would not be possible to call in 13 million in the next six weeks and screen them all at once.

Ms. Richardson: I do not think that the hon. Lady has answered the point. We can all do our calculations. She says that women can come forward at any time if they wish to do so. As the Minister herself has pointed out, women do not always think about the necessity of doing so. Sometimes they do not do so until, unfortunately, it is too late. However, if they did all come forward at the same time, the entire system would snarl up. It would not be possible to cope with all those women because there are not enough laboratory resources or staff to check the smears. Unless more resources are provided, there will be women who would not be called until 1992, and many of them may die in the meantime.

Similarly, family planning services that have contributed so greatly to women's improved health, and again were fought for by women and brought into the National Health Service by a Labour Government—I am proud to say—are being cut. The hon. Lady has said that she would be concerned if the family planning service disappeared or was substantially cut. At least, 25 districts have made cuts in their family planning services already, according to reports from community health councils and family planning regional offices. All the available evidence shows that more districts are planning cuts.

Any Government who were genuinely interested and concerned about this matter would urgently intervene to prevent the inevitable increase in unplanned pregnancies that will result from such policies. Ironically, they will also create long-term increased social and economic costs. It is a short-sighted and narrow approach which plagues every aspect of the Government's policies. The obsession with cash limits, charges and market forces distorts every section of the Government's White Paper on promoting better health. They end up by addressing the wrong agenda and issues and, therefore, come to the wrong conclusions.

The Minister should be chairing an interdepartmental committee covering employment, her Department, housing, the environment and transport. The committee should cover all Departments. It should examine broadly what contributes to bad health in women and in men. The hon. Lady is the appointed Minister for women's health, and we are all glad that the Government have acknowledged that there is a problem and have appointed a Minister to deal with it. That will not be done, however, within the blinkered confines of the Minister's Department. I hope that she and the Prime Minister will recognise the necessity for having an interdepartmental link so that we can examine the problem properly and sanely.

Ms. Joan Ruddock (Lewisham, Deptford): I recommend to my hon. Friend a recent report entitled "Poverty in Lewisham". If the Minister were to chair a committee of the sort that my hon. Friend has suggested, she might find some links that are well illustrated in the report. In three of the wards in my constituency, one in four is unemployed —one in five of the young people is unemployed—and one of every two households is receiving supplementary benefit. My hon. Friend will not be surprised when I say that in two of those wards my constituents are 30 per cent. more likely to be dead before the age of 65 than are those who live elsewhere. In the other ward the figure is 54 per cent. Those figures illustrate that mortality rates are linked directly to poverty, unemployment, bad housing and all the ills that have been illustrated by my hon. Friend.

Ms. Richardson: My hon. Friend, in referring to the borough which she represents, has illustrated what could

be done nationwide if the Minister took up my suggestion of an interdepartmental committee. I hope that she will tell us later whether she is intending to take it up.

Labour's agenda for women's health—it has been set out in one of the best documents that the Labour party has ever produced—has been set by women. It was founded on women's own experience and it built on the ideas and the health projects that women have developed for themselves. Together with our proposal for a ministry for women, the agenda will provide the powerful Government machinery that is needed to ensure that every Government Department is included—for example, the Departments of the Environment and Employment, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Departments of Energy and Education and Science, the Treasury and the Department of Health and Social Security. All those Departments should be monitored. A women's ministry and a health Department under a Labour Government will jointly ensure that the social and economic causes of women's ill health are tackled on every front.

If ever there is justification for the concept of a women's ministry, it rests with the problems of women's health and the necessity for monitoring what is happening in every Department. There must be a central strategy for women's health, and that is what the Government do not have. We would ensure under a Labour Government that all women had the same opportunities to make genuine and realisable choices about their own health and the health of their families and communities. That includes private and community health care. We would work together in teams and in partnership to ensure that there is real choice and the best of health for all. That, in our view, is the way forward. That is the only real hope for the future that women have for themselves and for their families.

11.14 am

Mrs. Teresa Gorman (Billericay): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Minister on being able to produce the amazing catalogue of measures that the Government are now taking to improve women's health care. She must accept our congratulations on being the Minister who has put the subject on the map. There is no doubt that she whizzes around like an Exocet missile, attacking all areas that might prejudice women and which concern women especially. She is not the only member of the Government, however, who takes a special interest in women's health and general lifestyle. We do not need a Minister to take that special responsibility because we have so many Ministers who take an interest in the subject.

I shall talk especially about mature women and their health care. It is a subject in which I have a special interest, not least because I am one of them. When we are cute little babies, everybody loves us. When we become older and become pregnant mums, everyone cares for us. Who cares for women when they become menopausal? Until recently, not many.

Ms. Harman: Not many men do.

Mrs. Gorman: Perhaps. Women in this age group were often embarrassed and felt guilty. In many instances the approach of others was to this effect, "Well, you are getting old and you must put up with the consequences, just as your mother and grannie did." When the event hit me, as it does every woman eventually if she lives long enough, and I started to experience horrible hot flushes and other symptoms, I went to find treatment. As my hon. Friend the Minister said in her opening remarks, it is true that women tend to put up with a great deal that a man would normally go to his doctor to complain about. I am one of those real women who usually do not put with things. Accordingly, I went to find help, but it was not easy.

I shall refer briefly to some of the awful things that can happen. There are awful hot flushes, which are embarrassing when one is in a room that is full of people. The woman might say "Oh, my God, it is hot in here." Everyone looks round and says, "It is not really. It is you." It is rather like saying to a crowd of strangers, "I am getting old."

My wrists and ankles began to hurt. My ankles became so painful that I could hardly get to the top of my house—incidentally, it has 70 steps. My wrists became so painful that I could not cut a slice of bread. I had to buy sliced bread. Incidentally, I could tell the hon. Member for Barking (Ms. Richardson) where she could buy good sliced wholemeal bread in Brixton. I drive through Brixton almost every other day and I know where it is possible to buy good wholemeal bread and yoghurt. I am fond of Greek yoghurt. It is possible to buy some good West Indian bread, which is really delicious. It is brown and moist and lasts for ages. I buy it regularly.

As I was saying, I could not cut a loaf of bread because my wrists were so painful. I was running a business and when I returned home at about 7 o'clock I was knocked out, as it were. I was tired, listless, dreary and irritable. Worst of all, I started forgetting things. This meant that I missed appointments. I began to think that if these were the symptoms of becoming old at the age of about 40, I would rather be dead. I felt that I could not face another 30 years of them.

I was fortunate. I am a biologist by training and so I know a little about these things. I went to King's College hospital, which has a menopausal clinic that is one of the most prominent in the world. It is a world leader. I got myself on hormone replacement and it reconstructed me. I am a resurrected woman. I would have fallen to pieces had it not been for the treatment.

When I saw the facilities at King's I realised that the opportunity for women to discover the marvellous treatment that has helped me enormously was scant. There are only about a dozen such clinics in the country. I asked those at King's who had helped me how I could help them. They said that they wanted to raise money for a unit that they could make a national research and development centre, and I started getting a committee together to do this work. In the meantime I was elected to Parliament. That meant that everything came out in the open about me—hormones, the menopause and my age. I decided that I might as well go for broke. I wrote an article for a newspaper that was to this effect, "Yes, I am over 50. Yes, I am menopausal. Yes, I have hormone replacement therapy. Yes, it is terrific." The response was 10,000 letters from women saying that they thanked God that someone was talking about the subject. Some of the letters set out horrific stories of broken marriages and women driving their kids mad because they were so irritable. I realised that there was a desperate, crying need to provide help for women in this position.

Since I have come out, as it were, I have met an enormous number of women who are prepared to admit that they receive hormone replacement treatment. These

[Mrs. Gorman]

include Dora Bryan, Dot of EastEnders, Diana Sheridan and many other famous women. I shall not give the House the whole list now. The gynaecologist to the Queen is a big supporter of it. He believes that it can help enormously and is on record as saying so.

My experience has helped to highlight one aspect of women's medicine which was perhaps hidden and secretive, and about which women felt bad. A third of women have these desperately awful symptoms, another third have them fairly badly and some do not have them. One is unfortunate if one's doctor is a woman who has not experienced these symptoms because she will not be sympathetic, nor, I am sad to say, will many general practitioners.

The Minister said that this treatment is available on the Health Service, but that does not mean that a woman will always find a doctor willing to grant it to her. If she does, he may not understand all the nuances. There are about 20 different varieties of hormone involved, like baked beans. She needs a specialist and if her doctor gives her a treatment which does not work or affects her badly, often there is nowhere to go to see a specialist. we need more menopause specialists.

We have 9 million menopausal women, many of whom are suffering symptoms, some of which they can see, such as flushing, but many which go on inside the body insidiously. Outside we may become wrinkly but inside we are growing crumbly. Our bones, arteries and memory are all being affected. There is now masses of evidence, as the Minister pointed out, linking the lack of female hormones which are lost at the menopause with osteoporosis. I am delighted at the support and help that she has given to the National Osteoporosis Society. I am working closely with it and between us we want to set up special places where women can go.

Unseen symptoms include arterial problems. Arteries and veins decay, leading to strokes, which are another aspect of the loss of female hormones. That is being studied at King's College hospital, which also has a unit studying the mental and psychological effects of the loss of hormones. Many women undoubtedly suffer from deep depression and sometimes their doctor gives them tranquillisers or pep pills, which cost a fortune and which the doctor continues to prescribe for donkey's years. They cause side effects. The Minister said that she was not keen on on-going drug treatments over many years. People get hooked on tranquillisers. That is not necessary if more research is done on this subject.

The Minister's answer to osteoporosis is to take more exercise. That may be good advice for those under 40, but there is not much one can do to increase one's bone mass when one is over 40, except perhaps the middle bits. I am assured that the end bits which snap off with wrist and hip fractures are not particularly affected. Incidentally, many people die of jogging.

Some people worry about the side effects of this hormone replacement treatment. Whenever I become enthusiastic about it, which I frequently do, the scare of cancer is raised. We must meet that anxiety and we can probably do more research on that. Many women who have come to our new clinic, which I have helped to open, are discovered to have other conditions when they come in for menopause symptoms. They can then be sent on for other treatments.

Originally, American women with this problem were given only oestrogen. I do not want to get too technical. That hormone causes the lining of the womb to build up and if one does not get rid of it, as one does naturally when one is younger in the form of a period, it can become cancerous. That was not realised early on, but now it has been discovered and women are given a balance of hormones, similarly to those produced when young, so that the lining of the womb is shed periodically. That is good news for the tampon makers. In that way, women do not risk cancer of the uterus. There is a possible link with breast cancer which is under investigation, but by having frequent checks for hormone replacement therapy, women are more likely to be screened and mammogrammed. I go every six months and have a mammogram there. As far as we know, there is no link between the treatment and cervical cancer.

About a third of all Health Service beds, for example in orthopaedic wards, are used by women with problems linked to the menopause. Heart attacks rocket in older women. They are practically unknown in young women because they produce hormones, but when that stops, the rate of heart attacks in women catches up with that in men. Therefore, many menopausal women, for example, with arterial problems or suffering from strokes, are in hospital care. There are 10 women for every man in institutions for the senile because the menopause has a profound effect on one's mental capacity. Women reach the point, sometimes quite young, when they cannot remember how to light the gas stove. That is hard to believe, but it is true. They forget how to do as simple a task as that. We all know about women arrested for shoplifting and blaming it on their age, and often that is to blame. American evidence shows a distinct link between Alzheimer's disease and the loss of hormones, as witnessed by the number of older women, compared with men, suffering from it. That is a further area for research.

In America, this treatment has been used almost since the last war. At least women know about it there, which British women do not. Perhaps a third of American women take this type of help, so it is not a newfangled idea just to keep women young, although there is nothing wrong with that. If we do not have to get old, why bother? The treatment will not make us live for ever. We will go on for our four score years and 10. I say that because many women are living well into their eighties. We are talking about the quality of life. Are we going to be little old ladies, stooped with osteoporosis, having lost five or six inches in our spine and unable to remember what we did two seconds ago, or are we to be in the fantastic condition of someone like the Queen Mother, who is healthy, articulate, intelligent, bright and active?

Mrs. Currie: I was wondering whether my hon. Friend was going to offer herself as an advertisement for the treatment.

Mrs. Gorman: Why not? This treatment is well worth supporting and investigating.

Mrs. Audrey Wise (Preston): The hon. Lady is making an interesting and valuable speech, but I am not clear

whether she is also advocating that the Government should put more resources into this. If she is, will she be explicit about it?

Mrs. Gorman: I am just coming to that point.

In response to my experience I set up a new charity called the Amarant Trust to raise funds for King's college hospital medical school. It would like to set up a national centre to investigate all aspects of this treatment, to make it as effective as possible, and the various ways of administering the treatment. We certainly applied to the Minister for support and I hope that under section 64 she will consider giving us some help. We need about £2 million for the centre where we should like to retrain doctors because few understand the menopause. It is not a special discipline, but it ought to be. I hope that we will put it on the map, and that doctors in training will be given a special course.

I also hope that we shall persuade more GPs to make such treatment available on the National Health Service. However, I certainly do not exclude the possibility of private sector funds. I should like to see a centre in every town, to which mature women can go without embarrassment to talk to qualified nurses, chat about all their symptoms, be given screening and generally undergo a check-up in a friendly, happy atmosphere. While I hope very much that some of the funds will come from the private sector in co-operation with the Government, who cares where the money comes from so long as the project gets off the ground?

This is one of the most important aspects of medical care—preventive medicine at its best. As some doctors have pointed out, it keeps women out of the orthopaedic wards, the divorce courts and institutions for the senile —I hesitate to use the word "madhouses". Those institutions are unnecessarily filled with women who, if they received more attention, could be prevented from reaching such a condition. We could all end up in our eighties as active, healthy and alert as the Queen Mother.

I am happy that the Government are supporting that kind of preventive medicine, and I hope that they will give it more support.

11.30 am

Ms. Joan Walley (Stoke-on-Trent, North): It is a great pleasure to be here this morning, with women Members on both sides of the House, taking part in such an important debate. There are few men present, but those who are here seem a bit embarrassed during part of the speech by the hon. Member for Billericay (Mrs. Gorman). I am particularly sorry that the Secretary of State is not present to hear us all speak.

Women's health is not important only to us. It is equally important to our partners, our families, our children and all the people we care for. We must get that point across. I, too, regret that the debate is not taking place in prime time, and that this is not a parliamentary occasion with the Benches packed with the male Members who are in the majority here. Nevertheless, I welcome the debate, and I should like to expand on what was said earlier by my hon. Friend the Member for Barking (Ms. Richardson). We are discussing not merely health but stress, poverty, work and, in particular, the environment —all the issues that promote good health, not just the way in which the National Health Service is used to treat ill health.

The hon. Member for Billericay expressed regret that not enough doctors were prepared to specialise in women's issues. I particularly regret the closure five or six years ago of the South London hospital for women, which was one of the major training grounds for women. We are now beginning to experience the bad effects of that closure. Not many female consultants and medics specialise in the different kinds of women's health care, and that is reflected up and down the country. A report produced last week clearly showed that proportionately very few women make it to the top in medicine.

The Minister said that our health was in our hands. I take issue with that. Some of our health is indeed in our hands, but so many other aspects are in the Government's hands. My hon. Friend the Member for Preston (Mrs. Wise) asked where the money would come from to fund a clinic to help menopausal women, and perhaps to extend the provision to set up well woman clinics all over the country. I do not think that it is enough to say that we do not care where the money comes from. The Government should be providing a lead. An integral part of NHS funding should be the provision of well woman clinics, where women can simply walk in without fear or embarrassment. The reason for a visit may be a means of uncovering all kinds of other illnesses or conditions for which the woman could receive support. That would benefit not only her but her family and her employer.

A range of issues affect women as women. First, family planning services have been cut dramatically. Two thousand unwanted and regretted pregnancies have been occurring every year because clinics are closing down. Women who are no longer able to walk into a clinic and obtain advice have no choice but to go to the local GP, who is often very busy and often male. He may not even be fully trained in contraception, and is more than likely to prescribe the pill as a matter of course—which is the best thing that a doctor can do when he is busy and far too many people are coming to his surgery every morning. There is a clear need for much more direction from the NHS to provide family planning clinics.

Secondly, a woman is likely to have babies at some stage in her life, which brings us to the subject of maternity services. My constituency contains one of the largest maternity hospitals in the country. Recently, I met the midwives who work there, and heard at first hand that, although they have a very good centralised unit—one of the largest in the country—the shortages mean that it is being run on the basis of midwives' good will. There are not enough resources to enable them to provide the full and comprehensive service that they would like to provide.

I did indeed smile when the Minister mentioned her initiatives to encourage more women to breast-feed. But hard-pressed midwives will not be available to advise all the patients who come into the hospital. They cannot tell all the new mothers how important breast feeding is. Short staffing means that it is impossible to provide a continuous service, from the time when a woman first knows of her pregnancy until the time when she gives birth. As the mother of two children, I know that it makes a world of difference for the midwife to be there from the beginning, to be present at the birth and to visit the woman at home afterwards. That gives a new mother the best possible start.

Ms. Harman: Does my hon. Friend agree that solving the shortage of midwives is fairly and squarely the

[Ms. Harman]

Government's responsibility? Pay is not the only problem. Midwives complain strongly of the inflexibility of their working hours and the lack of child-care facilities. The Government must take action on all those problems.

Ms. Walley: My hon. Friend has summed up the position admirably. When there are shortages of midwives and other nurses—as we have seen recently in the Birmingham children's hospital—staff must be recruited, but that can only be done if we change the basis of their working conditions, and perhaps enable some of the menopausal women about whom we have just heard to get back into our hospitals and the NHS. That also applies to younger women with children at school. All these issues are vitally important.

I am delighted to see that breast cancer screening services are being set up all over the country. Let me say as an aside, however, that if the Minister is so keen to introduce them and to enlist the help of all hon. Members on both sides of the House, it might have been helpful to receive an invitation to the opening of the one that serves my constituency. I received no such invitation, which is why I was outside with all the other people who are concerned about aspects of NHS funding.

I welcome the introduction of the breast screening services. In Staffordshire the take-up of those services has been beyond our wildest dreams. A 70 per cent. take-up was expected, but the actual take-up was 76 per cent. My main concern is to ensure that, when women have plucked up courage to go for cancer screening, it will be possible to get treatment should they need it, without having to wait a long time. I am concerned that in the west midlands those women who are receiving radiotherapy treatment have to wait a long time for that treatment and as a result suffer great personal hardship.

Cervical cancer screening is incredibly important. Women are unnecessarily dying of that disease. The problems that have been experienced by my district health authority have had to be kept in the public eye. There has been a considerable delay in processing the results of the tests, but I understand that that problem is now more in hand than it was four months ago. That is probably only as a result of the initiatives that have been taken by local hon. Members, including my hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Mrs. Golding).

I was horrified when one of my constituents came to me and said, "My wife has been prescribed some treatment as a result of cervical cancer, but why is it that there is no laser equipment within the North Staffordshire health authority to provide that treatment? My wife must go elsewhere." When I delved deeper into the matter, I discovered that there are some fortunate district health authorities that have laser technology equipment. In many cases, however, that equipment has been bought as a result of private contributions, fund raising or by individuals taking out an overdraft, as in the case of the Sheffield consultant. The marvellous advances that have been made in new technology should be used to treat everyone who needs help. In the debate about the National Health Service and funding, the Secretary of State must face up to the fact that one must take account of new technology. We should ensure that every district health authority has the necessary equipment for treatment.

In common with my hon. Friend the Member for Barking, I am delighted that, after campaigning since 1982, we are to have cervical cancer screening in the House. That development only occurred because of the screening that was conducted in the House of Lords, the results of which were so alarming that we managed to finally swing the balance and acquire that service in this House.

The Ceramic and Allied Trades Union, the major union for pottery workers, the headquarters of which are in my area, passed a resolution at a recent conference that it should do everything possible to ensure that a well woman clinic was established in north Staffordshire. On a number of occasions, I have made inquiries of the district health authority about that, but it has said that it does not consider that such a clinic is necessary.

I am sure that CATU members will be delighted that they have the full support of women hon. Members for a well woman clinic. I am sure that even the Minister will exert some pressure to demonstrate the importance of such clinics. If we had such clinics I believe that there would be many more of the "reconstructed women" referred to earlier.

I share the disappointment that the provision of school meals has been cut and the fact that marvellous initiatives, such as the healthy eating initiative adopted by Staffordshire county council, are likely to be affected by competitive tendering and as a result of loss of income due to social security changes.

Last week, a dentist in my constituency told me that Stoke-on-Trent is a black spot for tooth decay. I am sure that those of us who are mothers have, from time to time, had a child screaming with toothache. We must take into account the cuts in the school dental service and the recent charges for dental treatment that have been introduced.

It is marvellous that women are living longer. Many women need community care, and in my constituency that care is not available. Local authorities are hard pressed to find sufficient money within the rate support grant for such care. I make no apology for referring to a constituency interest, Westcliffe hospital, an institution which houses a large number of elderly patients. In the past, I have been assured that, if it is closed down, alternative health provision will be made available. I have been informed that the switchboard of that hospital is likely to be closed down, which will create safety problems for the women in that hospital. With regard to mental health care, it is clear that, as a result of DHA cuts, replacement hospital facilities will not be available.

At the moment there is an important debate about the funding of the National Health Service, about which many of us are concerned. I wish that the Secretary of State had been present today so that he could tell us whether he had had much success in his discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It would be interesting to know the extent of tax cuts that are to be provided for those who take out private insurance at the cost of the services provided by the NHS. Yesterday, I met representatives of North Staffordshire health authority and they asked that I should make an earnest plea to the Government to reconsider the proposed changes to the RAWP formula. As a result of those changes, it will be almost impossible for my area to provide the services that are especially needed for women.

Health care is not in our hands only. It is affected by the money we earn, our housing, working conditions and the environment. Mention was made earlier of a conference on

health care, and I believe that different Departments should be represented at that conference. Exercise and sport are important, but why does the Department of the Environment provide insufficient money for local authorities to provide swimming pools and other services to enable women to keep healthy? Why are creches not provided so that women can take part in sport regardless of young children?

Pollution also contributes to ill health. The Government have been dragging their feet on the introduction of lead-free petrol. There are only two garages in my constituency where one can buy such petrol. Three weeks ago I met representatives of The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders. Its report "Into the '90s" contained not one mention about lead poisoning, lead-free petrol and its effect on children and women. Why has the Department of the Environment not made strong representations on this matter?

Why has the Department of the Environment not intervened on playground safety? The tarmac and concrete used on those playgrounds is dangerous and causes many injuries to young children, with which we mothers must contend. Why is the Department not prepared to put safety first?

Will the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food be invited to the conference? Will it be asked to look at ways in which food policies affect women? Will there be any change in the labelling of foods so that we know what certain foods contain and therefore whether to buy them —presuming that we can afford them?

What steps will the Ministry of Agriculture take to look at the way in which radiation from Chernobyl gets into the food chain? It has become clear in recent weeks that because of water nitrates the water supply in some parts of the country is not safe for young children and babies. Mothers have been supplied with bottled water because the nitrate levels are so high.

Will the Ministry of Defence be asked to make a contribution? RAF Swynnerton is near my constituency, and radioactive substances have been used in exercises. What effect does that have on children's health? I ask that in the wake of the scientific report published earlier this week about the incidence of leukaemia in areas close to Dounreay. What is the Department of Trade and Industry doing about unsafe goods on sale and about the baby walkers that we heard about this morning? Why are there not more prohibition orders on unsafe goods and why is the Department not looking at imports? The Department should be concerned with ballpoint pens whose precise measurement means that if a child swallows a pen top it is likely to choke. We must look at all the issues about product liability and consumer legislation.

Transport has already been covered. Many women cannot live a full life and their mental health is affected because they are confined to the home. Pensioners in Burslem in my constituency cannot get to the health clinic because the bus service stops at a certain hour at night. There are constant complaints from people about such things.

I should like the junior Minister to take on board a few points about women workers. I have had representations about the effects of maternity pay on contractual payments. Some time ago I said how important it was that new mothers should get the best possible start to motherhood. That includes the importance of maternity pay to assist mothers through this difficult although very exciting time. Constituents have told me that because of the way in which maternity pay is assessed, a woman worker sometimes receives perhaps two weeks' holiday pay on the same day, but she may get more than that, or she could end up with 60 per cent. of the amount to which she is entitled. In my constituency, women sometimes get £90 or £67, while other women in the same factory receive perhaps £110. That is wrong. Women need the maternity pay to which they are properly entitled.

One of the things that has saddened me over the last nine years is the reduction in the Health and Safety Executive's ability to enforce good, safe standards of health and safety in the workplace. One of the industrial diseases that is especially prevalent among women pottery workers in my constituency is tenosynovitis. I pay the greatest possible tribute to the wonderful work of women pottery workers. Government Departments need to do more research into this important industrial disease. Why have we not had legislation about ways in which people move and carry things in the workplace? Those issues are important.

I hope that some of the many valuable contributions by hon. Members today will not be lost. This debate will not be left after today because we shall press these matters and bring them to the attention of the public at every possible opportunity.

11.53 am

Miss Janet Fookes (Plymouth, Drake): I welcome the decision of the Government to allocate to one Minister special responsibilities for women's health. It is quite clear from the debate and from what we know from experience that the topic certainly needs to be spotlighted because it tends to be underestimated and overlooked.

The debate has ranged so widely over the possibilities that might come before the Minister that there is a danger of diluting her activities and those of her Department. It would be wiser if some of the matters discussed could be allocated to the Departments in which they more properly lie and if we could have somebody in each Department to look at matters from the woman's point of view. That might be a more practical way of following up some of the points that have been made.

I should like to turn to those elements that are clearly the responsibility of the Department of Health and Social Security. I warmly welcome the emphasis that is now being placed on preventive medicine. It is not before time, because it has certainly been one of the most neglected aspects of medicine. I was always brought up to believe that prevention was better than cure, and I am glad to see a conversion to this approach and that we are dealing on a far better and more systematic basis than ever before with the various forms of cancer that afflict women.

Men should not be left out of the concept of preventive medicine. It would be wise if we considered the concept of both sexes, although I recognise that there are special women's illnesses that require very special attention.

I hope that women will come forward and co-operate in schemes that are now under way for testing for cervical and breast cancer. May I offer one small word of caution? Several months ago I conducted a mini campaign in my health district to encourage women to come forward for the cervical smear test. I was horrified to discover that although the authorities were ready to welcome them,

[Miss Janet Fookes]

there was a distinct reluctance on the part of many women to come forward and have the test. There almost seemed to be a suggestion that there was something shameful about doing so or that women were too embarassed to go through the very easy process.

Ms. Harman: Does the hon. Lady think that the Minister's comments that cervical cancer is increased by screwing around increases the reluctance of women to come forward for cervical cancer smears? Does the hon. Lady agree that the comments of the Minister that women should not screw around discourages women from coming forward because they feel a sense of shame?

Miss Fookes: My hon. Friend the Minister has a turn of phrase which is not always the one that I would use, but that is for her to decide.

It is important that women are encouraged to come forward. I made it plain that I had undergone this test, that there was nothing to it and that I would continue to have it regularly in the hope that as a woman in public life I was not simply urging other people to do what I was not prepared to do myself. That is a more effective encouragement.

I do not know whether my experience in my own limited area is common in the country as a whole. My hon. Friend the Minister will know better than I whether there is any widespread reluctance to undergo these tests on the scale that we think is necessary and proper. If my experience is symptomatic the matter needs to be looked at in health education measures and in public discussions.

I think it is correct to say, but perhaps the Minister will correct me if I am wrong, that young girls who engage in very early sexual activity have a statistically greater risk of contracting cervical cancer. If that is so it should be dealt with by health education for the young. It is not a matter of which anyone would immediately think, especially youngsters who have been brought up to think that there is nothing morally or practically wrong—contraception has developed—in engaging in early sexual activity. I look forward to hearing a reply about that from my hon. Friend the Minister.

The newer techniques that have been developed with breast cancer do not involve the drastic amputation that many, perhaps all, women have dreaded and have found so difficult to come to terms with when it happens to them. I am not sure that those newer techniques are always embraced by the medical profession. The Jeannie Campbell appeal, which has contacted all lady Members, has been campaigning for less drastic methods where they are suitable. In a recent letter, the appeal chairman, Peter Hawkins, says:

"I am extremely disturbed by the increasing number of cases being brought to my attention in which breast cancer patients actually have suffered, or have been threatened by, unnecessary breast amputation.

In the majority this has been because the possibility of alternative conservative treatment was never discussed between diagnosis and mastectomy. In an appalling minority the patient was found, after 'automatic' mastectomy wrongly had taken place, never to have had breast cancer in the beginning."

At the end of his letter he expresses his worry about the all-embracing consent form that patients must sign before having an operation. My hon. Friend the Minister should consider quickly, if she has not done so already, the terms of the consent form. There is nothing worse than giving general consent but discovering that the operation has been carried out in a way to which one would never have consented had one been aware of the full implications. If such a thing happened to me, I would be furious and boiling mad. It would be, however, too late and could not be redressed. I urge my hon. Friend to consider that as quickly as possible.

My hon. Friend the Minister did not deal much with stress-related diseases. It is a matter that the hon. Member for Barking (Ms. Richardson) had in mind when she gave her survey of what may lie behind women's ill health. It is true that many women are subject to much stress because of work, unemployment or family problems. They should never use excessively tranquillisers and sleeping tablets as an updated version of a medieval cure. I hope that the medical profession is far more aware of the dangers of long-term addiction to what appear to be harmless drugs and that it is far more wary of prescribing them.

I was shattered to be told by an organisation called Broadreach House, which operates in the Plymouth area and specialises in drug and general chemical dependency, that it found it more difficult to wean members of both sexes off such drugs than it did to wean people off heroin or the other so-called hard drugs. Unless tranquillisers are used on a short-term basis to deal with a crisis in a woman's life or health, they are worse than what they are supposedly trying to cure. We must be far more wary of prescribing them and we need a health education programme to explain to women the dangers of using them.

On many occasions, women have visited my constituency advice bureau and said, almost as a matter of course, "I am on X, Y or Z" as though it was the most natural thing in the world. The long-term use of those drugs horrified me even before we reached our present point of knowledge about them. We shall have to give urgent attention to that problem. It is easier to give urgent attention to something that directly threatens life, but emergency treatment should be available for those other ailments or stress-related diseases that do not necessary kill but cause many problems.

It is clear that many women suffer stress simply as a result of trying to perform the traditional tasks of being a housewife and mother while holding down a full or part-time job. I know that one suggestion to tackle the problem is the all-embracing creche facilities, nursery classes and the like. I am not against those facilities and I am sure that they have a valuable role to play. A futher solution that could run alongside those facilities, which would ease that burden, would be if women could take time off when their families were young without their employment and promotion prospects being impeded when they return to the market place. We must look far more closely than we have previously at the possibility of returning women to work after a period away from their working environment while they give their first attention to their families.

That may be the prerogative of other Departments, such as the Department of Employment, but I am sure it would not be beyond the powers of my hon. Friend the Minister to interfere, in the kindest possible way, in the activities of other Departments to ensure that they consider the woman's point of view.

It would be useful if medical practitioners and nurses were more aware of how much of a burden women carry

in their domestic lives and jobs. I know that it is generally believed that the husband or partner give far more help with the housework than they used to, but my strong hunch is that for every man who does all those saintly duties there are a further nine who do precious little, continue in exactly the way that they always have but expect the women to hold down a job and carry out the domestic duties.

Ms. Richardson: I follow the hon. Lady's argument—and I apologise for being absent from the Chamber for a few minutes—but does she agree that the introduction of the concept of parental leave, whereby both partners would statutorily be allowed to take time off work, would encourage more men to take more interest and responsibility in home care?

Miss Fookes: The theory is good, but what worries me is that it might lead to one more visit to a darts, football or snooker match rather than doing what they should be while on parental leave. Having reached middle life, perhaps I am becoming slightly cynical. In theory, the concept of equal responsibility is all very well. I should like to be proved wrong and find that they might not use the opportunity for something other than for which it was intended.

As a former teacher, I am well aware of the importance of catching people young. It is important not only to have education processes and campaigns for adults but to ensure that those matters are dealt with at school. I know that teachers complain that they are always being asked to add a further item to the overloaded curriculum, but it could be subsumed, if the information were given, in the various subjects by which health education is taught.

I am particularly perturbed about the number of young girls who smoke cigarettes. It is much more difficult to give up the habit than never to start it. I have never smoked a cigarette, but those who do must feel that they are part of a highly threatened minority that is hardly allowed to exist. Even hardened smokers would probably agree, however, that it would be better if youngsters never started to smoke. A much tougher programme is needed to persuade youngsters never to begin the habit.

All the good reasons why young people should not start to smoke will not necessarily work. Young girls are most vulnerable about their appearance. They are usually deeply conscious of it. Health education must be related to how they look rather than to how they will feel or how health they will be in 20, 30, or 40 years' time. It is very easy to make a good case about never starting to smoke by relating it to their appearance.

Several Opposition Members have referred to the fact that women doctors ought to be available for those women who would prefer to see them. Some women are so diffident that they do not even make the point that they would prefer to see a woman doctor. For all those who say that they would prefer to see a woman doctor, I suspect that there are many more women who would greatly appreciate that facility but who would never voice it because they are accustomed to seeing male doctors. The most intimate details are frequently spoken about these days, but I am sure that the great majority of ordinary women are very reticent about doing so. They would find it far easier to talk to a sympathetic woman doctor whom they feel would instinctively understand what they are trying to say. However well intentioned male doctors may be, that is how very many women feel. This is particularly important to women who belong to the ethnic minority groups. It is a deep part of the culture of Asian women that they do not allow a man other than their husband to see or touch them. That may be misguided, but we shall not overcome that cultural opposition overnight. In the meantime, those women deserve as much care as any other women. They deserve the best care that is available. I hope that my hon. friend will look carefully at that aspect.

I am tempted to make a number of further points but I am aware that other hon. Members are anxious to speak in the debate. I hope that the few points that I have referred to will have made my hon. Friend the Minister aware of the fact that, although she has made an excellent start in dealing with the health of women, a great deal more remains to be done.

12.12 pm

Mr. Ronnie Fearn (Southport): Despite what was said earlier, I am not in the least embarrassed about being here this morning. Male Members of Parliament have wives and daughters and we speak to one another about these matters. Our constituents occasionally talk to us about them. I am pleased, therefore, to have this opportunity to join in the debate on women's health.

Due to the structure of our society, women play a central role in the health of the nation. They are in a position to influence the health of others and to promote good and preventive health habits in our children. They are the major carers through their role in the Health Service and in the family and the community. That is one reason why their health should be of prime importance to the Government and to this House.

Today, more than ever, women are expected to cope with a diversity of roles, with little or no support. More women work today than ever before—some out of choice, others because of the pressures of a materialistic and consumer society, and many out of pure need. Most are in low paid and low satisfaction work. Few are in positions of power or influence. At the same time we expect them to provide a good family life and to care for our children, the sick and the elderly.

In the poorer sections of the community, these pressures are added to by intolerable housing and living conditions. We hear a lot about Victorian values. In many respects this Government have reintroduced Victorian legislation for the social services and the welfare state. However, it is time that we recognised that the structure of society is not what it was. Gone is the extended family and the close-knit community that could offer help and relief from the pressures of caring for children, the sick and the elderly. Today our carers are often isolated and expected to cope on their own. I do not find it surprising that women suffer from the effects of stress, anxiety and depression. It is time that we cared for the carers.

With the emphasis on community care, it is important that we should replace the old network with a full range of community services. There should be adequate day care facilities, creches, mobile clinics, day centres, home helps and visits and short-term respite facilities. There should also be improved benefits to relieve the financial burden that is often placed on our carers. With an improvement in these services, it may be easier for men to take on the role of carers, thereby giving women the freedom of choice that they should have.

[Mr. Ronnie Fearn]

It is with some concern that I note that district health authorities are finding it necessary to close down their family planning clinics in budget-saving exercises. Family planning clinics offer a wider choice of contraceptives. The staff are often better trained in these matters than the general practitioner and can offer more time for consultations than the average GP. It has already been said twice that many women prefer to go to clinics. Quite often, it is the only opportunity that they have to be seen by a woman doctor. Family planning clinics have proved to be cost-effective and we should consider expanding, not diminishing their number.

I welcome the Under-Secretary of State's claim in a speech to the Royal College of Nursing on 19 May 1988 that the Government do not want health authorities to cut back on the provision of family planning clinics. While district authorities continue to suffer from a shortage of funds, the position is unlikely to improve.

We hear much from the Government about freedom of choice. Many of their policies are justified by that cry, yet the centralisation and rationalisation programme in the hospital service and the cuts due to the financial crisis have limited the choice for many women. For instance, it is often the maternity wings of hospitals that are hit. Expectant mothers find that the criterion of choice becomes not the services provided but how far and for how long they will have to travel to reach a hospital.

The centralised programme is sometimes justified by the claim that health authorities are providing centres of excellence, equipped with all the latest advances in technology and equipment. When that claim is applied to obstetrics, we are in danger of pressurising women into giving birth in unnatural clinical surroundings and, in the majority of cases, with unnecessary technical equipment. The Government are on record as saying that their aim is to encourage hospital births in order to reduce the mortality rate, yet there is no confirmed evidence to support the theory that the fall in the mortality rate is due to hospital confinements. Hospitals have a far higher rate of infection of the mother than have home births. There needs to be more scientific evaluation of present methods before we continue to pressure women into high-tech births.

The real choice for women will come when we view pregnancy and birth as the natural phenomena that they are. We should provide the maternity services that the World Health Organisation recommends. The expectant mother must be given the opportunity, in consultation with her doctor and midwife, to choose the birth that suits her best. Therefore, the number of midwives needs to be increased and after-care services expanded.

That latter point is particularly important, because, as a result of financial and staffing pressures, more and more women are being sent home 24 hours after giving birth. The latest information from the Royal College of Midwives is that, between 1979 and 1987, the birth rate increased by a further 40,000 babies, but the claim that more midwives are being employed could be challenged and the Royal College of Midwives says that we are talking about only half a midwife per unit per week.

Later in life, many women have to suffer the effects of the menopause without any hope of alleviation of the symptoms of menopause-related diseases such as osteoporosis, which is connected with the death of many older women. In June 1986, the *Nursing Times and Nursing Mirror* estimated that osteoperosis treatment was costing the Health Service £2 million per week, with a third of hospital beds occupied by women suffering from related ailments. We have heard with interest about hormone replacement therapy, which may offer women a better quality of life. However, before it becomes commonplace, there should be a further investigation of the short and long-term effects of such treatments, and more information and training should be given in methods of prescribing it.

The current financial crisis and long waiting lists mean that many women needlessly suffer the pain and discomfort of osteoarthritis and other conditions. Yet we hear of more ward closures and of a doctor in Sheffield contributing a third of his salary to keep his specialist osteoporosis unit for another two months. In the majority of areas, provision is not good enough. In Southport, we are lucky: a new hospital is due to open at the end of the year, although there again, it is to replace outdated buildings.

Four major causes of death in women have been identified as coronary disease, lung cancer, breast cancer, and cervical cancer. The last two are specific to women and I welcome the Government's attempt to improve matters through screening programmes. However, those programmes will not be completely successful unless the Government also provide and fully fund the necessary back-up services. I note with concern that units that began their programmes in January are already having to close because of a shortage of scientific and laboratory staff. With increased emphasis on preventive screening and new laboratory techniques it is imperative that the Government tackle the problem by improving and funding pay awards and improving career structures in the service.

The mammography programme requires a better training scheme for radiologists to prevent unnecessary recalls, and possibly the employment of specialist teams to ensure that the correct diagnosis is made and the correct treatment given. Both screening programmes should involve more counselling and after-care services for women who are proved positive.

Perhaps most important of all, the hospital services must be given the means to provide the treatment necessary. There is little point in introducing systems of early detection if treatment is thwarted by lack of equipment, lack of staff, and long waiting lists. There is also a danger that in the current crisis, less serious gynaecological cases will be pushed further down the list, with the result that more women will suffer months, if not years, of ill health, perhaps with more serious consequences.

The Governnment must look at the whole picture. Women play a pivotal role in our society. In an ideal world, men would share that role, but until the structures of our society are changed to accommodate that, it is especially important that women are given the local, community and work-based services that they require to meet the demands that society and Government place on them. The better health that women enjoy, the more benefit will accrue to us all.

12.26 pm

Mr. John Browne (Winchester): I declare an interest as a director of the Churchill Clinic, which is in the private sector. I very much welcome this first Government debate on women's health. The Minister, the hon. Member for Barking (Ms. Richardson) and others have alluded to the fact that not only is our total Health Service of vital national importance but it affects women more than men both because they live longer and because they have special roles such as childbirth, child care, and so on. They also have the role of educating children. As I hope to illustrate, preventive medicine is a key aspect. The debate is particularly timely and I am glad to have the opportunity to speak in it.

The National Health Service is about 40 years old and it is in a crisis of change. It has been alleged that the Government do not care and that they have instituted cuts. I find such allegations amazing. When I read Government statements or listen to Ministers, as I have over the past nine years, I find it hard to see how allegations of not caring could be justified. One type of caring is to give money away; the other is to ensure that that money is properly spent and that it genuinely goes to those who need it. That is effective care.

Let me deal with the allegation of cuts. Spending on the Health Service increased from £7.5 billion in 1979 to £22 billion this year. That is an amazing increase—30 per cent. and more ahead of inflation. Opposition Members' claims are therefore difficult to substantiate.

It is interesting to note that as more money has been spent on the National Health Service in vast amounts, so the complaints have increased. The complaints reached a crescendo last winter, which makes it obvious to me that the problem is not one of money and that we need to look somewhere else for the cause. Therefore, I greatly admired the Government's courage in not responding to the crescendo of complaint by pouring more money into what is effectively a leaking bucket. Instead, they decided to spend on a maintenance basis and conduct a top-level review to establish, on behalf of every citizen in the country, where the taxpayers' money must go to ensure that in the next 40 years the Health Service will still work, and work to the benefit of the nation as a whole.

As we all know, health is a complex problem. As has been said by the Minister and others, more people live for longer. As they live longer, more complex demands are placed on the Health Service. Furthermore, expectations have changed. When I was a lad, for the symptoms of many ailments one readily accepted a glass of hot milk and two aspirins and the recommendation that one should go to bed. Today people expect more sophisticated treatment, or at least more sophisticated consultation, for the same symptoms.

Technology has improved, and that is greatly to our advantage. But that has happened at a price far in excess of inflation. There is a technology expenditure curve, in addition to an inflation curve. Furthermore, high technology operations place much greater demands on the resources of the Health Service.

Technology has enabled operations such as kidney transplants, which were unheard of 30 or even 20 years ago, to become routine. They are very demanding on Health Service resources and there are huge opportunity costs. If kidney transplants are to be carried out, what operations will need to be stopped? What is the opportunity cost? There is also a greatly increased awareness of new types of disease such as stress, which has already been mentioned this morning. That all leads to increased demands on the Health Service.

Somewhat misguided comments have been made today about alcoholism and so on being directly related to unemployment. My county of Hampshire has recently been told that it has the worst record in the country for violence against the police. There were 34 cases last year, 90 per cent. of which were alcohol-related. Yet Hampshire is not an area of high unemployment—indeed, it has low unemployment and high earnings per head. Therefore, we cannot simply and justifiably relate stress to high unemployment.

The good health of the nation is absolutely essential to our survival as a developed nation. However, it is not just a question of money—although funding is, of course, a critical problem. I hope that, in their current top-level review the Government will turn heavily towards preventive medicine. I apologise to my hon. Friend the Minister for not having given her notice, but I would be interested to know how much of the NHS budget is spent on preventive medicine. Even without knowing the figure, I guess that it is not enough. In that top-level review, preventive medicine must be seen as a massive source of cost saving. Government spending on preventive medicine should be seen as an investment in the future to reduce potential costs and claims on the NHS. Just as with buildings, to modernise, maintain and take preventive action is a good philosophy.

I support the Government's aim of increasing the emphasis on self-reliance, and women can play an influential and important role in that. However, the Government must also play a key role in preventive medicine. First, they must regulate on matters such as pollution. Secondly, they must provide preventive services such as screening, and thirdly, they must publicise much more widely the good programmes that they are following, such as immunisation, and educate on such matters as diet.

I know that my hon. Friend the Minister has done a tremendous amount in that area and I much admire her courage in challenging even the sanctity of the English breakfast and other dishes that are thought to be sacred. That took guts. She had to take a great deal of flak following some of her comments. The Government's first role in preventive medicine should include action on pollution, especially passive smoking and leaded petrol. Secondly, there should be action on what I call lifestyle —diet, alcohol and active smoking. The third area is in services such as immunisation and screening.

The recent Froggatt report shows conclusively that passive smoking alone—and I am not yet speaking of active smoking—increases the incidence of lung cancer by between 10 and 30 per cent. That is an enormous figure. Think of how many people are suffering and using the resources of the Health Service because of lung cancer predominantly caused by smoking.

When I spoke in the Chamber on 9 May 1980 during a smoking and health debate, I said:

> "I believe that the Government should consider legislation on non-smoking areas, particularly enclosed, confined public spaces, such as lifts, cinemas, waiting rooms and, indeed, the Committee Rooms and Dining Room of this House—a place where we are fortunate to have a specific Smoking Room set aside."—[*Official Report*, 9 May 1980; Vol. 984, c. 714.]

[Mr. John Browne]

I was almost laughed out of the Chamber for saying that. I am glad to say that, today, I think the story would be very different. Indeed, there is now an early-day motion along those lines.

Subsequent early-day motions have stated that we should not have such a tyranny of restricting smoking.

The Government must take strong action. Obviously,people have a right to smoke—I am not trying to take away that right—but the Government's duty is to defend a far more basic right than the right to smoke, and that is the right of the non-smoker to breathe fresh air. The Government have not grasped that nettle firmly enough. Leaving it to the free market is not enough. Every day people are unnecessarily being caused mortal injury. More legislative action should be taken, and the voluntary codes and so on should be toughened up. I realise that the Government believe in the free market, but legislation can hasten the free market. We have seen that done in many areas.

I now refer to leaded petrol. As we know, there are approximately 18 million cars in the United Kingdom. Two million motor cars, without any adaptation, could use unleaded petrol. Another 7 million cars, with the smallest adjustment to their ignition timing, could immediately take unleaded petrol. In fact, as a demonstration, James Bond's Aston-Martin was converted in 25 seconds. It is not an expensive deal. Most garages could do it for free. If they charged £1, they would get a lot of money for it. So, today nine million cars or 50 per cent. of the cars on our roads—could run on unleaded fuel. Actually, the consumption of unleaded petrol, despite the fact that it is 6p a gallon cheaper than leaded petrol—thanks to the Chancellor—is less than 1 per cent. of petrol sales in this country. Again, the Government must invest more money in publicity to put the message across.

I now refer to what I call lifestyle—food, alcohol and tobacco. Cholesterol and calorie intake has been proved of great significance and importance to health. The Minister has done a tremendous job in highlighting that. I am pleased to hear about the new consultancy on breast feeding. Breast feeding and early feeding habits of children are an aspect of foods. That is why women's role is so important. Breast feeding can affect people's metabolism for the rest of their lives. They become fat-inclined or not fat-inclined, sweet-toothed or not sweet-toothed, and so on. Such matters must be drummed home and money must be spent in terms of investment by the Government. Much more publicity is needed about diet. In terms of legislation, the Government should demand that calorie and cholesterol contents should be printed on food packages at point of sale.

In terms of alcohol—you will be shocked, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by the statistics that I hope to give—750,000 Britons are seriously ill as a result of alcohol abuse. That means that 2 million or more families are affected. Alcohol abuse is the United Kingdom's third most dangerous disease. Women are particularly prone to the harm of excessive alcohol intake, especially in the 25 to 37 age group. Excessive drinking was involved in 80 per cent. of deaths by fire, 40 per cent. of pedestrian traffic accidents, 33 per cent. of child abuse cases, 50 per cent. of murders, 30 per cent. of non-traffic accident deaths, and 33 per cent. of domestic accidents.

As I have said already, I am ashamed that, in Hampshire, we have experienced the worst rise in violence against the police. It occurs throughout the country, and it is rising at an alarming degree. Ninety per cent. of such offences are related to alcohol.

In the past 20 years, alcohol consumption has doubled, not declined. In 1982, £12·3 billion was spent on alcohol. No less than 38p of every leisure pound is spent on alcohol. That is more than is spent on food, light, newspapers, cigarettes, books or holidays. Alcohol has a high human cost—it is responsible for between 5,000 and 10,000 premature deaths each year, and for more than one in five patients being in NHS care. The monetary cost of alcohol misuse is estimated to be more than £1 billion in lost production and more than £1·7 billion in social costs.

The cost is huge. The Government have a duty to publicise that fact far more effectively. We have hard-hitting campaigns, which I support, on AIDS, for example, but the campaign on alcohol is nowhere near hard-hitting enough. Not enough money is spent on it. Will the Government seriously consider demanding through legislation that a health warning be printed on each bottle of alcohol? A label could be affixed, just as a duty-free label is attached. That would not be too expensive and it could be done quickly.

Mrs. [illegible]: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that it would be cheaper for the public purse if we restricted the amount of money spent by alcohol producers on promoting their products? If we did that, we might not need to spend public money combating their advertising.

Mr. Browne: I have some sympathy with that line, but I am more of a free marketeer than the hon. Lady. There are methods other than restricting producers, which I shall describe later. I believe that we should go for the advertisers and prohibit what can be advertised. That would have an immediate effect on what is spent on advertising.

The active smoking of tobacco is a major cause of lung cancer, heart disease and cervical cancer. It is estimated that smoking costs the NHS £500 million a year and that it causes more than 300 deaths a day. We have had pretty good results since 1979. Deaths from lung cancer have declined by 9 per cent., but among women have risen by more than 20 per cent. especially among women in their 20s. Girls aged between 11 and 15 now smoke nearly twice as much as boys of the same age. Smoking is a killer. I support the Government health warnings, but they are not enough. They are not hard-hitting enough. The Government must spend a lot more money to publicise the dangers of smoking. Alcohol and tobacco are killers and they require legislative action.

I am a director of a satellite television company. We have a self-denying ordinance—we will not accept any advertising of tobacco or alcohol products. That has an opportunity cost for us. We do it as a self-initiative, but I believe that the Government should prohibit advertising of tobacco and alcohol products on television, which is such an influential medium.

The Government have done a tremendous job on immunisation. The figures speak for themselves. There is now a 68 per cent. take-up of the vaccination for whooping cough, whereas it was only 31 per cent. in 1978, and there is now a 71 per cent. take-up of the measles vaccination, whereas it was only 48 per cent. in 1978. There is more to

be done, however, and I welcome the introduction this October of the combined, measles, mumps and rubella vaccination. This is probably the biggest change for 20 years. However, when I look at the grant of £48,000 that the Government have given to the Rubella Council, I think that that illustrates the problem. When one looks at the cost to the National Health Service of £22 billion, the £48,000 shrinks into an insignificance that it does not deserve.

On the subject of screening, particularly for cancer of the cervix and breast, we know that early detection is critical in successfully treating many of these cancers. We have about 2,000 deaths a year from cervical cancer. The screening that has already been carried out is estimated to have saved about 14 per cent. of those under threat. However, the new five-year screening programme that my hon. Friend has announced is estimated to save 84 per cent. of those who are screened. It is, therefore, a very laudable scheme that has been introduced. It is the first fully comprehensive programme in the world. I believe that the Government should be praised for taking this initiative last February particularly by extending the programme to cover women from 20 years of age. I wholly support that. It is all good stuff. Obviously, as it is a trendsetter for the world, we can expect problems, because we are on the cutting edge.

I have to say—my hon. Friend has already mentioned it in her speech—that we have a problem in Winchester and in Basingstoke, because our district health authorities are situated in areas where competing earnings are very high, the cost of housing is very high, and the payment given to those laboratory technicians—people with two A-levels and six months' training—of £7,000 a year is not enough. They are not striking, as they would have done several years ago, but they are getting on their bikes and moving to other employment and to other agencies. Therefore, what has happened is that Winchester and Basingstoke health authorities do not have the laboratory technicians sufficient to support this excellent initiative. Something has to be done, because women in my constituency are now being re-exposed to the risks that existed before the Government took those initiatives. As my hon. Friend has said, I believe that there are 75 per cent. of other laboratories that are under-utilised. The problem is that Winchester local health authority does not know this. It does not know which those under-utilised health authorities are, so how can it send its smears to them?

Mrs. Currie: It does now.

Mr. Browne: My hon. Friend says that it does now, and I am very pleased to hear that. One alternative is to send them into the private sector.

The other idea I must mention to my hon. Friend is that of local pay premiums. Our problem is only the tip of the iceberg. There are people on the clerical staff in our family practitioner units, starting as VDU operators, who earn £4,200 a year; while British Telecom in the same area pay £6,000 a year; local government £5,500; and the Civil Service £6,000. Effectively, the FPC is becoming a training ground for other people. They train and then move on to higher salaries.

The Government have to look at the private sector, for examples. In the private sector, I understand that in Winchester the National Westminster bank, after someone has been on probation for four months, pay a £750 a year premium on their salary. I believe that the Government have to look at this in terms of the National Health Service and regional pay. As a result, Hampshire FPC is short of 25 people from a staff of 115. It is just under 25 per cent. understaffed. Unless this is sorted out, the system will collapse. It is an excellent system and highly efficient. The administrative charges are less than 1 per cent.

Our FPC is a very effective system and yet it is in danger of collapsing because of the low pay of certain of the staff. I think that the Government must examine it and consider stopping capital spending, maybe for a year, in order to put these wages right. They must regrade staff and pay regional cost-of-living premiums. As I have said, if it is not put right there will be a collapse of the cervical screening system let alone the breast screening system that we hope is to come. It will just not get off the ground unless collective action is taken.

To close, I believe that preventive medicine is absolutely essential. It is very cost-effective. The Government must legislate on smoking in enclosed public places. They must legislate on alcohol to get a health warning on bottles. They must legislate to curb advertising of alcoholic and tobacco products, particularly on television. I think that they also must also ensure that there is legislation to require that cholesterol and calorie values are printed on packs at point of sale.

As I have said many times, I think that the Goverment must spend much more on publicising both their own good works, such as immunisation and so on, and the whole concept of self-reliance and what people, particularly mothers, can do in this education process of preventive medicine. I know that the Minister, as I have said before, has already done a great job. I am sure that she will continue. She has shown great courage and I wish her good luck in this very challenging and exciting venture.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. I ask hon. Members to keep at least one eye on the clock. There are at least five hon. Members who have been in the Chamber throughout the debate who are hoping to contribute to it. I am sure that we would all be disappointed if they were unable to do so.

12.52 pm

Ms. Hilary Armstrong (Durham, North-West): I have a train to catch, so I shall not be too long, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I rise with some trepidation as a woman from the north, a category with which the Minister has not been too pleased. Women from the north have suffered some abuse of the past few years. I hope that the guilt that many women in the north have had laid upon them will not emerge in any way in my speech. I try not to behave in that way. As I have said, I rose with some trepidation.

One of the issues on which the Minister and I have corresponded on several occasions has been covered already in the debate, so I shall try to be brief about it. Cervical screening in my area is an issue that has been brought to my attention on numerous occasions. I have frequently found that the Minister's loose talk does not help. I ask her to examine again some of the reasons why

[Ms. Hilary Armstrong]

women suffer from this form of cancer. I ask her to take on board the fact that there is a reason to which she has not alluded.

The incidence of cervical cancer is not necessarily because women have a number of partners. There are women who have a partner with whom they sleep who has a job which is normally classified as dirty—in coalmining or the steel industry, for example. The incidence of cervical cancer in areas where these occupations predominate is higher than elsewhere in the country. I assure the Minister that I and others are convinced that that is the major reason for the incidence of cervical cancer in my area.

As there are no longer any coalmines or steelworks in my constituency, the world may begin to change. Women in my constituency have been working hard to organise and improve the services that are available, and it is not exactly helpful to tell them that they suffer for the reason that the Minister has given. That does not encourage them to continue to strive for better services.

I ask the Minister to examine the priority age for screening. There seems to be evidence that more attention should be paid to it for those in a younger age group. I accept what she has said about breast cancer screening, but I do not think that that is true of cervical cancer screening. What is the cost of putting work out to private clinics?

Last year I wrote to the Minister about a particular case. A friend of mine was screened in November and did not hear until the end of March that she had had a positive test. It is exactly a year ago this week—I remember it well, because it was the week of the general election—that she eventually had an appointment at the clinic to have her condition dealt with. It was well into August before she knew that she was clear. It is not enough just to stand here and say that that is appalling. The effect of that on women is devastating. My friend was a nurse, but that did not seem to help her. It was a devastating experience, and she was almost agoraphobic. She managed to continue to work, but little else. It has had a devastating effect on her confidence in having tests and on her future life.

I was interested in what the Minister said about the rate of screening and the Government's objectives. In 1986, we knew that 60 per cent. of women with cervical cancer had never been screened. We know that elsewhere there is an effective screening programme which reaches 80 per cent. of all eligible women. At that stage, we could not say what percentage of women was reached by our programme, and I should be interested to know what progress has been made on that.

I was interested in the speech of the hon. Member for Winchester (Mr. Browne). He represents a town which in a league table drawn up by a local northern university is shown to be the most prosperous town in Britain. That same table puts Consett, a town in my constituency, at the bottom. The problems that the hon. Gentleman identified in recruiting medical laboratory scientific officers are exactly the same in my constituency. We have enormous problems, particularly because of salary scales, so they are not just created by success and a high wage economy. Consett is at the bottom of the league table because, despite new jobs, we are a low-wage economy. Even then, it is incredibly difficult to recruit MLSOs in the area.

In a recent letter, the chair of the Northern Regional health authority states of north-west Durham:

"Latterly the service has been affected by staff illness and this resulted in a reporting delay of around ten weeks by the end of December 1987, but again by the use of a private laboratory that interval is now down to around six weeks."

He tells me that, in the other district health authority that covers my constituency, the same sort of problems exist.

I know, partly because I was chair of the union which recruits MLSOs, that the recruiting problem in both areas was acute, as was the difficulty of retaining them. They feel that they are not recognised as part of a health care team, that their work and contribution is devalued, and that that is reflected in their salary. Everyone who works in the Health Service has a vital role to play. To see the whole work force as a health care team is crucial if we are to get our preventive health care and responses right. Some health care workers feel not only that their contribution has been devalued, but that they are played off against workers whom the Government see as the hands-on, face-to-face workers. In fact, the contribution of the other workers is equally important. I am not saying that the work of nurses and doctors is not important; of course it is. Others, however, have a vital role to play, and we look to the Government to recognise that.

How do we enable and encourage more women to know, and be confident in, their health services? One of my local community health councils recently carried out a detailed survey, which found that the most disturbing fact about cancer screening was that some 27·6 per cent. of those tested were never informed of the results. The majority presumably assumed that no news was good news, but for some, as I have said, that was very much the wrong assumption.

The survey also discovered that many women did not know or feel confident about finding out when and where to go. Working with women's health projects in the Tyneside area, I found that they were largely able to overcome the problem, vitally affecting the number of self-referrals. The atmosphere and the campaigning nature of the clinics gave women confidence, as they knew that they could go along, meet some of their friends and be dealt with by a woman who would not only do a test but talk to them, listen to their problems and ensure that there was a comprehensive response.

Another group who have been to see me, and who are very distressed about what they see as a breakdown in the service, are the community nurses. Those in one patch of my constituency say that exactly the same number of staff as 10 years ago deal with a caseload 70 per cent. higher. Given that sort of increased pressure on community nurses and on those who try to provide a more holistic approach to health care, is it any wonder that women feel unsure about where to go and what to do? It is partly because they do not want to put additional stress on those whom they know are already overstretched.

Whatever label is attached to the service—well woman clinics, or community health care—I think that the Minister knows what we are talking about. I hope that she will work carefully to ensure that opportunities are provided, particularly in areas in which health care is especially important, because the figures show women to be at higher risk. Cuts in the number of well woman clinics, and the reduction in spending on health education, are not what I see as a positive commitment to support.

I should like to mention many other matters, but I shall be brief. The community nursing problem affects specific issues, which the Minister mentioned and which I had

meant to say something about—mental health. Community nurses have a crucial impact on that problem, and I hope that the Government will take it on. Let me also stress the importance of an effective occupational health service. There are now many more women at work; many more now have to work. There is clear evidence from Sheffield that an effective occupational health service improves not just attendance and sickness rates, but the general well-being of employees—and therefore I trust, that of employers. Moreover, it has increased productivity. The International Labour Organisation has suggested how specifically to encourage the development of a good occupational health service.

There are many other issues on the agenda and I believe that the Government know what they are. I press the Government not to lecture women about what they are not doing properly, but to ensure that women can meet their health worries and those of their families.

I remember when I spoke to one of the Minister's colleagues in the canteen downstairs. I noticed that he was having an extremely unhealthy lunch with lots of chips and other fried things. I said that a member of his Government would not be happy about that and he replied, "The trouble is that every time I hear her, it pushes me to have more chips." The Minister should learn from that. Lecturing people about what they should do frequently pushes them the other way.

The Government need to encourage and support good practices, and I accept that I must also do that. The Government must consider first how to give women positive support and encouragement rather than just lectures.

1.5 pm

Mrs. Gillian Shephard (Norfolk, South-West): I am glad to have the opportunity to take part in this debate and equally glad that it is taking place in this Chamber, which focuses all too infrequently on matters of exclusive concern to women. I congratulate the Minister on initiating this debate.

I should like to focus—perhaps more narrowly than other hon. Members—upon the current issues of cancer screening and well woman clinics. I should also like to mention the traditionally included specialisms of maternity and family planning and broader issues that are of particular interest to those who are practically involved in Health Service work—the way in which services that benefit women are delivered and health promotion and education specifically geared to women.

Funding is not the most important element in the successful promotion of women's health, but the way in which available funds are used is important. I am concerned about the effect that local professional enthusiasm may have either positively or negatively on the way in which women's health is regarded.

There should be a combination of Government initiatives and good work at local level, which stems from the health authorities or family practitioner committees as well as the involvement of other relevant local statutory and voluntary agencies. Obviously women must accept that their health is as important as the health of their families and they must accept that responsibility. The private sector must be involved, but most importantly, there must be professional enthusiasm for the cause.

It is useful to consider what has been done by the Government to promote women's health. Obviously the Government can act not only by directly funding their own initiatives, but by pump-priming and initiating others' efforts. The most recent Government-funded initiative—it has had considerable airing this morning—has been the introduction of computerised call and recall systems for cervical cancer testing and the imminent introduction of mammography services. The introduction of the computerised cervical cancer testing system cost £10 million and involved an enormous amount of effort by Health Service staff to computerise many millions of manual records. When we last discussed the system during the passage of the Health and Medicines Bill, some hon. Members, notably Opposition Members, expressed their concern about the way in which the scheme was falling short. To redress the balance, I should like to illustrate the successful way in which that system is operating to serve the health authorities of my constituency.

In the area served by the Norfolk family practitioner committee as a whole, we had our computerised system of call and recall up and running by September, seven months before the Government deadline. The West Norfolk and Wisbech health authority has since January had a system of recall every three years for all women between the ages of 18 and 66, and of call every three years for all women between 35 and 66. The laboratory turn around is four weeks.

The Norwich health authority also serves part of north-west Norfolk, and its recall operates for women between the ages of 20 and 34 every three years. For women between the ages of 35 and 66, it operates every five years, and the call operates for women between 35 and 66 every five years. The laboratory turn around is just over four weeks despite the enormous increase in the amount of work with which the laboratories have had to deal.

While these authorities offer three-year periods of call, they are correctly concentrating their major efforts on getting an increased response to first-time call-out which in East Anglia as a whole is presently 40 per cent. That is not yet good enough, but there is a very good proportion of older women.

Ms. Ruddock: We all applaud the situation that the hon. Lady is outlining. The health authority in my area has been able to get that kind of system going. But a problem arises after the first laboratory turn around time of four weeks when there is an abnormal smear recording and women have to return. There are then enormous delays. Women have an abnormal smear and do not know what is wrong. That is because of the lack of colposcopy services. Perhaps the hon. Lady will tell the House about the colposcopy service in her health authority.

Mrs. Shephard: I shall be delighted to do that. In the West Norfolk and Wisbech health authority there is no problem. There has been some delay in the Norwich health authority but a colposcopy service is being instituted with the help of the voluntary sector. That will be instituted shortly in the Norwich health authority and that will reduce the problem. The problem is nothing like as extreme as that which the hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock) described in her health authority.

These health districts have responded very positively to Government plans for mammography. The West Norfolk

[Mrs. Shephard]

and Wisbech health authority is not the best known in the world, but since January it has been providing a mammography service for women between 50 and 64 on four evenings a week and on Saturday mornings. It is on a self-referral basis and geared to suit the hours when women are free to go along. Since January, 500 women have been examined and in some cases that has resulted in the saving of life.

The Government can be involved in ways other than the funding initiatives of which I have given examples. Sometimes they can achieve as much by pump-priming, an example of which was the £100,000 announced at the start of European Cancer Week. That will clearly help women's health causes in the broader sense. Sometimes Government can help by encouraging effort by others. An interesting example of this approach was described by the Minister in connection with the breast-feeding initiative. The Government deserve to be congratulated on bringing forward cancer screening. That has put the United Kingdom ahead of the rest of our European partners. The Government are also to be congratulated on taking the whole issue seriously and for raising the national consciousness about it.

As important as Government initiatives is the degree of professional enthusiasm for the cause at local level. There is no advantage in the Government insisting that women's health is important if those running local health services do not agree and do nothing about it. I am struck by the contrast between the achievements of the two health authorities that I have mentioned, which serve my constituency, and the problems described during the passage of the Health and Medicines Bill. Although East Anglia is a RAWP receiving region, it is still several percentage points below its full allocation.

I hope that no hon. Member will suggest that south-west Norfolk is somehow part of the palmy middle class south-eastern part of the United Kingdom, because it certainly is not. As well as the problems of sparsity of rural services that are costly to run, parts of it are submerged by water for three months of the year, which makes the delivery of services a challenge that is not commonly met elsewhere—I suggest not in inner cities.

The reason for west Norfolk's success is that for some years there has been a ready acceptance at professional level—at doctors' level—that women's health is important. A well woman clinic has been running at two centres in my constituency for years. When cancer-screening services were introduced, the professionals led the way, the Government provided the money and the political and administrative will followed.

When we tried to introduce a well woman clinic in Norwich, we met with less success. There is one there now, but there was resistance from the serried ranks of male GPs, backed up by male consultants, all of whom said plaintively, "If a woman has something to say, surely she can say it to me. I am always sympathetic." That encapsulates one of the problems with women's health. It is vital that there should be professional enthusiasm and commitment to the cause.

It is important that all professional and voluntary bodies should be involved when a cancer-screening initiative is launched. Any local initiative must reach women more effectively through GPs and dental surgeries, health centres, hospitals, schools, playgroups, voluntary organisations, women's organisations and the private sector than any national campaign, however well organised it is. Women need to know that the service is available, free and painless. An envelope dropping on to a doormat, backed up by extensive local publicity and all the relevant agencies, must be the right way forward.

I mentioned earlier the broader issue of the delivery of services, which in a rural area is vital. The Norwich health district has an excellent scheme of community care groups, which involves a range of health professionals attached to doctors' surgeries or groups of surgeries. Early incidence of forms of mental health that affect women, such as post-natal depression, is picked up by a range of health professionals.

Mention was made of carers, almost uniquely a women's group. Recently, one of our community care groups decided that more emphasis needed to be placed on the services available for carers. A meeting was arranged by the health educator. She involved the local youth and community services and provided a sitting service so that carers could attend the meeting. The Women's Royal Voluntary Service organised the transport and, as the meeting was held in a school, the local parent-teacher association provided refreshment. Information was given by the DHSS, voluntary organisations and Health Service staff. We must have such team work if we are effectively to deliver those services to women where it matters—close to their homes.

Much importance must be attached to the local promotion of cancer-screening services. If health education is to run effectively, it must involve all agencies and, where appropriate, the private sector. Large companies such as Tesco and Sainsbury concentrate on healthy lifestyles.

Health education is almost more important for women than men. Clearly, the advice that is taken on board by women is absorbed for the benefit of their families. In that regard, I am glad that the producer of a certain sunflower margarine has withdrawn the suggestion, which it extensively promoted in a former advertising campaign, that it was more important to keep one's man healthy than oneself. I note that Flora is now thought to be good for everyone, not just for men.

For the information of the hon. Member for Barking (Ms. Richardson), I live in Lambeth. I have no problem in obtaining cheap, healthy food at my local Sainsbury, Tesco or Bejam. Local competition provides a wonderful baked bean that is much cheaper than I can find in Downham Market.

The promotion of women's health is a team job. The Government have their part to play. The Government have done just that in many vital areas, but if their policies are to be translated into effective action there must be local professional conviction, local action, local promotion, local involvement of all agencies in both the private and the voluntary sector and acceptance by the individual woman that her health is her responsibility.

1.20 pm

Mr. John Hughes (Coventry, North-East): I am most grateful for this opportunity to contribute to the debate. Having had to wait to speak for so long, I feel that I am suffering from what could accurately be diagnosed as "manopause."

Due to the effect of Government policies, there exists what I would describe as a Dorian Gray health service. Its looks bear little reality to health in general and to the many specialist areas of health care that are so important to women—none more so than primary care in the home.

It is a fact that all the knowledge gained from many health surveys has established that in areas of deprivation where there is high unemployment the physical and mental health of families is considerably worse than that of families in employment. Until recently, however, direct evidence that unemployment causes poorer health was not available. There is now substantial evidence that unemployment causes a deterioration in both physical and mental health.

Although the well-established pattern of women having lower death rates than men but experiencing higher sickness rates still holds true, recent studies have shown that the position is far more complex. Women's health varies according to social class, employment and marital status in ways that are only just beginning to be understood. The health of working-class women is particularly poor.

Striking regional disparities in health can still be observed. What is becoming increasingly clear from fresh evidence are the great inequalities that exist between communities living side by side in the same region. Numerous studies at local authority ward level have pinpointed pockets of poor health that correspond to areas of social and material deprivation. Alongside them, areas with much better health profiles can be detected and they exhibit more affluent characteristics.

Ms. Mildred Gordon (Bow and Poplar): My hon. Friend might like to know that in 1986 the key population and vital statistics of local authority and health authority areas showed that women married to men in the manual socio-economic category suffered from three times as much chronic sickness as the wives of men who are classified as professionals. I represent part of Tower Hamlets, one of the most deprived areas in the country. It has the highest morbidity rate in London. The morbidity rate is inversely related to socio-economic groups, so I could not agree more with what my hon. Friend has said.

Mr. Hughes: I thank my hon. Friend for that contribution and I hope that the Minister will note it.

The differential is also to be found in other groupings. Although there has been a fall in all-cause death rates in Britain, the improvements in health have not been experienced equally by all sections of the population. Non-manual groups have experienced a much greater decline in death rates than manual groups. Thus, the gap between the two groups has widened. Futhermore, the number of deaths from coronary heart disease and lung cancer has increased alarmingly in the manual groups, whereas there has been a substantial decline in the number of such deaths in non-manual groups. There is also a widening gap between rates of chronic sickness in the manual and non-manual groups.

In our society of abundant poverty, those are the inequalities of health that apply to the deprived areas of Coventry, such as Willenhall, Stoke Aldermoor, Wood End and Foleshill, which have higher mortality rates and more ill health than other areas. The provision of health care, which comes under the jurisdiction of Lady Butterworth, the chairperson of the Coventry family practitioner committee, fails to take that background into consideration. Instead, Lady Butterworth allocates the same number of deputising calls to each practice in Coventry. She makes no allowance for social class or the health status of the patients in a practice. In the process, she exacerbates the inequalities of health, to the detriment of young mothers with children and old women who require practitioner services.

During her period in office, Lady Butterworth has refused permanently to allocate an extra allowance for the deputising service to practices located in the areas that I have mentioned. That leaves doctors with two choices: they can dispense more prescriptions, which would result in a worsening service for women in deprived areas at even higher cost to the taxpayer, or they can caringly and humanely respond to calls above their allocation and find themselves subjected to the most detailed investigation. The doctors in one practice had to explain their actions over a period of 365 days.

With iron-fisted rigidity, Lady Butterworth applies the most draconian measures when a little understanding and a small amount of extra allowance—the cost of which would be far less than the cost of extra prescriptions—would result in better care for women. She refuses to recognise that women suffer from major illnesses and require visits from the doctor more frequently outside normal hours than is provided for in the average allowance. In women's interests, she is obliged to ensure that such visits are available. In other parts of the country such miserly allocation has led to general practitioners who realise that they cannot win applying to opt out of night and weekend work and to forgo the related fees. That is to the detriment of women and I am determined that that will not happen in Coventry.

I feel that it would be in the interests of the well-being of women patients in Coventry if a new chairperson were appointed to the Coventry family practitioner committee, as the present chair has failed to fulfil her duties in many ways. She has allowed money obtained by fraud, which should have been used for the well-being of women in the deprived areas of Coventry, to be retained by a practitioner. She has allowed a single-practice doctor, who claimed a partnership allowance, attracting a higher payment entitlement, fraudulently to retain £42,000, and so failed to imitate the exemplary chairmanship of her predecessor, who recovered £19,000 in similar circumstances. Fraud appears to be condoned when a chairperson of the FPC refuses to carry out the instructions of the committee by suggesting that the matter be buried and when no attempt is made to recover the money. The case was covered up and the police were not informed.

This culpable default of duty also applies in the case where a GP is allowed to retain a fortnight's income when that GP, against the interests of his women patients and in complete breach of his contract, disappeared for two weeks' holiday.

The circumstances in Coventry require immediate investigation. The present term of office of the chairperson should be instantly teminated if the chair has not the grace to resign in the meantime.

The attitude that prevailed impaired even my representations when I sought the assistance of the Minister because of the failure of the FPC to provide adequate and stable care for one of my chronically sick constituents, who had been shunted from doctor to doctor after being placed for only the minimum period. I am

[Mr. Hughes]

certain that that is only the tip of the iceberg and that many more patients are being subjected to a process that is a contradiction of the ethos of the Hippocratic oath.

The circumstances in Coventry, to which I have drawn the attention of the House, are not unique—I am sure that they exist elsewhere. In the interests of women patients, there should be a committee of inquiry into the whole process of the FPC service so that we can eliminate the malpractice that has occurred in Coventry. In the interests of my constituents, I shall resubmit to the Minister the names of Coventry patients who are currently experiencing serious problems under the FPC service. I hope that that will enable her to resolve the problems with some urgency during her ministerial investigation.

1.31 pm

Miss Emma Nicholson (Torridge and Devon, West): Thank you for calling me to speak in this debate, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am becoming a little worried about the health of the non-lady Members of the House who are not with us today. I am sure that they are grossly damaging their health with fatty lunches in pubs. I am sorry that they are not here to hear some very interesting speeches.

When I learnt of today's debate, I cancelled my constituency engagement with the Tavistock under-fives group this afternoon. The mothers asked me to raise a number of points on their behalf, but most of them have already been most capably raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, South-West (Mrs. Shephard). However, one point that she did not raise—unless I missed it—is a crucial issue on which I intend to touch lightly, and that is the need for more women doctors. This is no sexist or feminist comment because it is of particular importance to the Moslem community.

Although I understand that the Koran does not literally forbid women to consult male doctors, by custom and habit many of the older women do not do that and their health is therefore significantly undermined. They may have potentially life-threatening conditions, that actually result in death, because they cannot consult a male doctor. Therefore, the provision of more women doctors is of acute importance to society.

The key to good health in our society lies in greater stress on preventive medicine. I want to talk a little about how preventive medicine is currently practised in the United Kingdom and how it could be improved. The most dramatic aspect of preventive medicine is immunisation, which can change the whole pattern of public health. It is, therefore, good news that the World Health Organisation has withdrawn its opposition to immunisation, which it once viewed as achievable only at the expense of building up the necessary infrastructures for health care.

Ms. Harman: I should not want this interesting debate to pass without some mention of the measles epidemic. Will the hon. Lady join me in urging everyone to take their children for immunisation, which is almost entirely without risk? I am glad to see the Minister nodding.

Miss Nicholson: I was intending to touch on that matter in a moment, but I am pleased to join my hon. Friend the Minister and the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) in stressing the need for immunisation. In overseas countries, it is easier to spot the fact that the measles virus has mutated into a killer disease. It is no longer just the few lumps and bumps that it might have been in our childhoods.

Smallpox immunisation was the first great example of successful vertical programme intervention. Worldwide eradication of smallpox—the great achievement of the World Health Organisation—has been completed and is a triumph.

The United Nations task force on child survival recently announced that it planned globally to eradicate polio, another of the great crippling and killing childhood diseases, by the year 2000. That is a great tribute to the International Rotary Polio Plus campaign, which was launched some years ago. It has taken the World Health Organisation a little time to agree that the eradication of polio can be conducted separately from, but while continuing, immunisation against the other five major childhood diseases.

I pay tribute to the Save the Children Fund Stop Polio campaign. Ten million pounds was raised and spent in the first four years of its existence alongside the Rotary Polio Plus campaign. That campaign has now been subsumed into the overall immunisation programme.

Polio is a major problem for developing countries. For example, in India, every year 200,000 children catch polio. Many more do so in Africa. In Malawi, when we ran the Stop Polio campaign for the Save the Children Fund, five or six years ago we achieved 90 per cent. coverage. By contrast, at that time in Lambeth, polio immunisation had a 37 per cent. take-up. The crucial importance of communicating with mothers and children simply cannot be overestimated. It is almost the most important factor after development of the vaccine.

It is marvellous that, at last, in this country we are starting by immunisation, the long haul to eliminate CSR —congenital syndrome rubella. We should think hard about the initiatives taken by the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind. We clearly appreciate the values of immunisation in developing countries, so perhaps we should apply them nearer home. As recently as 1982, the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind convened a conference to discuss rubella and its tragic and miserable consequences. The risk of pre-natal damage from rubella is highest in the first four months of pregnancy. If a woman catches rubella in the first month, her child may suffer multiple handicaps—deafness, blindness, and physical and mental handicaps.

About a fortnight ago I talked to a man in my constituency about the Abortion (Amendment) Bill. His mother caught rubella in about the fourth or fifth month of pregnancy. He has a weak heart, poor eyes, poor ears, and bad health. He said how much he would have wished not to be alive had his mother caught that illness earlier. That is an important point to remember.

I strongly welcome the 1 October introduction of the MMR vaccine—measles mumps and rubella. Measles is a wretched, mutative virus. I recognise the need to get rid of it as fast as we can. Of course, we are late in that respect, as so often we are late. MMR has been used in the United States of America for perhaps 20 years. In 1970 we started our anti-rubella programme for schoolgirls of 10 to 14 years, whom we saw as the vunerable age group. But the MMR vaccine will be given to 15-month-old babies. I understand that we seek a 90 per cent. uptake, which will

allow us to eliminate rubella in particular, and, I hope, measles and mumps. The booster pre-school package of diphtheria, tetanus and polio will include MMR.

It used to be said that one could not eliminate such contagious diseases and that smallpox was unique because it was carried only by humans. The great advantage of the polio immunisation programme was to counter that suggestion. Polio is carried by primates. It is a water-borne disease, and medical experts said for a long time that it was ineradicable because no sooner would it be eliminated in a group of human beings than they might catch it again from primates through the water supply. When immunisation is built up in children and babies, the human race seems able to deflect the disease. It is enormously encouraging, therefore, to see that genuine eradication of contagious diseases other than smallpox is a possibility.

I should like to pay a strong tribute, in regard to the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine, to the Rubella Council, which was formed as a result of the 1982 Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind initiative. The council is chaired by Jean Wilson, who is the wife of the chairman of the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind. Like the council, I welcome the extra £40,000 a year grant, which brings its funding up to £83,000 a year.

I am sorry that my hon. Friend the Member for Winchester (Mr. Browne) has had to leave, because he would be interested to know that the funding is for promotional purposes, not for eradication. If the £35,000 that the council has been running on for the past five or six years is anything to go by, it will do a remarkable job with the additional £40,000. The funding is not to enable the council to immunise 15-month-old babies but to enable it to tell mothers and everyone else that 15-month-old babies need the new immunisation.

This is a good example of successful partnership between the Government and the voluntary sector. I welcome that in health care. I have participated in such partnership and I know that it works. With the Save the Children Fund, I participated in the anti-rickets campaign. We mistakenly thought that we had eliminated rickets from the United Kingdom many years ago, but without sufficient vitamin D people will still suffer from it. People with darker skins, particularly the Asian community, have a predisposition towards rickets if they live in Britain because there is considerably less sun here to enable them to synthesise vitamin D. People with darker skins need significantly more sun to achieve the synthesising effect.

We had to reach out to Asian mothers, through the Asian community, to teach them to bring their children forward for additional supplies of vitamin D. The mothers had rejected officialdom already and I suggest that the heavy hand of Government would not have had the same effect. The very best of the non-governmental organisations have a lighter touch, a more personal approach, a sharper eye for human needs and more flexible rules which enable them more swiftly to meet those needs. It is a matter not of the state not being able to provide everything, but that it should not provide everything, because non-governmental organisations can provide some services better than the state can. The quality and effectiveness of provision should be the determining factors.

Mrs. Wise: Does the hon. Lady agree that providing cheap or free welfare milk for infants made a considerable contribution to the elimination of rickets and that it is a great pity that that does not happen nowadays?

Miss Nicholson: I am not absolutely sure about the vitamin D content of milk as compared with the benefits of sunlight. It is certainly true that when we eliminated rickets in the United Kingdom, free milk was supplied. Vitamin D comes from other sources, too.

My point about the Asian community in the United Kingdom is that people with darker skin need more sun to synthesise vitamin D. Those of us who have paler skins are acclimatised to our miserable lack of sun, and we are therefore able to use the limited sunlight more effectively. Because of the miserable problems—such as fear of going out and worries about safety—of Asian mothers, they and their babies stay indoors, so they do not benefit even from the minimal sunlight that is available. Extra-rich vitamin D foods, suggestions on diet and more fresh air, and, of course, oils rich in vitamin D, cod liver oil and so on, are offered by the National Health Service. However, it was the outreach to that community which mattered most. That is where the valuable partnership between the voluntary organisation and the Government comes into play, with the Government providing virtually all the funds, and the work being done by a highly respected child care organisation, well known internationally.

I turn to one aspect of the care of the elderly, but only briefly, not because it is not important but because time is short. I feel justified in raising in a debate devoted to women and health the plight of blind women. Most of the constituency of the Royal National Institute for the Blind consists of elderly women with visual problems. Women are considerably healthier than men. They live longer, they are tougher when they are babies and in many ways we are luckier than men. However, because of our long life, more elderly women than men are blind or have sight problems. As everyone knows, only a third of those who have visual problems are registered. One hundred and forty-six thousand people are registered as being blind and 82,000 as being partially sighted.

Ophthalmic surgery has advanced so rapidly, with the new technology for the removal of cataracts—using laser beams and lens implants—that major surgery can now be undertaken for people who have cataracts and ocular degeneration in old age. However, it is expensive and is far down the Government's list of priorities. I suggest to my hon. Friend the Minister that more funding on this aspect of eye care would save money for the social services, apart from improving the quality of life of those who have their sight improved.

I welcome the recent announcement by the Minister for Social Security and the Disabled of a grant of £200,000 to the Royal National Institute for the Deaf, which is allowing fresh training provision to be undertaken by social workers who care for the deaf. That is an important element of work in our society, just as special training for social workers who care for the blind is important. That again is a partnership and an initiative involving a voluntary organisation and the Government.

1.47 pm

Mrs. Audrey Wise (Preston): I appreciate the remarks that the hon. Member for Torridge and Devon, West (Miss Nicholson) made about the Asian community and voluntary organisations. I share her wish that voluntary organisations should be helped and encouraged in their work. In fact, it has been noticeable that during the lifetime of the present Government many voluntary

[Mrs. Audrey Wise]

organisations have felt that they are being pushed into being a substitute for the Government rather than playing their proper role as partners and carrying out the kind of work which the hon. Lady correctly outlined, and which cannot be done simply through professional organisations or governmental bodies.

The debate has set the topic of women's health in context, both establishing the importance of good health to women and, as they are the majority of the population, to society in general. We need not justify our anxiety about our own health by reference to our partners or our children. We should defend our right to health in our own terms and for our own benefit.

Nevertheless, as women are the major planners of family diets and have responsibilities—some of them inescapable and some which should be more shared—for child care, they do have a special place in society. I associate myself with my hon. Friends who have set that in the context of poverty and have talked about the impact of bad housing and unemployment on health. It is impossible to consider ill health without considering the ills of society.

I associate myself also with my hon. Friends' remarks about the need for a cross-departmental approach. One of the distressing features of the British style of Government, and perhaps this it true of others—I am not singling out Britain but it is Britain that I observe at close quarters from day to day—is that policy appears to exist in little boxes. Governing in that way simply does not work properly, especially in matters concerning women. I associate myself entirely with the remarks of my hon. Friends on the importance of the Departments of Employment, Transport, and Energy in this context.

References have been made to food, and there has been some give and take about whether it is possible to buy cheap, healthy food as easily in working-class areas as elsewhere. I remind the House that the British Medical Association has established clearly that a healthy diet costs more than an unhealthy one because of the extra cost of supplying enough calories. The individual salad and vegetable items that go to make up a healthy diet may not be excessively priced individually, but it is necessary to provide more food of that sort to obtain enough calories. That should not be ignored. Cost is important, and studies have shown, for example, that it is impossible for expectant mothers on supplementary benefit to provide adequate diets for themselves and their coming babies. Not enough attention is given to these matters by the Government when they reduce the incomes of such mothers.

Even if someone has the money and the wish to eat a healthy diet, it can be well-nigh impossible to achieve it. For example, it is of doubtful benefit to eat lettuces in the winter because of their nitrate levels. A person may want to have good quality food and may have the money to buy it, yet still find it unavailable because of the distortion of agriculture policy. This arises for two main reasons. One is the pursuit of short-term profit and the second is the distortion and wrongful use of public subsidy for purposes that are connected with economic and agriculture objectives that are of less importance than the maintenance of health. The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has a great role to play in enabling the public to have a good diet, assuming that other Departments play their part and we manage to achieve suitable incomes and obtain sufficient knowledge to enable us to want and have a healthy diet.

I associate myself with the remarks that have been made about the desirablility of well woman clinics or centres. In Preston we have a good, popular well woman centre in which women doctors, non-professional helpers and counsellors participate, but it is absolutely tiny so it cannot cope with the demand that exists just underneath the surface. It does great work with ethnic minorities. Its ethnic minority worker, who has splendid contact with the whole of the considerable ethnic minority community, goes out from the clinic and does valuable work in the community.

We do not necessarily need a bigger centre—smallness can be desirable in this sort of context—but we need more of them. This one exists only because Preston borough council helped to find it premises and the district health authority helped it with money, but not enough. That is an area where we can have good partnership between voluntary workers, ancillary health-related people and professionals, such as doctors and nurses. But there needs to be pump priming, and that is not happening, so we have an inadequate network of well woman clinics—enough to show how valuable they are, but not enough to tackle the problems. I recommend the Minister to give that genuine consideration and to take action.

Well women give birth to babies, and maternity is not an illness. I greatly regret that over the years women have been forced into large district general hospitals which are geared to the treatment of illness and have found themselves cared for by people who are accustomed to abnormality rather than normality. The present concept of childbirth is almost one of medical crisis. That is wrong and we need to move in the opposite direction.

I urge the Minister most strongly to look at the need for continuity of care for women who are pregnant, in childbirth and after childbirth. It is monstrous when a woman goes to an antenatal clinic and does everything that the authorities exhort her to do—going monthly, then fortnightly and then weekly—that every time she sees a different midwife or doctor, and sometimes several of them attending to different bits of her. That is dehumanising for the woman and deskilling for the carers. We have gone too far along the wrong road.

I endorse what has been said about the need to pay women, nurses, doctors, health visitors and midwives properly. That is a necessary prerequisite, but job satisfaction, self-respect for clinical judgment are also important. Midwives have an excellent training which equips them to be practitioners in their own right and not to be the mere handmaidens of doctors. They exercise clinical judgment and are experts in normal birth. But they are not being given an adequate opportunity to exercise their clinical judgment. That is why the Labour party's approach in its good document on women and health, which will stand the test of time, puts great stress on the approach to maternity, maternity services and the role of midwives.

It is wrong for women to be treated as a collection of little "patches", which are seen by different people on every visit. It is also wrong that they are given entirely inadequate choice about the place and style of giving birth. More and more women are entering the controversy and making more and more demands, and I should like the Minister to commit herself to choice.

We hear a great deal from the Government about choice, which often amounts to the choice between two indistinguishable products on the supermarket shelves. In this instance, however, choice is a genuinely important element, because women are different and have different needs and wishes. There is not only one good pattern or one simple recipe for a good birth experience and a good outcome. In this context, a good outcome does not merely mean that the baby does not die: that is obviously imperative. It also involves the opportunity for bonding, and a positive feeling that does not make a woman say —as so many say immediately after giving birth—"Never again." That is not conducive to the development of a good relationship and good child care.

The argument is not between high-tech and low-tech; that would be a stupid argument. It is a matter of appropriate technology and adequate choice, neither of which is at present available. Many women are subjected to far too much intervention when giving birth, and a much too lavish use of expensive technology which they do not want or need. Others are deprived of, for example, adequate anaesthesia when they need it, because anaesthetists are too scarce, and the one who is there is busy with someone else. That is a nonsense. We need appropriate technology, no unnecessary intrusion and respect for women's wishes—as well as an acknowledgement by all concerned that as women's bodies swell their brains do not shrink.

The position is now so serious that some midwives leave the service because they are unhappy with their conditions, while others are driven outside the NHS to practice independently so that they can provide continuity of care. That is not because they want to be outside the NHS, but because this approach to maternity care is becoming unavailable on the NHS. We should look carefully at this phenomenon.

We should also look at the effect on midwives' ability fo exercise their clinical judgement. I do not know whether the Minister is aware of the controversies that are currently raging, but they bear on this. One instance is the disciplining of a midwife who decided to transfer her patient to hospital and, instead of waiting for an ambulance, accompanied the patient in a car driven by the patient's husband. That midwife has been disciplined for not waiting for an ambulance, although she exercised her clinical judgement about what was suitable, and she was right. There was a good outcome.

I should like to know who would have been disciplined if the midwife had waited for the ambulance and it had not come—for ambulances are increasingly scarce—or if it had come and had therefore been unable to go to someone else. Such an approach to the exercise of a midwife's clinical judgment is absolute rubbish. I should also like to know who is disciplined if there is unnecessary and intrusive use in hospitals of techniques such as episiotomy, which often have a very bad effect on women. I urge the DHSS to investigate that very carefully.

I welcome the breast-feeding initiative and I applaud anything that is done to encourage it. Breast feeding is extremely important for both mother and baby. The more time that elapses, the more work is done and the more information published to strengthen the argument for it. It is not, however, simply a matter of lecturing women about its importance. One Conservative Member said that the importance of breast feeding had to be "drummed in" to women. I can think of nothing less effective than trying to drum something in to women, although I hope that the hon. Member did not mean it in quite the way it sounded. Unfortunately, much of the health exhortation to women comes over in exactly that way: "Why can't you be a good little girl and do what is proper? Don't you care about your baby?" And such like. It is monstrous to behave in such a manner to women who are frequently suffering the greatest stress and pressure which is not being addressed by those who exhort them

I should like steps taken to prevent, not just to discourage—we are not talking about voluntary codes of practice—the promotion of baby milk formulas in hospitals and clinics. Such promotion still takes place and as long as the manufacturers of powdered milk have access to clinics and hospitals, mothers will be influenced to think that such products are the best for their babies.

Staff must have not only the right attitude, but enough time. That may mean that more staff should be available. Staff should not be harassed and, in their approach to hospital activities, they should not be made to believe that the efficient use of hospital resources means that they are kept almost at a run all day long while on duty. Staff should have the time to develop relationships with the women and observe them to see what can be done to make breast feeding the joy that it can be.

I also think that the Department should consider weaning. It is virtually impossible to obtain single weaning foods. Foods like "bacon and egg dinners" thrust at women as weaning foods. Any mother who has an eye to weaning her child sensibly, food by food, finds it difficult to get to first base even if she has the knowledge and income to do so. Something should be done and that means interfering with the free market economy. Such a free market economy often puts our infants second to money making, and that is highly undesirable.

During and after maternity women need back-up help, not just lectures. They need home helps, for example. If they have a home help after childbirth they should not be made to feel that some elderly person has therefore been deprived of such help. The squeeze on local government is having a deplorable effect on the availability of such help.

I urge the Minister to consider a submission from the National Childbirth Trust on infant mortality. It has suggested a number of topics for investigation, ranging from excessive obstetric interference through to the effect of poverty and bad housing on the increase in respiratory infection among babies, which can be an underlying feature in cot deaths. The National Childbirth Trust has a great deal of experience of mothers and babies and it pinpoints poverty and bad housing as being likely to have an effect on infant mortality. It believes that such factors should be investigated.

Another matter that should be considered is the danger of radiation. It is appropriate that this debate has taken place this week, after the information published about Dounreay.

Ms. Ruddock: I had hoped to be able to make a speech about environmental pollutants but I shall not get the opportunity. May I draw the attention of my hon. Friend and the Minister to early-day motion 1080? It is the only one on the Order Paper about women and health matters. It is a request to the Government to instruct the National Radiological Protection Board to investigate radiological standards. Current standards are based on the whole body male. We know, and scientific evidence shows, that for

[Ms. Ruddock]

women and children the risk from ionising radiation is much greater than the risk to men. The risk to the foetus in the womb is considerable and there is probable evidence that the tragic child leukaemia deaths from the Dounreay area may well have resulted from radiation affecting the foetus. Through my hon. Friend may I ask the Minister to look into this matter?

Mrs. Wise: I associate myself entirely with my hon. Friend's intervention. I shall not repeat it, but I reinforce it.

The hon. Member for Torridge and Devon, West said that women live longer than men. We are grateful for that, but it does not follow that the quality of life and health of most women is better than that of men. We are survivors, but women often survive against great odds and with greatly impaired health for many years. They suffer considerable stress and strain and physical ill health.

Simply living longer is not a good enough objective. We must achieve a better quality of health for women and it is not enough simply to say that we can stick a bandage on the Health Service or issue umpteen prescriptions for tranquilisers or tranquilise the whole population so that it does not see what happens to society. Sometimes I think that that is happening. We need an attitude to health that looks at the whole person in health care and medicine and not simply at isolated symptoms. As public policy we need to look at the whole of society. We need adequate preventive medicine for our society. I end as I began, by placing the matter of women's health care in the context of poverty and deprivation and the need for new priorities.

2.13 pm

Dr. Charles Goodson-Wickes (Wimbledon): I am glad to have been called to speak in the debate. While it may appear to be discourteous to make my contribution late in the day, I trust that the fact that I have been treating patients is an acceptable reason. That also registers my interest in the subject.

I think that this is the first general debate that we have had on women's health. Nowadays it seems fashionable to link women's interests to those of various minority groups. I speak as a member of a minority group—as a member of the male sex—and I have never quite understood the logic of that linkage. I certainly make no complaints and hope that with improvements in women's health care the present ratio and happy state of affairs will continue. Perhaps I could make a plea to my hon. Friend the Minister for a debate in due course on men's health or perhaps for a debate on some non-sexist subject such as geriatric health.

I am sure that the House approves of the unmistakable trend in the world of medicine towards prevention. The last century saw the first public health revolution and a reduction in the ravages of infectious diseases by means of better nutrition, cleaner water and air, and innoculation. We are now in the era of the second public health revolution and it is possible to educate people to reduce the risk of developing disease by modifying their behaviour and lifestyle. This is applicable in cardiovascular, respiratory and gastro-intestinal conditions and can be done without making life miserable.

When I became a medical student 24 years ago, teaching was virtually confined to the cure of disease. The notion of screening apparently healthy individuals was in its infancy. Specific tests were introduced gradually for presymptomatic disease. In addition to the admirable work of the National Health Service, the private sector is to be congratulated on pioneering the general screening of individuals. For many years I have been active in that work and in the identification of occupational hazards to the health of male and female employees.

Screening for cancer of the cervix and breast will clearly attract most attention in any discussion of women's health. However important those aspects may be, they represent too narrow a view of women's health generally. The effectiveness of cervical smear testing, which has been available for more than 20 years, depends on technical efficiency. I was alarmed recently by reports of deficiencies in the taking of such tests, which often impede sound diagnosis by yielding false positive results, which alarm patients unduly, or false negatives, which create a false sense of security. The credibility of the test depends on the technique of taking it so as to ensure that the laboratory interpretation is valid. I cannot emphasise enough the input that there must be in teaching hospitals to ensure that medical students are adequately taught.

All such efforts are useless if those at risk do not come forward. For 20 years, Sutton and Merton health education unit has pioneered increasing awareness among the public and encouraged people to come forward through the National Health Service, voluntary organisations, industry and schools. Screening is flawed—perhaps fatally, in the true sense of the word—if the administration of recall is inadequate. I congratulate the Government on the steps that they have taken to computerise the recall system.

Breast cancer has, to an extent, been the poor relation in public awareness and resources allocation. That is curious because, on a per capita basis, more lives are saved at less cost. The incidence of mortality from breast cancer is far greater than that from cervical cancer, with 15,000 deaths per year at all ages as opposed to 2,000—a sevenfold difference, which the House would ignore at its peril. Those statistics show the way forward for the future, and I am delighted that St. Bartholomew's hospital has been active in implementing the recommendations of the Forrest report. I hope that the Government will be flexible and examine the results in relation to the right age bracket. We must bear in mind that if women have a family history of carcinoma of the breast they are far more at risk than others who have palpable findings on clinical examination.

I am amazed in my consulting room, at the many bright female graduates, who often work in the financial world and are clearly better at examining balance sheets than their breasts. I hope that the statement, "Doctor, I do not know what I am looking for", will have no relevance in the 1990s, and there will be no repetition of the heroic but horrific surgery that was recommended by some of my teachers, which resulted in physical and psychological mutilations to so many women. I do not deny that lives were saved, but at what cost?

Ms. Gordon: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Dr. Goodson-Wickes: I am working against the clock; I apologise for any discourtesy.

There is insufficient public recognition of the correlation between smoking and cancer of the cervix. The increased incidence of smoking by women is almost certainly the main factor behind cancer of the lung that is

now challenging cancer of the breast as the main malignant killer of women. Smoking will also increase the major cause of death, which is ischemic heart disease. My hon. Friend the Minister referred to the fact that it results in the the delivery of small babies.

It is illogical and bad medicine to limit the examination of women to organs that are peculiar to them without at the same time checking their blood pressure and advising them on issues such as weight and smoking. I hope that my hon. Friend will develop the theme of primary health care for women, since they are such valuable members of the community.

2.20 pm

Mrs. Currie: By leave of the House, I should like to respond to an excellent debate. I am conscious of the fact that some hon. Members have not had the opportunity to speak. We may need to have another debate. We heard splendid speeches, particularly from Lady Members, including my hon. Friends the Members for Plymouth, Drake (Miss Fookes), for Norfolk, South-West (Mrs. Shephard), for Billericay (Mrs. Gorman), for Torridge and Devon, West (Miss Nicholson), and from my hon. Friends the Members for Winchester (Mr. Browne) and for Wimbledon (Dr. Goodson-Wickes). I listened with interest to the speeches of other hon. Members. Some hon. Members have sat here for four hours waiting to speak. I apologise to any men including my hon. Friend the Member for Wimbledon, who felt left out. However, on 23 October we had a full day's debate on prevention when we concentrated on heart disease, which particularly affects men. Perhaps today, therefore, is the women's turn.

As to whether anybody is taking any notice of campaigns on health, I refer hon. Members to the food purchasing patterns, reported in the national food survey every quarter by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. It shows that people are making strenuous efforts, by their purchasing patterns of food for consumption in the home, to eat much healthier food.

I am also grateful to those Lady Members who have had to leave but who were courteous enough to let me know. The hon. Member for Preston (Mrs. Wise) made quite the nicest speech that I have heard her make since she returned to the House. I am grateful to her for her kind remarks about our campaign on breast feeding. I suspect that female Members of Parliament on both sides of the House are much nicer and much more courteous to each other than their male counterparts. I venture to suggest —it is a remark of total prejudice—that if, nay when, there are more female Members of Parliament, behaviour will improve dramatically.

The hon. Member for Coventry, North-East (Mr. Hughes) asked a number of specific questions relating to Coventry. I hope that he will allow me to read what he has said and to write to him, particularly about the family practitioner committee. I am grateful to a number of hon. Members for referring to measles. We are very concerned about measles, as the disease has resulted in the death of six children this year. We have already made approaches to general practitioners. We shall have to consider whether those approaches have been successful and, if not, what else we can do.

A number of hon. Members, including my hon. Friend the Member for Torridge and Devon, West referred to the introduction of MMR—the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine—in the autumn. That is a major step forward and we hope that it will be of considerable benefit. It will cost the Government rather more than £40,000 or £80,000. We are budgeting for several million pounds because we shall have to pay for the vaccine. However, we expect it to result in a considerable long-term saving. About 2 per cent. of women who are susceptible to the disease catch rubella every year. Between 300 and 400 women feel obliged every year to check whether their babies have been handicapped in any way. We know of 20 cases of congenital syndrome rubella every year, each one of which could have been prevented.

The hon. Member for Barking (Ms. Richardson) referred to a number of issues and talked about the scandal of the VDUs. Unless any hon. Member should think that I am referring to a sexually transmitted disease, I should explain that VDU stands for visual display unit. The hon. Lady and I know that, but my experience in this job suggests that not everybody understands precisely what it means. The hon. Lady and I are referring to people who may or may not be affected by working in circumstances in which they are obliged to be close to a VDU for long periods.

The Industrial Injuries Advisory Council published a report on non-ionising radiation in December 1987. During its investigations, the council considered the possibility of VDUs being a potential source of harmful radiation. It concluded that there was no evidence to suggest that the present terms of prescription for industrial injuries purposes should be extended to cover any potential effects of non-ionising radiation from VDUs. The Government accepted those recommendations. As I have suggested, I suspect that at least part of the problem may arise from the fact that women get far too little exercise. Perhaps we may encourage companies and employees to take that into account. That is the scientific evidence on VDUs as it stands at the moment.

A number of Labour Members referred to the social security system. I would point out that in this country the pension scheme in particular contains several features that are very favourable to women. For example, we retire five years earlier than men. Under the United Kingdom scheme the married woman has the right to obtain a pension of her own through her husband's contributions if she wishes. There is nothing similar in most European countries.

Hon. Members have spoken of poverty. The hon. Member for Preston said that the BMA had established that a healthy diet cost more. My nutrition unit tells me that there has been no such report from the BMA, although the report from the Maternity Alliance was referred to earlier. If the hon. Lady has futher information, we should be delighted to hear it. We do not know that the BMA or anyone else has established that a healthy diet costs more. I do not believe it. It costs nothing to throw away the frying pan or to replace one kind of fat with another and it is probably cheaper simply to eat less fat.

A number of hon. Members on both sides of the House called for a cross-departmental committee. I am reminded of that splendid series, "The Wheeltappers' and Shunters' Club," which used to appear on television. The programme often used to start, "We've got to get a committee together on this." In fact, there is already a committee—the ministerial group on women's issues, which is chaired by my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Home Office and which considers some of the issues that

[Mrs. Currie]

have been raised. There is also the Women's National Commission, which is part of the Cabinet Office, which is ably chaired by my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Department of Education and Science. I have no doubt that that commission will take into account a number of points that have been made.

I see that my hon. Friend the Member for Plymouth, Drake is in her place. I do not know whether she has been reconstructed recently but she is looking absolutely splendid these days. It must be to do with her responding vigorously to everything that previous Ministers and I have said recently. I am very glad to see my hon. Friend, who has been a doughty fighter for women since she came to the House 18 years ago. I am extremely grateful to her for her remarks, and for encouraging women in her constituency to have smear tests.

My hon. Friend the Member for Plymouth, Drake mentioned breast amputation and women's concern about that. I am glad to be able to tell her that a recent study has shown that between 1980 and 1986 in 80 centres in this country the ratio of mastectomy to conservative surgery such as lumpectomy has shifted from around 50-50 to about 20-80. In other words, about 80 per cent. of surgery does not involve full amputation. However, conservative surgery is not suitable in all cases and clearly more work remains to be done on that.

My hon. Friend the Member for Plymouth, Drake and a number of other hon. Members referred to women doctors. I shall undertake to send a copy of the detailed press release sent out on Wednesday by my right hon. Friend the Minister for Health about the publication of Isobel Allen's report. The release is entitled "Women Doctors—Any Room at the Top?" Incidentally, a minute that I received about smoking in DHSS offices was entitled "The Empire Strikes Back"; clearly someone in my Department has a sense of humour.

The detailed minute that has been issued shows both our concern that there should be more women doctors and our interest in what happens when they start on their career path. Action is already under way, or is being set in hand, on a number of the issues identified in Isobel Allen's excellent report. We recognise, for example, the demands for more part-time career posts and we shall discuss with representatives of the Health Services and the medical profession the possibility of increasing them. We shall also discuss with the Royal colleges and faculties, postgraduate deans and health authorities, ways of eliminating questioning by appointments boards that can be seen to be discriminatory. To assist that process we are arranging two seminars to promote consideration of Miss Allen's report by representatives of health authorities and the medical professions. I am conscious that I lay myself open to the criticism from the hon. Member for Barking that there tend to be a great number of seminars—but they work. The hon. Lady will remember that in the Labour party document on health that it published in preparation for the election, the only picture of a doctor was of a man.

My hon. Friend the Member for Winchester raised issues concerning his constituency, and he knows that we are concerned about them. My hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, South-West, in an outstanding contribution, set out exactly how a good service for women should be run. That spills over into other forms of health care, where the needs and the interests of the consumer, male and female, really start to matter. That is the sort of service that we are trying to promote for women, children and men throughout the country.

It being half-past Two o'clock, the motion for the Adjournment of the House lapsed, without Question put.

Maternity Facilities (Moray)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—[*Mr. Kenneth Carlisle.*]

2.30 pm

Mrs. Margaret Ewing (Moray): It is, perhaps, appropriate that at the end of an extensive debate that touched on so many issues affecting women's health, we should move on to specific issues affecting the well-being of the women in my constituency.

I wish to start with a few personal remarks. Yesterday I attended the funeral of Dr. Allan Matheson, who was a key figure in all our efforts in Moray not only to improve maternity services but to enhance all of Moray's medical facilities. Like me, the community of Keith has been devastated by his tragic and untimely death at the age of 39. All of us remember his unstinting work in his community—his selfless, sincere and abiding concern for all the patients in the local practice. His commitment to those with special needs was reflected in his work for the Sunshine playgroup, his involvement with the Keith patients participation group, the local parent teachers' association and the Keith caring service. Keith has lost a great friend. As was said at his funeral yesterday, it is a fitting memorial to his life and his work that his activities helped to persuade Grampian health board to retain a maternity unit in the Turner memorial hospital. I am sure that the Minister, who met Allan Matheson during that campaign, will join me in recording our deepest sympathy to his wife Hazel and his children Kirsty, Rhona and Duncan.

To return to the issue of the debate, I understand that the Scottish Office has received a full submission from the Grampian health board recommending that five general practitioner maternity units should be closed. I note the Minister indicating dissent, but must tell him that I was given that advice last week when I spoke to a representative of the board. I apologise if the Minister has not yet received it, but it is certainly on its way. The submission is to close the five GP maternity units in the area, with no further consideration being given to the possible establishment of a specialist obstetric and gynaecological unit in Elgin.

My first key questions, therefore, are can the Minister say when the Scottish Office will give a response, how will the announcement be made, and what provision will be made in the coming weeks for representatives of the Scottish Office to meet local interested groups representing both the medical profession and the public? Such meetings would be desirable before any final decision is reached.

As the Minister well knows, the Grampian health board's proposals met with universal antagonism throughout the region. While this debate relates specifically to Moray, I wish to emphasise the general principles underpinning that reaction. Together with the right hon. Member for Kincardine and Deeside (Mr. Buchanan-Smith) and the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce), I have argued that women in rural areas have the right to give birth in local hospitals. All three of us, irrespective of party politics, feel most strongly that choice and safety are being ignored, and we resent the centralising philosophy that denies our mothers the right to have access to local facilities that, over the years, have been marked by the highest standards of care and practice.

Our mothers are to be asked to undertake hazardous and lengthy journeys. They will be removed from the familiar surroundings of their local units and distanced from family and friends at a time when they wish to be in their local communities. All three of us believe that that is against the interests of our constituents and communities. We are certain that no good reason has been put forward for doing that.

There are two key issues in Moray. First, Leanchoil hospital in Forres is to lose its maternity unit and all mothers are to be transferred to Raigmore hospital in Inverness, which is in a different health board area. It appears that complex negotiations—though not public negotiations—have taken place between Grampian and Highland health boards, and the former will pay the latter for such obstetric facilities. Will the Minister give me some guidance? First, what costing of that deal has Grampian health board given? Secondly, are the obstetricians based in Inverness prepared to accept full responsibility for all aspects of pregnancy, labour, delivery, neonatal and paediatric care that were previously dealt with by general practitioners in Forres?

Thirdly, is the Minister satisfied that Raigmore hospital will be able to cope with increased numbers, including the provision of lying-in facilities for new mothers? Fourthly, has any costing been made or will a costing be made of accepting the suggestion from Leanchoil general practitioners that the current 12-bed unit be reduced to six beds, with the other beds being given to orthopaedic facilities? Fifthly, has any account been taken of the importance attached to Leanchoil by young RAF families based at RAF Kinloss? Sixthly, what safety net is to be left for emergencies for Forres mothers who, for whatever reason, cannot travel to Raigmore?

Dr. Russell Lees, a consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist at Raigmore, commented:

"We, the Consultants in the Department of Obstetrics in Raigmore view with anxiety the prospect of an increased demand for home confinements which could conceivably arise as a result of the closure of the maternity unit at Leanchoil and it is for that reason that we would support the retention of a six bedded unit at Forres for uncomplicated deliveries with the additional benefit of "lying in" facilities for those mothers who deliver their babies in Raigmore but whose medical condition is such that they can be looked after in the early days . . . in a hospital nearer home."

That issue directly affects Forres and the western side of my constituency.

The next main issue for Moray is the need to establish a full-scale specialist obstetric unit in Elgin, which is regarded as the centre of the district. Perhaps the fate of the Turner memorial and Leanchoil hospitals would not have met such antagonism had Grampian health board offered us a locally based specialist facility. However, the long-held hope that Elgin would have such a unit has apparently been ditched for good by the board. Instead, Aberdeen and Inverness are to be the central points for such services. The suggestion is that all women east of the Spey will be asked to attend Aberdeen maternity hospital and that all women west of the Spey will be asked to attend Raigmore and Inverness hospitals.

On my latter point relating to the geographical area west of the river Spey, I again refer to comments made by Russell Lees, the consultant obstetrician at Raigmore hospital in Inverness. He stated:

"I feel I should add that the Consultants in the Department of Obstetrics at Raigmore view with some concern the prospect of transfer of maternity care patients in

[Mrs. Margaret Ewing]

the Elgin area from Grampian Health Board to Highland Health Board, and we are uniformly of the opinion that without additional facilities in terms of beds and staff at all levels we could not provide a similar quality of care to that which is already provided by this Department for mothers from the Highland Region."

Dr. Lees said that against the background of an increase in the bed complement at Raigmore from 56 to 72. It is not enough to say that facilities at Raigmore have already been increased.

In whatever direction the mums in my constituency are pointed, they face lengthy and hazardous journeys along the A96—a road that is notorious for delays and accidents at all times of the year. Obviously, that road is most dangerous in winter. Recently, it was branded by the Inverness chamber of commerce as a goat track, and by the Royal Automobile Club as a death trap. In conjunction with all the district councils near that road, Highland and Grampian regional councils are mounting a major campaign to improve the A96. It seems unlikely that that will be within the immediate future, although piecemeal opportunities have been given for slight improvements on the road.

We must think of women who are in distress—perhaps already aware that the life of their baby is at risk—being driven over a road that they know is in poor condition. Often, they are already in labour, strapped to a drip, and in severe pain. No one could harden his or her heart to the psychological and physical stress that such an experience must create. We must remember that such women may not have their husbands with them, and may have left behind young children.

There is, of course, the flying squad. On page 10 of unit II's strategic plan for maternity and neonatal services in Grampian, it says:

"Once the Flying Squad call is received it takes an average 30 minutes to assemble medical staff, equipment and taxi and if the call is to Elgin, for example, then a further one hour 45 minutes transport time ensues to reach the destination. This delay may be crucial to patient management. Often, because of the time factor involved, the patient is sent by ambulance to Aberdeen and may deliver en route."

So now it is being suggested that a helicopter could form part of the normal service to mums in my area. The same report says that it should be part of the normal service to have a helicopter as a standby to transport mums in labour from my constituency.

I have never travelled by helicopter, but many who have —including my husband who is a member of a mountain rescue team—tell me that it is without doubt the most unpleasant and uncomfortable form of transport imaginable. The idea that women in labour and in stress should be asked to regard a helicopter as a mainstay is unpalatable.

We should consider Grampian health board's reasons for opposing the establishment of a specialist unit such as we want in Moray. The board says:

"There is no definitive guidance on the optimum population to be served by a full specialist obstetric facility".

It seems that, in the absence of definitive guidance, the board is prepared to reach its own definition. By using the Gavin Shaw report, which recommends a minimum of three consultant obstetricians, Grampian health board concludes that 1,100 births per year do not justify the establishment of such a unit.

My argument, like that of my fellow campaigners in Moray, challenges that assertion. I shall use the facts and fugures provided by MUM—the Maternity Unit for Moray campaign—which says:

"In a centre of population such as Moray, with 26,361 females aged 16-64 and 6,880 females aged 65-89, is it appropriate to provide obstetric and gynaecological services for the majority of these women, either 68 miles away in Aberdeen or 37 miles away in Inverness? Miss Hines, the Director of Midwifery Services in Grampian stated on 11 February 1988 at the public meeting in Elgin, that she could not justify or defend the decision of Grampian Health Board to continue to send mothers such distances for obstetric care."

On page 2 of its strategic plan, unit II says:

"The total number of births in Grampian will fall to approximately 6,500 by 1991: of these 1,300 babies will be born to women living in Moray. The numbers for 1996 are approximately 6,300 and 1,400 respectively."

In other words, we are anticipating an increased birth rate in the Moray district. We know that obstetric units which cater for smaller numbers have been established elsewhere in Scotland and I believe that, south of Perth, the norm for such facilities is a travelling distance of something less than 30 miles.

Grampian health board also believes that the number of cases that it predicts would not attract consultants of the quality that it desires. That must be one of the most spurious arguments that has been advanced. Elgin has never experienced any difficulty attracting consultants of the highest calibre on other specialties, and nobody but Grampian health board anticipates any difficulty in attracting obstetricians.

If population were used as the sole criterion for the establishment of specialist centres in rural communities, we could fully expect all specialist centres in Scotland to be based in cities. It is therefore an argument to which we cannot give any credence and I hope that the Minister, who also represents a rural constituency, will reject it.

I trust that the Minister will give us hope in Moray that the maternity services that we already have and appreciate will not be taken from us. Our GP units are of the highest standard and the public has shown its confidence in them by the demand for their retention. The files that I have on the Bench beside me represent the strength of feeling from my constituency. Those files contain letters of support and argument, not just from the GPs or from the medical practitioners within my constituency, but from hundreds of ordinary men and women who are deeply concerned about their community. This argument is not about statistics and, according to the Grampian health board, nor is it completely about costs. The argument is about life. It is about safety and proper medical care. In Moray we are refusing to be regarded as second-class citizens.

2.46 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Michael Forsyth): I was sad indeed to hear the news about Dr. Allan Matheson. I well recall the hon. Lady bringing a delegation to see me about the Keith maternity unit. The clear commitment that Dr. Matheson had to the community was evident from our discussions. I join the hon. Lady in expressing my condolences to his wife and family on such a tragic loss.

The hon. Lady expressed some surprise when I said from a sedentary position that I had not received the final submission from the Grampian health board. I received in April some preliminary material regarding its proposals for closure. Additional infomation was forwarded to my

Department on 2 June, and the remainder is expected within the next fortnight. Therefore, I have to dissappoint the hon. Lady because I am unable to say very much today —in fact nothing—about the substance of the board's case or to reply to her arguments. However, I have had a large number of representations on this matter from a wide variety of opinions and from every section of the community in Moray. In fact, a few weeks ago I had a lengthy discussion with the chairman of the health council, Mrs. Rona Hossack. I have given an undertaking to the officers of the health council that before coming to any conclusions on the matter I will meet them to discuss the arguments. I hope that the hon. Lady will accept that as going some way towards meeting her request that I should take account of local opinion on this matter before reaching a conclusion.

It clearly would not be appropriate for the Scottish Office to embark upon a whole new consultation process, because these matters are for the board. I am sure that the hon. Lady will forgive me if I make one rather pertinent observation. In this debate the hon. Lady is asking me and my right hon. and learned Friend to overturn the decisions of the Grampian health board and direct it to do something else. It was only a few weeks ago that she was strongly chiding me and criticising me in public for directing the health board on competitive tendering. She was then arguing that it was no part of the Secretary of State's duty to undermine the local autonomy of health boards. Having said that, the breadth of feeling on this matter is clear.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: I am grateful to the Minister for allowing me to intervene. I am conscious of the time constraint. Some of his latter comments have been mischievious but I shall not respond to them. On the issue of consultation within the community, and over and above meeting the representatives of the full health council, will it be possible for representations to be received from general practitioners in Forres, and will there be discussions with the obstetricians in Raigmore, which is within the Highlands health board.

Mr. Forsyth: I shall consider all the arguments, but it is the job of the health board to carry out the consultation process and reach conclusions, and it requires the consent of the Secretary of State. The hon. Lady is asking my right hon. and learned Friend to overturn its conclusions following its consultation, and it would not be appropriate for my right hon. and learned Friend to be involved in consultation. Having received strong representations from Mrs. Hossack, I agreed to meet officers of the health council before reaching any conclusion. I have agreed to meet a delegation that my right hon. Friend the Member for Kincardine and Deeside (Mr. Buchanan-Smith) is bringing to deal with the issue of Torphins prior to reaching any conclusions.

I have received representations from the Maternity Unit for Moray campaign and I shall examine carefully the specialist unit proposal. I have also received representations from regional and district councillors and others through the political network from the Moray Conservatives. I accept that it is an issue of concern to every sector of the community.

There was the hint in the hon. Lady's speech that resources have had a part to play—she referred to the overall level of funding available to the Grampian health board—but I do not believe that they have. Conclusions should have been reached on the basis of what will provide the best quality of patient care for the people of Moray. The Grampian health board has seen a substantial increase in the resources granted to it since the Government came to power. Since 1979, the amount of money available to the health board to meet running costs has increased by one third over and above inflation. The increase in capital resources that has been made available to the board to fund new developments and new hospital projects has been spectacular. That level of funding has almost doubled in real terms, there having been an increase of 96 per cent. since 1979.

I know that the hon. Lady will be aware of the difference between the resources that are available to the health boards now and those which were available when the Labour Government were in office, whom she and her party were keen to support.

When that Government were in office we saw a 28 per cent. cut in the capital expenditure made available to health boards in Scotland. These figures are sometimes dismissed as mere statistics or just numbers, but they are not. The increased funding that we have provided for Grampian is seen in new developments. Phase 1 of the new royal Cornhill hospital will begin construction in October and will improve the services that are available to the mentally ill. When I visited Foresterhill I announced that £3 million would be made available for the new blood transfusion centre that will open in 1991. More central to the hon. Lady's constituency interest is the redevelopment at Dr. Gray's hospital to replace the Maryhill maternity unit, which will cost more than £1 million. I recently announced the extension of cardiac surgery in Grampian that will result in a capital investment of about £1·2 million over a period. As we are now taking centrally the funding of cardiac surgery operations there, the result will be a windfall running cost benefit to the health board of about £250,000.

The board has benefited from some substantial extra money. I urge the hon. Lady to recognise that and to recognise also that any decisions should be based on what represents value for money. The review of maternity services is designed to ensure that the needs of the people are met as well as to ensure efficiency.

Lest these discussions seem to be limited to Grampian, let me say that other health boards are having to consider these matters. Lothian has had to consider the problem of the underutilisation of maternity beds. Clearly, it is in no one's interest to have beds which are staffed but which are not needed, because that constitutes a waste of resources. Today my right hon. and learned Friend has approved a restructuring of obstetric services in Lothian which will involve the closure of the Elsie Inglis maternity hospital in Edinburgh. He was prepared to give consent on the basis that for years there had been an oversupply and underuse of obstetric beds and that the position would be made worse because of the opening of new obstetric services in the Borders. He also took account of the facts that the proposals have the support of Lothian health board's professional advisory committees and that the savings will be fully available to the board to promote development and improvement in the services in other areas.

The hon. Lady asked about the A96. Fortunately, roads are not within my area of responsibility, but the importance of the A96 is fully recognised. Works worth some £6 million are under construction; £44 million worth

[Mr. Forsyth]

of work is planned and a major feasibility study is under way. Progress on future schemes will be determined by the satisfactory completion of statutory procedures, the availability of finance and the priority of particular schemes within the context of competing claims from the entire trunk road network in Scotland.

The hon. Lady will forgive me for pointing out that in Scotland we enjoy a Health Service that is funded to the extent of rather more than a quarter more per head t n the Health Service in England. Our roads programme is also considerably better funded. Were it not for the fact that I would be called to order, I would be intrigued to hear from her how she imagines that continued support would be available if we were to follow the prescriptions of her party.

I shall listen carefully to all the arguments and study with the greatest possible care the papers, submissions and letters we receive in the Department. I am happy to hear from the hon. Lady of any additional arguments, other than those which she put in the debate and in correspondence with me. I will make arrangements to meet the officers of the health council. The personal remark which she addressed to me about my constituency interest and recognition of the problems of rural areas strikes home. I need no convincing because when my wife was expecting our latest child, the central thought in her mind was the 25 miles which were involved from Aberfoyle to Stirling, so I am aware of the anxieties and feelings. I shall ensure that the arguments are considered carefully before we reach a conclusion.

The hon. Lady asked when we would reach a conclusion. In the time-honoured phrase which trips off the tongue so easily after a mere year at this job, we would expect to reach a conclusion as soon as possible and shortly.

Question put and areed to.

Adjourned accordingly at two minutes to Three o'clock.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 23 May 1988

HOME DEPARTMENT

Prisons (Mother and Baby Units)

Mrs. Ann Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many women in prison mother-and-baby units on the most recent convenient date had not previously served a custodial sentence; what were their ages; and for what offences they had been sentenced.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Forty three women in mother and baby units on 13 May had not previously served a custodial sentence. Their ages are shown in table 1. They received custodial sentences for a wide range of offences and in many cases they were sentenced for more than one offence. Table 2 lists the primary offence in each case.

Table 1

Age	*Number of women*
16	1
18	4
19	3
20	4
21	1
23	7
24	2
25	7
26	4
27	1
29	1
30	1
31	2
32	2
33	1
35	1
36	1
Total	43

Table 2

Offence	*Number of women*
Wounding	1
Aiding and abetting rape	1
Robbery	3
Burglary	3
Shoplifting	2
Theft	7
Illegal importation of drugs	13
Conspiracy to smuggle drugs	1
Obtain by deception	4
Handling	3
Conspiracy	2
Fraud	1
Grievous bodily harm	1
Assault occasioning actual bodily harm	1
Total	43

Civil Defence

Mr. Patnick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the current state of civil defence planning in the areas covered by the joint fire and civil defence authorities with particular reference to south Yorkshire, as evidenced by those authorities' submission in response to his Department's circular dated 30 October 1986, entitled "A planned programme of implementation"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: The initial submissions in response to the circular were in the form of preparatory information on how the planning requirements of the Civil Defence (General Local Authority Functions) Regulations 1983 would be met. These indicated that in general progress was being made in civil defence planning. In April 1988 county level authorities, including joint fire and civil defence authorities, were required to submit the first group of operational plans: these are now being considered.

Broadcasting Standards Council

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to his statement of 16 May, *Official Report*, column 685, if he will specify the period of time for which he expects the Broadcasting Standards Council to be a non-statutory body.

Mr. Renton: We intend to introduce legislation for the Broadcasting Standards Council in due course, by which time I hope the council will have established satisfactory working arrangements with the relevant broadcasting and other agencies.

Strip Searches

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many strip searches were carried out on inmates, both sentenced and remand, and on female visitors to *(a)* Holloway, *(b)* Styal and *(c)* Durham prisons during the first three months of 1988.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Strip searching is a routine security measure in prison establishments to which both male and female inmates, including those on remand, are subject. Comprehensive records of strip searches are available only in respect of category A women prisoners, of whom there were three in Durham prison during the period in question. Details of the numbers of occasions on which these prisoners were strip searched were given in my replies to questions from the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) on 16 February, at column *546*, and 21 April, at columns *525-26*.

If there is reason to believe that a visitor intends to smuggle drugs or other contraband into an establishment, it is the normal practice to call in the police to investigate the matter. Information is not available centrally regarding the action taken by the police in such cases.

Ethnic Monitoring

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the results of the ethnic monitoring survey of probation clients will be published.

Mr. John Patten: Information from the survey, which relates to individual probation areas, has already been

given to those areas. The preparation of a full report on the survey has been delayed, but a report will be published as soon as possible.

Crime Statistics

Mr. William Shelton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many offenders were found guilty of, or cautioned for, the offence of gross indecency with children, broken down by sex of the children for each year from 1967 to 1987.

Mr. John Patten: The information requested is shown in the table for the years 1979 to 1986. Comparable data are not readily available for the years prior to 1979 and information for 1987 is not yet complete.

Offenders found guilty at all courts or cautioned for gross indecency with children by sex of victim
England and Wales
Number of offenders

Offence description	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Gross indency:								
with boys	123	141	129	107	117	138	122	119
with girls	147	139	118	138	138	145	206	172

Mr. William Shelton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were found guilty of, or cautioned for, the offence of indecency between males, for each year from 1967 to 1987, showing how many offences were committed against boys aged less than 16 years.

Mr. John Patten: Information collected centrally does not identify those cases where the offence involved boys under the age of 16. Details of offenders found guilty or cautioned for all offences of indecency between males are published annually in "Criminal Statistics, England and Wales", copies of which are in the Library. The most recent figures, covering the years 1977 to 1986, can be found in table 5.14 of the issue for 1986 (Cm. 233). Data for 1987 are not yet complete.

Firearms

Mr. Corbett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will publish in the *Official Report* details of the response he has had from the Advertising Standards Authority on the nature of advertisements for the sale of firearms by mail order.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 20 May 1988]:* The Advertising Standards Authority was not convinced that a statutory requirement of the sort proposed at Committee stage of the Firearms (Amendment) Bill on 10 March was practicable or would meet the concern expressed. The authority is considering whether the British code of advertising practice covering weapon advertising generally can be strengthened in some way.

PRIME MINISTER

Private Security Companies

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Prime Minister how many meetings have taken place from 1980 to the current date between Government Ministers or officials and representatives of the KMS private security company; and on which occasions Major (retd.) David Walker of KMS was present.

The Prime Minister: I have nothing to add to the replies which have been given to the many questions on this subject.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Company Statistics

Mr. Holland: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what was the share of the top 100 private sector companies in *(a)* manufacturing employment, *(b)* net manufacturing output and *(c)* net capital expenditure in 1984, 1985 and 1986.

Mr. Alan Clark: The information requested is presented in the following table:

Share of total manufacturing activity accounted for by the top 100 private sector enterprises in manufacturing[1]
Per cent.

	Employment	*Net output*	*Net capital expenditure*[2]
1984	32	35	38
1985	32	35	36
1986	33	37	38

[1] Defined in terms of their employment in manufacturing.
[2] Excluding leased assets.
Source: Annual Census of Production.

Bankruptcies

Mr. Holland: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many private sector manufacturers were declared bankrupt in *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* Great Britain in each year since and including 1979.

Mr. Maude: The information that is available for insolvencies in manufacturing is given in the table:

	Bankruptcies[1] *England and Wales*	*Company Liquidations*[2] *England and Wales*	*Company Liquidations*[2] *Great Britain*
1979	137	1,039	1,103
1980	143	2,095	2,190
1981	192	2,676	2,806
1982	208	4,058	4,217
1983	263	4,171	4,298
1984	387	4,457	4,599
1985	[3]295	4,837	4,981
1986	277	4,776	4,884
1987	[4]202	3,579	3,700

[1] Bankruptcy orders, receiving orders and deeds of arrangement.
[2] Compulsory plus creditors' voluntary liquidations.
[3] Not comparable with earlier years because of changes in legislation effective from October 1984 which have reduced the number of bankruptcies.
[4] January to September only.

Mr. Holland: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how may private building contractors were declared bankrupt in *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* Great Britain in 1985, 1986 and 1987.

Mr. Maude: The information that is available for insolvencies in the construction industry is given in the table:

	Bankruptcies[1] *England and Wales*	*Company Liquidations*[2] *England and Wales*	*Company Liquidations*[3] *Great Britain*
1985	788	1,975	2,069
1986	801	1,914	2,018
1987	[3]487	1,447	1,520

[1] Bankruptcy orders, receiving orders and deeds of arrangement.
[2] Compulsory plus creditors' voluntary arrangements.
[3] January—September only.

Retail Sales

Mr. Holland: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many firms accounted for the upper half of retail sales in the United Kingdom in 1986 and 1987.

Mr. Butcher: It is provisionally estimated that the largest 88 individual companies accounted for one half of retail sales in Great Britain in 1986. No estimate is yet available for 1987.

Goods (Distribution)

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what information he has about the distribution of *(a)* capital goods and *(b)* consumption goods imported from abroad by region of destination.

Mr. Alan Clark: I regret that this information is not available.

Welsh Language

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is his policy with regard to dealing with those individuals and bodies in Wales who wish to communicate with his Department through the medium of the Welsh language.

Mr. Butcher *[holding answer 20 May 1988]:* It is the practice of my Department's Companies Registration Office, Cardiff to respond in the Welsh language: more generally, my Department communicates in the English language except where it is considered appropriate and practical to do otherwise.

Action for Cities Programme

Mr. Blair: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list the total expenditure by the Central Office of Information on the Government's action for cities programme for each month since its inception.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke *[holding answer 18 May 1988]:* The only significant expenditure incurred by the Central Office of Information was approximately £34,400 for the launch of the action for cties programme on 7 March. This represents a very small part of the Government's expenditure of approximately £3,000 million each year on inner cities programmes.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Development Aid

Miss Lestor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list United Kingdom contributions to each of the member states of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference through national, Commonwealth and European Community action in each year from 1979 to 1987 inclusive *(a)* in cash and *(b)* in 1987 prices.

Mr. Chris Patten: For bilateral aid I refer the hon. Lady to the answer my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office gave her on 13 May, at column 250. Figures for Commonwealth aid are not readily available in the form requested. The United Kingdom share of European Community programmes is as follows:

Gross United Kingdom multilateral aid through EC to SADCC countries 1980-86

£ thousand

	1980	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Angola	110	340	240	390	1,510	1,290	—
Botswana	660	740	260	330	1,180	500	—
Lesotho	510	760	1,010	850	1,300	1,340	—
Malawi	2,300	1,520	1,620	890	2,510	1,970	—
Mozambique	780	1,150	610	2,280	3,690	4,560	—
Swaziland	860	280	300	700	1,070	360	—
Tanzania	2,810	4,420	4,500	4,160	5,520	5,380	—
Zambia	2,260	3,000	4,530	1,290	4,140	5,220	—
Zimbabwe	1,100	380	1,540	1,590	4,470	700	—
Total	11,390	12,590	14,610	12,480	25,390	21,320	20,000

Note: Figures for 1979 are not available; 1986 figures are not yet available in detail.
Source: ODA estimates using OECD statistics.

Gross United Kingdom multilateral aid through EC to SADCC countries 1980-86 at 1987 prices £ thousand

	1980	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Angola	170	460	300	470	1,730	1,400	—
Botswana	1,000	1,000	330	390	1,350	540	—
Lesotho	770	1,030	1,270	1,020	1,490	1,450	—
Malawi	3,470	2,060	2,040	1,060	2,880	2,130	—
Mozambique	1,180	1,560	770	2,720	4,230	4,940	—
Swaziland	1,300	380	380	840	1,230	390	—

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Tanzania	4,240	5,980	5,660	4,970	6,320	5,820	—
Zambia	3,410	4,060	5,700	1,540	4,740	5,650	—
Zimbabwe	1,660	510	1,940	1,900	5,120	760	—
Total	17,200	17,040	18,390	14,910	29,090	23,080	21,000

Note: Figures for 1979 are not available; 1986 figures are not yet available in detail.
Source: ODA estimates based on OECD statistics using 1987 GDP deflator.

Miss Lestor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the level of official development assistance in 1987.

Mr. Chris Patten: We have today informed the development assistance committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development that in 1987 net official development assistance as defined internationally was estimated to be £1,151 million. As a proportion of GNP it was equivalent to 0·28 per cent.

The net official development assistance figure for the calendar year 1987 compares with a net public expenditure provision for overseas aid of £1,247 million in the financial year 1987-88. The figure of net official development assistance as a proportion of GNP for 1987 reflects the strong growth in the United Kingdom economy last year and the fact that expenditure in the calendar year 1987 was lower than expected as a result of an unusually high proportion of financial year 1987-88 expenditure falling in the quarter ending 31 March 1988.

Increases in the aid programme announced in this year's public expenditure White Paper mean that aid is now planned to grow in real terms. The aid budget for this financial year is £70 million higher than for last year—an increase of 5·7 per cent., which is considerably in excess of the expected rate of inflation. The planned aid budgets for 1989-90 and 1990-91 provide for increases of £140 million and £185 million respectively over the budget for last year.

ENERGY

Nuclear Power

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on his policy towards the development of nuclear power in the light of the report and recommendations of the Trades Union Congress review committee on nuclear power, published on 3 May, a copy of which has been sent to him.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The Government's policy on the development of nuclear power is as stated in the reply given by my right hon. Friend to the hon. Member for Wells (Mr. Heathcoat-Amory) on 17 December 1987 and in the White Paper "Privatising Electricity" (Cm. 322). I welcome the recognition given by the Trades Union Congress review committee to the importance of nuclear power.

Uranium

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he has given permission for the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority for the import of Namibian uranium since May 1979.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority has imported no uranium from Namibia during this period.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether *(a)* the Central Electricity Generating Board, *(b)* the South of Scotland Electricity Board, *(c)* British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. or *(d)* the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority has sought permission and safeguards arrangements for the import of uranium from (i) Namibia and (ii) the Republic of South Africa, either directly or through a second or third country, since May 1979.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Uranium for the United Kingdom's civil nuclear programme has not been imported from South Africa since 1973 or from Namibia since 1984. British Nuclear Fuels plc receives uranium ore concentrate from overseas customers for processing and re-export. The origin of such uranium is a matter for its customers who remain the owners of the material.

All uranium imported into the United Kingdom for these purposes is subject to Euratom safeguards and to the terms of the UK/Euratom/IAEA safeguards agreement.

Mersey Barrage Co. Ltd.

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the visit by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Worcestershire, South (Mr. Spicer), to Liverpool to hold talks with the Mersey Barrage Co. Ltd.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I visited Liverpool on Tuesday, 17 May, to make a joint announcement with the Mersey Barrage Company of a £1·3 million extension to studies of a possible Mersey barrage. The money will be used to finance further work on the engineering, economic and environmental aspects of the proposed barrage. Funding will be on a 50/50 basis between the Government and the Mersey Barrage Company.

Whilst in Liverpool I also took the opportunity to meet members of the Mersey Enterprise Forum and representatives of the shipping and environmental groups whose interests are likely to be affected by a barrage construction.

Advanced Gas-cooled Reactors

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list in the *Official Report* the designed generating capacity for each advanced gas-cooled reactor, the actual outputs currently being achieved, the reasons for any differences and details of the timetables and actions planned to rectify current operating difficulties.

Mr. Michael Spicer: These are operational matters for the Central Electricity Generating Board, and I have asked the chairman to write to my hon. Friend.

Coal Industry

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has about the future of the coal industry social welfare organisation in the light of the Government's plans to privatise the coal industry.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The Government have no present plans to privatise the coal industry. The future of the coal industry social welfare organisation is one of the issues that would need to be considered in any such plans.

Nuclear Waste

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what plans there are for the discharge of low-grade nuclear waste into the sea from nuclear power stations after June.

Mr. Moynihan: I have been asked to reply.

There are no plans to change the current system of regulating discharges by authorisations issued under the Radioactive Substances Act 1960.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Commonhold Tenure

Mr. Heddle: To ask the Attorney-General if he will make a statement on the responses he proposes to make to the conclusions reached by the Law Commission in its report of July 1987 on commonhold tenure proposals, "Strata Title."

The Attorney-General: The working group report Cm. 179, to which my hon. Friend refers, makes far-reaching recommendations. A decision on implementation will be taken when these have been fully considered.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Horniman Museum

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what consultations he has undertaken about the future of the Horniman museum after the proposed abolition of the Inner London education authority; and when he now expects to be able to announce firm proposals.

Mr. Dunn: My right hon. Friend has concluded that, after April 1990, both the Horniman and Geffrye museums should be established as independent charitable trusts. To ensure the future of the two museums he proposes that, in addition to support they are able to raise from local authorities and the private sector, they should receive a grant, in the first instance, from the London Residuary Body, and in the longer-term from the museums and Galleries Commission. We now propose to discuss the details of these proposed arrangements with the museums, with ILEA and with the local authorities whose residents enjoy the services of the two museums.

School Rolls (Cumbria)

Mr. Jopling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish the most up-to-date figures for school rolls at secondary schools in Cumbria, together with the number of unused places at each school.

Mr. Dunn: The numbers on roll in secondary schools in Cumbria in January 1988, the capacities based on the DES work station and the number of empty places were as follows:

School name	*Number on roll as at January 1988.*	*Capacity*	*Empty places*
Alston, Samuel King's	93	177	84
Appleby Grammar	548	540	−8
Aspatria, Beacon Hill	298	451	153
Barrow, Alfred Barrow	545	972	427
Barrow, Sixth Form College	531	491	−40
Barrow, Parkview	1,175	1,637	462
Barrow, St. Bernard's	744	737	−7
Barrow, Thorncliffe	873	1,267	394
Barrow, Walney	773	1,004	231
Brampton, William Howard	879	1,269	390
Cleator Moor, Ehenside	454	578	124
Carlisle, Harraby	530	1,120	590
Carlisle, Morton	1,216	1,467	251
Carlisle, Newman	602	657	55
Carlisle, St. Aidan's	783	1,243	460
Carlisle, Trinity	1,662	1,747	85
Cartmel Priory	339	443	104
Cockermouth	984	1,303	319
Coniston, John Ruskin	224	258	34
Dalston, Caldew	1,009	1,101	92
Dalston, Dowdales	660	821	161
Carlisle, Eden	293	232	−61
Egremont, Wyndham	1,106	1,618	512
Kirkbie Kendal	966	1,051	85
Kendal, Queen Katherine	1,170	1,288	118
Keswick	763	842	79
Kirkby Lonsdale Queen Elizabeth	601	721	120
Kirkby Stephen Grammar	379	469	90
Longtown, Lochinvar	252	399	147
Maryport, Netherhall	964	1,332	368
Millom	737	1090	353
Milnthorpe, Dallam	565	700	135
Penrith, Queen Elizabeth Grammar	567	629	62
Penrith, Ullswater	1,156	1,364	208

School name	Number on roll as at January 1988.	Capacity	Empty places
Sedbergh, Settlebeck High	199	218	19
Silloth, Solway	254	335	81
Ulverston Victoria High	1,442	1,613	171
Whitehaven	1,664	2,032	368
Whitehaven, St. Benedict's	834	917	83
Windermere, The Lakes	796	922	126
Wigton, Nelson Thomlinson	889	1,080	191
Workington, St. Joseph's	499	589	90
Workington, Southfield	1,026	1,219	193
Workington, Stainburn	874	1,128	254
(Workington sixth form)	121	—	-121
Totals	33,039	41,071	8,032

The above figures were provided by Cumbria county council.

Portage

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) what plans he has to develop portage; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what is his estimate of the number of families with young children who need portage but do not obtain it.

Mr. Dunn: It is the responsibility of local education authorities to provide portage. Over the five-year period from 1986/87 the Department will have provided in excess of £8 million through the education support grant scheme for the development of portage. Every local education authority wishing to participate in this scheme has been offered support by the Department. It is up to local education authorities to consider future support once the ESG scheme comes to an end and to determine the number of families who would benefit from portage.

Universities and Polytechnics (Scientific Equipment)

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether the Advisory Board for the Research Council survey commissioned to look at scientific equipment in United Kingdom universities and polytechnics has been completed; when the Government expects to receive a copy of the results; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: I understand that the Advisory Board for the Research Councils expects to receive the report of this survey around the end of this year. My right hon. Friend and I await with interest the information which is being collected and the ABRC's advice on its implications.

Open University

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the current financial position of the Open University in terms of *(a)* the development of new courses, *(b)* current course maintenance and updating and *(c)* research.

Mr. Jackson: The Open University is now conducting a thorough reappraisal of its existing plans and forecasts. Its conclusions are to be discussed with the visiting committee, and the committee will report to my right hon. Friend later in the year.

Medical and Biological Research

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what proportion of post-doctoral posts in medical and biological research remain unfilled at present.

Mr. Jackson: This information is not collected centrally.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what steps are being taken by his Department to improve the career structure of post-doctoral researchers in medicine and biology; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: The terms of individual research contracts and the career structures available to post-doctoral researchers are matters for the employing institutions. The Government are, however, considering the recommendations of the Advisory Board for the Research Councils, contained in "A Strategy for the Science Base" calling for the more explicit management of research manpower in universities.

Research Studentships

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many applications were received by the Medical Research Council for research studentships; what was the number awarded during the last year for which full figures are available; and what are the corresponding figures for each year since 1978-79.

Mr. Jackson: The MRC receives applications for research studentship places from academic departments and its own establishments; individuals apply to the department or establishment for a place. The following table gives the number of places sought and the numbers awarded:

	Places sought	Places awarded
1978-79	1,045	268
1979-80	1,010	275
1980-81	1,011	242
1981-82	952	243
1982-83	1,003	283
1983-84	1,059	280
1984-85	1,120	259
1985-86	1,146	184
1986-87	1,212	213

Burnage High School, Manchester

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) of 9 May, *Official Report*, columns *14-15*, if he has now received a copy of the Macdonald report on Burnage high school, Manchester, and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dunn: My right hon. Friend has not yet received a copy of the published report from Manchester city council.

Disturbed Children (Research)

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list those representations he has received concerning his Department's decision to withdraw funding from the proposed research project into children with emotional and behavioural difficulties; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dunn: No funds have been withdrawn, because no funds had been committed. The Department had been considering the possibility of commissioning a research project in this field and representations have been received from the three researchers whose proposals had been short-listed for final consideration. Priority is being given to the enquiry into disruptive children chaired by Lord Elton and further consideration will be given to the problems of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties in the light of the outcomes of the report.

Civil Servants (Outside Activities)

Mr. John: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many civil servants in his Department are also directors or consultants in *(a)* public liability companies, *(b)* companies limited by guarantee, *(c)* building societies, *(d)* other friendly societies and *(e)* commercial undertakings other than the above; and what rules or instructions govern these activities with particular reference to remuneration.

Mrs. Rumbold: This information is not available. Full-time officers are not allowed to accept any post in the management of any society, firm or company which requires attendance at any time during working hours. They should not undertake any outside activity which might impair their usefulness as public servants or conflict with the interests of their department.

Records of such directorships as are held within these rules are not kept.

City Technology Colleges

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has any plans as to announce a city technology college for *(a)* Doncaster, *(b)* South Yorkshire and *(c)* Scunthorpe.

Mrs. Rumbold: There are at present no plans to make any such announcements.

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if, pursuant to his answer of 13 May, *Official Report*, column *260*, he has received any recent representations from Dixons Plc on the site of the proposed city technology college; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend has not himself had any contact with Dixons since May 13, but officials have had discussions. Dixons is considering a number of possible locations. It would be premature for me to make a statement while it is doing so. I understand that Dixons has recently emphatically confirmed its commitment to sponsorship of a CTC and its belief in the importance of the programme.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Religious Education

31. **Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the right hon. Member for Selby, as representing the Church Commissioners what recent representations the Church Commissioners have received about the role of religious education in Church schools; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alison: None. The commissioners have no direct responsibility for religious education in Church schools, although they do have some indirect responsibilities through their support for some aspects of higher education.

Property (Restrictions)

32. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory:** To ask the right hon. Member for Selby, as representing the Church Commissioners what restrictions the Church Commissioners place upon the use of property for which they have responsibility.

33. **Mr. Conway:** To ask the right hon. Member for Selby, as representing the Church Commissioners what restrictions the Church Commissioners place on the use of Church buildings for which they have responsibility.

34. **Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** To ask the right hon. Member for Selby, as representing the Church Commissioners what restrictions the Church Commissioners place on the use of Church buildings for which they have responsibility.

Mr. Key: To ask the right hon. Member for Selby, as representing the Church Commissioners what representations the commissioners have received about the restrictions placed by them on the use of Church buildings for which they have responsibility.

Mr. Alison: The commissioners do not normally carry responsibility for church buildings when they are in use for worship. The restrictions which they place upon the use of property for which they do have responsibility depend upon its nature. For example, when a redundant church is put to another use, restrictive and other covenants are included to safeguard the use and fabric.

Redundant Churches

35. **Mr. Gow:** To ask the right hon. Member for Selby, as representing the Church Commissioners what account the commissioners take when they are consulted about the future use of redundant churches of the uses to which those buildings have previously been put.

Mr. Alison: Under the Pastoral Measure 1983 the commissioners must be satisfied that an alternative use

proposed for a redundant church is "suitable". The commissioners interpret this to mean a use which has planning permission and which is consonant with the former use of the building as a place of worship and also with the building's historic and architectural qualities.

SCOTLAND

Youth Training

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many youth training scheme trainees are currently in employment in the Monklands district; and if he will list the employers with which they are placed together with the number of trainees at each employer.

Mr. Lang: At 16 May 1988, 1,184 young people living in Monklands district were participating in YTS. Of these, 75 have employed status.

Information is not held centrally on placement providers and the number of trainees each has. Such information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Allen Adams: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the latest figures for male and female unemployment in the Paisley travel-to-work area; and if he will list these in the *Official Report*.

Mr. Lang: Paisley is contained within the Glasgow travel-to-work area. Figures showing the number of male and female unemployed claimants in the Glasgow travel-to-work area and for the Paisley parliamentary constituencies on 14 April 1988 (the latest date for which information is available) are shown in the table.

	Males	*Females*
Glasgow travel-to-work area	71,589	26,276
Paisley North Parliamentary Constituency	3,341	1,487
Paisley South Parliamentary Constituency	3,297	1,307

This information is available in the Library.

Cereal Seeds (Testing)

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what assessment he has made of the suitability of testing of the distinctness, uniformity and stability of cereal seeds for use in Scotland being carried out at Cambridge, and if he will make a statement on the recommendations of the recent review of plant variety testing and seed certification systems.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: There are no agronomic or scientific reasons why seed of new varieties of cereals for production in any part of the United Kingdom should not be tested for distinctness, uniformity and stability at a single suitable location. The testing of all cereal varieties is currently shared between centres at Cambridge and Edinburgh at both of which the work is carried out adequately.

The United Kingdom Agriculture Ministers agreed that the report on the plant variety testing and seed certification systems in the United Kingdom should be published and copies made available for comment by interested organisations. Ministers will decide in the light of those comments what action should be taken on the many recommendations contained in the report.

Health Expenditure

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the projected percentage increases in health expenditure for 1988-89 and 1989-90 as corrected for the gross domestic product deflator.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Provision for the NHS in Scotland in 1988-89 is some £2,451 million. This represents an increase over the provisional outturn for 1987-88 of 0·5 per cent. after allowing for forecast GDP inflation. In 1989-90 expenditure is planned to rise to around £2,560 million, an increase of 0·6 per cent. over and above forecast GDP inflation for that year.

These figures do not take into account the additional £92 million allocated to the health programme in Scotland, as a result of the Government's acceptance of the NHS pay review bodies' recommendations. This will raise the increase for 1988-89 over forecast GDP inflation from 0·5 per cent. to 4·2 per cent.

Mountain Rescue

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what funding is to be given to mountain rescue teams to replace existing radio equipment following the allocation of second radio frequency to 158·650 megaherz.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Assistance with equipment, including radio equipment, may be given to mountain rescue teams by police authorities, whose expenditure in this respect, provided it complies with established criteria, is eligible for police grant at the rate of 51 per cent. Where appropriate, rescue teams, desirous of moving to the new frequency, may wish to discuss their particular needs with the relevant police force in the first instance.

Chatelherault

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he intends to reply to correspondence from Hamilton district council addressed to the historic buildings section of the Scottish Development Department, relating to a request for comments on the studies about Chatelherault.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Scottish Development Department responded to the district council on 16 May 1988.

Council House Sales (Hamilton)

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he intends to reply to correspondence from Hamilton district council regarding the sale of council-built houses at Barncluith, Hamilton.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Scottish Development Department is seeking further information from the council to enable a decision to be reached on the council's proposals.

Prisoners (Drugs)

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what were *(a)* the categories and *(b)* the

numbers of industrial doses of drugs administered to members of each prison in Scotland in the latest year for which figures are available.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: No records are maintained centrally of the categories or of the number of doses of drugs administered to inmates in Scottish prisons and this information could be obtained only at a disproportionate cost.

Superannuation Benefit

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether it is his practice to recover an overpayment of superannuation benefit when the overpayment was made as a result of errors on the part of the supperannuation division.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Yes. Irrespective of the reasons for an overpayment of superannuation benefits, recovery is sought but care is always taken to avoid hardship.

Animal Disease Research (Wildy Report)

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the recommendations contained in the Wildy report on the future of animal disease research as they affect Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The Wildy report to the Agriculture Ministers and the chairman of the Agricultural and Food Research Council reviewed current arrangements for R and D in farm animal diseases and made recommendations on the use of resources in the future. In Scotland it covered work at the Moredun research institute, the Rowett research institute, the veterinary investigation service of Scottish agricultural colleges and the Edinburgh and Glasgow veterinary schools.

The report makes no specific recommendations about the programmes of research in Scotland but the recommendation on the establishment of an overall United Kingdom executive body will need further consideration.

Regional Councils

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the future of regional councils.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. and learned Friend has no specific plans at present affecting the future of regional councils.

Health Boards (Rates)

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what percentage of the health budget was spent on rates bills in each health board in the latest year for which figures are available;

(2) what was the total rates bill for each hospital in the latest year for which figures are available;

(3) what was *(a)* the total rates bill for each health board, in the latest year for which figures are available, and *(b)* the number of establishments this covers.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Information is not held centrally on the amount of contributions paid in lieu of rates in relation to individual premises. The following table shows the total of payments made by each health board in 1986-87 in lieu of rates and the proportion which this represents of their gross recurrent expenditure on hospital and community health services.

Health board	*Payments in lieu of rates*[1] *(a) £ thousand*	*Proportion which (a) represents of total recurrent expenditure on HCH services (b) percentage*
Argyll and Clyde	4,160	4·1
Ayrshire and Arran	2,467	3·2
Borders	413	1·9
Dumfries and Galloway	1,010	2·7
Fife	2,736	3·7
Forth Valley	1,936	2·8
Grampian	3,955	3·0
Greater Glasgow	13,832	3·6
Highland	1,491	2·7
Lanarkshire	3,203	2·7
Lothian	6,145	2·6
Orkney	60	1·5
Shetland	159	3·2
Tayside	5,068	3·7
Western Isles	182	2·4
Total	46,817	3·2

[1] Principally relating to hospital premises and administrative and community health buildings.

Rating Reform

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list for each local authority the revised levels of community charge from April 1989.

Mr. Lang: The levels of community charge for 1989-90 will be set by individual local authorities and will reflect their own spending decisions.

Domestic Rates

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the average domestic rate bill payable per household for 1988-89 in each local authority area in Scotland.

Mr. Lang: The table shows estimates of the average domestic rate bill in each local authority area in 1988-89 calculated using the latest data available. The figures do not reflect the rate reduction of 5·6p proposed for Lothian regional council:

Average domestic rate bill

	£
Berwickshire	355
Ettrick and Lauderdale	358
Roxburgh	356
Tweeddale	379
Clackmannan	450
Falkirk	427
Stirling	585
Annandale and Eskdale	382
Nithsdale	398
Stewartry	399
Wigtown	355
Dunfermline	465
Kirkcaldy	459
North East Fife	525

	£
Aberdeen City	432
Banff and Buchan	346
Gordon	393
Kincardine and Deeside	398
Moray	337
Badenoch and Strathspey	381
Caithness	313
Inverness	428
Lochaber	359
Nairn	423
Ross and Cromarty	365
Skye and Lochalsh	253
Sutherland	248
East Lothian	631
Edinburgh City	640
Midlothian	592
West Lothian	547
Argyll and Bute	446
Bearsden and Milngavie	887
Clydebank	468
Clydesdale	507
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	546
Cumnock and Doon Valley	431
Cunninghame	514
Dumbarton	584
East Kilbride	570
Eastwood	791
Glasgow City	506
Hamilton	553
Inverclyde	515
Kilmarnock and Loudoun	485
Kyle and Carrick	579
Monklands	523
Motherwell	502
Renfrew	541
Strathkelvin	607
Angus	426
Dundee City	486
Perth and Kinross	465
Orkney	194
Shetland	392
Western Isles	226
AVERAGE SCOTLAND	500

Forestry

Mr. Graham: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what proportion of the forestry planting in Caithness and Sutherland undertaken by *(a)* the Forestry Commission and *(b)* Fountain Forestry has been of broadleaved trees in each year since 1 April 1981; and what proportion of the further planting proposals accepted for grant aid by him in the statement of 25 January will be of native broadleaved trees.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 16 May 1988]:* The information for Forestry Commission planting is as follows:

Year ended 31 March	*Percentage of Total Area planted with Broadleaves*
1982	0·5
1983	0·6
1984	0·7
1985	1·2
1986	0·4
1987	4·0
1988	5·2

Precise figures in respect of broadleaved planting undertaken by Fountain Forestry are not readily available. However, since the Government's broadleaves policy statement of July 1985, the Forestry Commission requires that all private planting schemes should contain at least 5 per cent. broadleaves, wherever it is practicable to do so.

The planting prescriptions in the cases referred to by my right hon. and learned Friend in his statement of 25 January 1988 allow, on average, for over 5 per cent. broadleaves. Most of these broadleaves will be of native species.

Mr. Graham: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the names and areas of those parcels of land which were *(a)* submitted and *(b)* approved for forestry grant aid in the Dornoch forest district in 1987-88.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 16 May 1988]:* The information is as follows:

Cases submitted for grant aid	*Area scheduled for new planting or restocking within a 5 year period (hectares)*
Cnoc Bacach	28·0
Achany	49·2
Glencalvie Black Bank	27·5
Langwell	1·0
Dhonnadh	92·4
Jubilee Wood Shinside	17·9
Langwell Wood	4·0
Achany 2	146·6
Loubcroy	202·0
Forsie Farm	315·9
Tothelgill Wood	28·7
Coille a Chailleach	10·7
Coille a Fhithich	5·5
Dubh Chlais	5·4
The Brig	131·0
The Dale	4·0
Stroupster West	79·5
Bhaird	2·6
Crubag	78·2
Fasach	8·6
Leir	2·2
Talaheel	249·0
Casan	10·0
Imriche	8·9
Fideag	0·4
Coille nam Breac	12·3
Crocaich	2·1
Cutting	94·8
Loch Dubh	21·3
Thearaig	5·3
Abhainn Bheag	5·1
Gleann nam Beist	4·3
The Gunn	19·3
Mackay A Tuath	9·9
Bad Coille	9·5
Coille Buidhe	146·2
Coille nan Clach	59·5
Coille Fada	23·6
Coille Meadhonnach	20·0
Coille an Reidhe	105·3
Coille an Sealbach	110·3
Coille a Saobhidhe	11·7
Allton	5·3
Cnocan	3·8
Astle	116·4
Wester Shebster	77·9
Loubcroy 2	1,057·6
Loubcroy 3	471·8
Dunbeath Castle	0·7
Netherton	19·6

Cases submitted for grant aid	*Area scheduled for new planting or restocking within a 5 year period (hectares)*
Widows Banks	155·3
Lochinver	7·5
Dunrobin	14·0
Old Calder	35·2
Langwell	19·8
Camster	133·9
Forss	1·3
North Fideag	34·9
Rowans	132·3
Forsinain North	150·6
Forsinain South	59·1
Glebeland at Farr	38·6
Bardacleay	99·8
Houstry	53·0
Achlarole	343·3
Doira Chatha East	50·2
Doira Chatha West	51·3
Lower Camster	107·5
Craigy Call	107·5
Smerrie	107·6
Brabster Farm	55·1
Cnoc Bacach	7·3
Dunrobin Sutherland Trust	2·7
Sutherland Estate	1·0
Glencalvie	12·6
Amat Birchwoods	6·8
Dunbeath Castle Policy Woodlands	2·9
Langwell Glac An Sgreadain	0·75
Western Fearn	3·7
Lochinver Estate	4·0
Lybster Mains	0·8
Dalnawillan	1·3
Langwell Braemore Keepers	0·9
Langwell Coille Nah Easan	3·3
Dunrobin	38·5

Cases approved for grant aid	*Area scheduled for new planting or restocking within a 5 year period (hectares)*
Limekiln & Whitewell	1,071·9
Skitten	0·9
Tothelgill Wood	28·7
South Fideag	0·4
West Shebster	77·9
Old Calder	35·2
Camster	132·9
North Fideag	34·9
Lower Camster	107·5
Craigy-Call Camster	107·5
Smerrie Camster	107·6
3 Newport, Berriedale	0·6
Dunbeath Castle	0·7
Forss Plantation	1·3
Torrish	155·8
Clach Geala	9·2
Sciberscross	790·0
Navidale	2·3
Strathy East	16·5
Cnoc Bacach	28·0
Dhonnadh	92·4
Jubilee Wood	17·9
Langwell Wood (Ext.)	4·0
Coille A Chailleach	10·7
Coille A Fhithich	5·5
Dubh Chlais	5·4
The Brig	131·0
Bhaird	2·6
Fasach	8·6
Leir	2·2

Cases approved for grant aid	*Area scheduled for new planting or restocking within a 5 year period (hectares)*
Casan	10·0
Imriche	8·9
Coille Nam Breac	12·3
Crocaich	2·1
Thearaig	5·3
Achainn Bheag	5·1
Gleann Nam Beist	4·3
The Gunn	19·3
Mackay A Tuath	9·9
Bad Coille	9·5
Coille A Saobhaidhe	11·7
Cnocan	3·8
Forsinain North	150·6
Forsinain South	59·1
Invercharron	50·3
Strathcarron (pt)	279·7
Doir A Chatha East	50·2
Doir A Chatha West	51·3
Loubcroy	6·4
Braelangwell	486·8
Lairg Estate	1·5
Ben Bhraggie	41·0
Glencalvie	30·1
Achany	49·2
Langwell	1·0
Achany (2)	146·6
Loubcroy (1)	202·0
Dunrobin	14·0
Craggans Woods	8·8
Strathmore Lodge Woods	0·7
Torigil	2·9
Ackergill Woods	0·8
Dunbeath Castle Pol	2·9
Lyster Mains	0·8
Dalnawillan	1·3
Airdens Innish	0·8
Migdale Mill Farm	1·6
Cnoc Bacach	9·8
Dunrobin Castle	2·7
Sutherland Estates	1·0
Amat Birchwood	6·8
Loch Dhu	1·5
Glac An Sgreadain	0·7
Dunrobin	36·5

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Cash Dispensers

44. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the Lord President of the Council whether he will make an assessment of the practicability of installing a cash dispensing facility within the Palace of Westminster.

Mr. Wakeham: I am not aware that there is sufficient demand for such an assessment. The Post Office does, of course, already provide a cheque encashment service for Members and all staff working within the Palace of Westminster.

Press Briefings

45. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Lord President of the Council what accommodation is provided within the House for briefings of the press by *(a)* the Prime Minister's press secretary and *(b)* other Government press officers.

Mr. Wakeham: No accommodation is provided in the House specifically for this purpose. The Government

information service briefs the parliamentary lobby journalists at their invitation in their room in the Palace of Westminster.

Private Members' Bills

46. **Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will take steps further to review the arrangements for the consideration of private Members' Bills; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham: No.

Visits

47. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will review the current arrangements for visits, tours and Gallery tickets for the House with a view to ensuring that Members can arrange a full visit by one telephone call to one Officer of the House.

Mr. Wakeham: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave to his written question on Monday 15 February at column *451*.

Abortion (Amendment) Bill

48. **Mr. Favell:** To ask the Lord President of the Council what representations he has received seeking the provision of additional parliamentary time for proceedings on the Abortion (Amendment) Bill; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham: I have received a very large number of letters from members of the general public on this subject, and representations, inside and outside the House, from a number of hon. Members.

Telephones (Cleaning)

Ms. Walley: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will issue advice to every right hon. and hon. Member, member of staff and Officer of the House that they are personally responsible for cleaning their own telephones; and if he will give details of how they can obtain the cleaning sachets provided for this purpose.

Mr. Wakeham: Information concerning the cleaning of telephones and the availability of cleaning materials for this purpose is published periodically in the "All-Party Whip".

Members' Tea Room

Ms. Walley: To ask the Lord President of the Council what instructions have been given to the engineers responsible for the refrigeration unit in the salad bar in the Members' Tea Room to ensure that the temperature meets the basic food requirements.

Mr. Wakeham: That action be taken to adjust its thermostatic control.

Toilets

Ms. Walley: To ask the Lord President of the Council when he intends to provide rubbish bins in each of the ladies' toilets in the Palace of Westminster.

Mr. Wakeham: Many of the ladies' lavatories are provided with waste bins. I understand that where they do not already exist, the Serjeant at Arms is making arrangements for them to be provided. If the hon. Lady has a particular complaint in mind, may I suggest that in the first instance she writes to the Serjeant at Arms.

Members' Dining Room

Ms. Walley: To ask the Lord President of the Council by what authority it is possible for tables in the Members' Dining Room to be reserved.

Mr. Wakeham: Tables in the Members' Dining Room may not be reserved.

Food Hygiene

Ms. Walley: To ask the Lord President of the Council what advice is available to catering staff in the House on food handling; what percentage and how many of the existing staff have attended food handling courses; and what checks are made to ensure that food handled and cooked at the Palace of Westminster complies with the standards of food hygiene and inspection implemented by environmental health officers in food premises where Crown immunity does not apply.

Mr. Wakeham: Advice to staff on food handling is available from and given as necessary by heads of section and the management of the Refreshment Department. No record is kept of the numbers who have attended food handling courses; but the Department does comply with the standards of hygiene laid down in the Food Hygiene Regulations made under the Food Act 1984.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Laos

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what proposals he has to improve current arrangements for diplomatic representation in Laos; and if he will describe the present arrangements.

Mr. Mellor: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State the hon. Member for Enfield, North (Mr. Eggar) gave to the hon. Member for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin) on 24 March. Present arrangements work well and we have no plans at present to amend them.

Swiss Law Reports

Mr. Gregory: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the embassy in Berne receives copies of Swiss law reports on commercial cases.

Mrs. Chalker: No, but it is open to British missions to request copies of reports as appropriate.

Disarmament

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has considered the proposal put forward in Stockholm by the six nations initiative leaders for a multilateral verification system within the United Nations; if he will support the proposal at the United Nations special session on disarmament; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: We consider that verification is an essential element of any arms control agreement. Verification is most effective when provisons for it are specifically tailored to a particular treaty. Detailed verification arrangements are thus best left to the parties to a treaty. We would therefore question the value of a United Nations verification agency.

Soviet Union

Mr. Sumberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made in the past six months to the Soviet ambassador concerning violations of human rights in the Soviet Union; and what plans he has for further such representations in the near future.

Mr. Mellor: We take every suitable opportunity to raise human rights violations with the Soviet authorities in Moscow and with the Soviet ambassador here. My right hon. and learned Friend did so during his talks with Mr. Shevardnadze in February. We shall be making further representations during bilateral human rights talks at official level in June.

Nicaragua

Dr. Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he or one of his Ministers intends to visit Nicaragua.

Mr. Mellor: No ministerial visits to Nicaragua are currently planned.

Military Expenditure

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is Her Majesty's Government's response to the proposals of the Warsaw treaty countries for a one or two-year moratorium on the growth of military spending of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and Warsaw treaty states; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: A freeze on the military spending of the two alliances would do nothing to eliminate the conventional imbalance in Europe that so favours the Warsaw pact and which lies at the heart of the region's security problems. Nor would it reduce the proportion of Soviet spending on defence which, according to our estimates, is in the order of 15 per cent. of GNP, as compared to 5 per cent. in the United Kingdom.

Overseas Information Department

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) how many persons employed in each year in the overseas information department were previously employed in the information research department;

(2) what are the terms of reference of the overseas information department;

(3) how many members of staff are employed by the overseas information department; what are their responsibilities; and what are the department and section titles.

Mr. Mellor: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office overseas information department ceased to exist in 1980. Its terms of reference were to provide guidance and background briefing on matters of general concern affecting Government policies. To research details on an annual basis of the redeployment of former information research department employees would involve disproportionate cost.

Nuclear Materials

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether any of the three instances of violations of the declared purpose clause covering the safeguards of nuclear materials under Euratom treaty article 84, cited by Euratom safeguards director Wilhelm Gmelin in evidence before the Bundestag Enquiry Committee into nuclear materials in Bonn on 28 April, referred to nuclear materials in United Kingdom installations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: None of the three violations mentioned by Mr. Gmelin referred to nuclear materials in the United Kingdom.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to seek an early meeting with his counterpart in the Federal Republic of Germany to initiate a European Economic Community inquiry into the disappearance of nuclear materials in transit between European Economic Community states.

Mr. Mellor: No; the European Commission has already undertaken an investigation into the transfer of nuclear materials within the European Community. In addition, the European Parliament has set up a special committee of inquiry which we expect to report by the end of June.

Coal Imports

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if, during the next meeting of European Community Foreign Affairs Ministers, he will raise the matter of coal imports which come originally from South Africa or Namibia but are traded in Holland, Belgium or other European countries and its effects on the United Kingdom's coal mining industry.

Mrs. Chalker: No.

PLO Official (Murder)

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if, pursuant to the answer of 28 April, *Official Report*, column *232*, he will specify the information on which Her Majesty's Government base the suspicions of Israeli involvement in the murder of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation official Abu Jihad in Tunis; what attempt Her Majesty's Government have made to establish proof of such Israeli involvement; what weight he attaches in this regard to press briefings by Israeli Government sources acknowledging responsibility; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: Israeli spokesmen have neither confirmed nor denied widely reported allegations of Israeli involvement in the murder of Abu Jihad. The Israeli authorities have offered no comment in reply to our own inquiries on this matter.

Information Research Department

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish in the *Official Report* the text of the letter from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State the hon. Member for Enfield, North (Mr. Eggar), to the hon. Member for Brent, East, on 3 May concerning the information research department.

Mr. Mellor: I am arranging for a copy of my hon. Friend's letter of 3 May to be placed in the Library of the House.

Central America

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what specific measures will be proposed by Her Majesty's Government in the light of the adoption by consensus of United Nations General Assembly resolution A/42/L/49 regarding a special plan of economic co-operation for Central America; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: As foreseen in the economic communiqué issued following the San José IV meeting in Hamburg, we shall be discussing with our European partners ways in which the substantial EC aid to the region can be co-ordinated with the objectives of the plan, and with the action of other countries and international organisations which are taking part in this effort. The Community's participation in various specific measures under the plan will be agreed jointly with the countries of the central American isthmus.

Private Security Companies

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what payments have been made by his Department in each year from 1980 to date to Zeus and Lynx private security companies; and what was the nature of the work undertaken by these companies.

Mr. Mellor: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has employed Zeus but not the Lynx security company. Detailed information on this subject is not kept in a centralised form and can only be researched at disproportionate cost. Available records show that Zeus Security Guards Ltd. were employed on access control duties in Whitehall six years ago and on two further occasions in 1983.

Ms. Susan Wescott

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Secretary of State of Foreign Commonwealth Affairs if he has any information about the arrest of Ms. Susan Wescott, a British passport-holder, by the South African authorities on 8 May near Johannesburg; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: We are aware of the arrest, together with three other persons, of Mrs. Susan Donnelly (née Wescott) in South Africa on 8 May 1988. Her Majesty's consul at Johannesburg saw her on 16 May. No formal charges have yet been laid. Mrs. Donnelly's brother has engaged a lawyer to represent her.

EMPLOYMENT

Employment Training Programme

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what steps he intends to take to ensure that assessing agents on the employment training programme are aware of any particular needs of people with disabilities.

Mr. Patrick Nicholls: Training agents will be expected to demonstrate that they are able to deliver a full range of assessment and occuptional guidance services completely and professionally. This will include arrangements for participants who have special needs, including disabilities. In addition, the facilities of the employment rehabilitation service will be available to training agents to offer specialist or extended assessment to appropriate participants where the need is identified.

National Council for Vocational Qualifications

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how long he expects the National Council for Vocational Qualifications to take to complete its task.

Mr. Nicholls: The National Council for Vocational Qualifications was given the target date of 1991 to have the first four levels of its new system fully operational. It is making good progress, but whether it can complete this task by 1991 depends on the response of awarding bodies and employers, in particular on how quickly the leading industry bodies can set the standards on which national vocational qualifications must be based.

Youth Training

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give a breakdown of *(a)* female enrolment and *(b)* total enrolment in each youth training scheme course since 1985.

Mr. John Cope: There are currently around 5,000 individual schemes operating in YTS. At the end of March 1988 there were 389,100 young people in training on YTS, of whom 43 per cent. were young women. This proportion of young women has remained constant since 1985.

Information in the form requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mines and Quarries Act 1954

Mr. Illsley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) whether he is able to publish the proposed regulations which will replace the Mines and Quarries Act 1954;

(2) whether he is able to publish, in conjunction with the Health and Safety Commission, the codes of practice which are to replace the Mines and Quarries Act 1954.

Mr. Nicholls: Fifteen sets of regulations, each with a supporting approved code of practice, will replace the Mines and Quarries Act 1954 and associated legislation. Five sets of proposed regulations together with the relevant proposed codes of practice have already been published. The subjects to be covered in the programme are:

Administration of Mines and Quarries
*Electricity in Mines
*Electricity in Quarries
Explosives in Coal Mines
Explosives in Miscellaneous Mines
* Explosives in Quarries
Health and Welfare
Machinery
* Mines (Safety of Exit)
Respirable Dust
* Shafts and Winding
Special Hazards
Support
Tips and Structures
Transport
Ventilation and Firedamp Drainage
* Subjects on which proposals have been published.

New Businesses

Miss Lestor: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many new businesses were started during 1987.

Mr. Cope: I regret that the information requested is not available. However, during 1986, the latest year for which we have figures, there was a net increase of 29,000 businesses registered for VAT.

Civil Servants (Outside Activities)

Mr. John: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many civil servants in his Department are also directors or consultants in *(a)* public liability companies, *(b)* companies limited by guarantee, *(c)* building societies, *(d)* other friendly societies and *(e)* commercial undertakings other than the above; and what rules or instructions govern these activities with particular reference to remuneration.

Mr. Lee: Comprehensive information is not available about the number of staff in the Department of Employment group who are also directors or consultants in outside organisations because there is no requirement to report these activities unless there is a real or potential conflict with the Department's business.

Staff who engage in such activities are bound by the general rules of conduct that apply to all civil servants. They must not put their private interests before their duty, engage in activities which might involve a conflict of interest with the Department's business, or use their official position to further their private interests. They are not precluded from receiving remuneration. They are not permitted to accept directorships in any company holding a contract with the Department, except as a Government nominee or with express permission.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Cereals

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what arrangements his Department is making for estimating the size of the cereals harvest in England and Wales in the current year.

Mr. MacGregor: I made it clear in October last year that, in the light of that year's experience and similar difficulties in 1985, I proposed to give serious consideration as to whether, on balance, we were right to release a harvest estimate before we had the initial results from our farm-based production survey.

Following discussions between my officials and representatives of the cereals industry, I have now decided to end the late August survey of yields in sample parishes and, weather permitting, to bring forward the more reliable cereal production survey so that its provisional results can be published in the last week of September. Further surveys of the level of cereals production will follow in the course of the year.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Portavogie (Health Services)

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland at which addresses in Portavogie National Health Service general medical practitioners hold their individual clinics; what accommodation facilities are used at each of these locations; and why there are no health and medical clinics in Portavogie.

Mr. Needham: The addresses are 2 and 5a Springfield road. The facilities at each consist of one room for waiting and another for consultation. Baby and chiropody clinics are held in Portavogie technical college and physiotherapy and occupational therapy services are provided on a domiciliary basis when needed.

Irish Teacher's Certificate

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what percentage of student teachers graduated from teacher training colleges with teastas muinteora gaeilge/Irish teacher's certificate in each year of its existence;

(2) why was the teastas muinteora gaeilge/Irish teacher's certificate discontinued.

Dr. Mawhinney: This certificate has not been awarded by Northern Ireland teacher training colleges for at least 40 years.

The required information is not available.

Irish Language

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what qualification the Department of Education recognises as suitable for teaching Irish in primary schools;

(2) why the Ministry of Education ceased to recognise certificates of competence to teach Irish in primary schools issued by voluntary Irish language colleges in Northern Ireland; and if he will reconsider establishing an arrangement whereby voluntary Irish language colleges would issue certificates of competence to teach Irish and the Department would give them full recognition.

Dr. Mawhinney: Recognition as a qualified teacher in primary schools is dependent upon the successful completion of an approved course of teacher training. The award of recognition is not based on a single specific subject.

It is a matter for the individual school authorities when appointing teachers to take account of any relevant specialisms.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what in-service training opportunities are available to primary teachers with no Irish who wish to teach Irish.

Dr. Mawhinney: St. Mary's college is currently offering a part-time BEd in-service degree course with Celtic as a subject option. Proficiency in Irish, while desirable is not a prerequisite for entry to the course.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent on the support of Irish in the education system in Northern Ireland in each academic year from 1980 to 1987, inclusive.

Dr. Mawhinney: Details of the cost of supporting any subject in the curriculum, including Irish, are not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will produce a discussion document on the role of Irish in the school curriculum; and if he will make a statement.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 16 May 1988]:* I have no plans to produce such a document.

Post-16 Education

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he has any proposals to improve the staying on rate in education after the age of 16 years; and if he will make a statement.

Dr. Mawhinney: I have no proposals aimed specifically at improving the staying on rate in Northern Ireland secondary schools which is already significantly higher than the average for schools in England and Wales.

Adult Training Centre, Glasvey

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he now expects to replace the present adult training centre at Glasvey, Ballykelly.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 17 May 1988]:* This is a matter for the Western Health and Social Services Board.

I understand that the board is aware of the deficiencies in the accommodation at Glasvey ATC and hopes to provide a new 75-place unit at Limavady as soon as possible.

Road Works, Comber

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the present roadworks at High street, Comber, will be completed; what form of advance notice was given to occupiers in the High street; and if he will make a statement about the proposed Comber bypass.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 17 May 1988]:* The roadworks at High street, Comber, are due to be completed by the end of October 1988.

A letter giving details of the scheme and proposed traffic diversion was issued to all affected residents prior to the roadworks commencing.

The proposed Comber bypass extension is included in the Department of the Environment's 6 to 15 years major works programme. The priority of the scheme within the overall programme is currently being reviewed.

Fair Employment

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many subscribers there have been in Northern Ireland to the register for equal opportunity employers and organisations for each quarter since 19 June 1986; and how many of such subscribers have been removed from the register each quarter since this date.

Mr. Viggers *[holding answer 20 April 1988]:* The number of subscribers in each quarter is as follows:

Quarter ended	*Numbers of subscribers*
31 July 1986 (from 19 June 1986 only)	8,112
31 October 1986	8,270
31 January 1987	8,456
31 April 1987	8,667
31 July 1987	8,834
31 October 1987	9,031
31 January 1988	9,218
30 April 1988	9,438

No subscribers have been removed from the register in this period.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the number and type of cases referred under the Fair Employment Act (NI) 1976 to the county court, showing the number and type of findings upheld or overturned by the court, and the employers concerned; and if he will place in the Library copies of the judgments in each case.

Mr. Viggers *[holding answer 20 April 1988]:* The tables provide details of cases heard by the county court. It is not normal practice to place judgments in the Library but they may be obtained on request from the county court, Courthouse, Crumlin road, Belfast.

Table 1

Appeals to County Court	*Total*	*Settled out of court*	*Findings upheld*	*Findings overturned*	*Result unknown*
Appeals by respondent under section 28(2)	32	18	5	9	—
Appeals by complainant under section 28(3)	19	3	5	1	10

Table 2

Appeals by respondents against FEA findings of discrimination under section 28(2) of the Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act 1976

Date appeals lodged	*Organisation involved*	*Outcome of appeal (findings upheld or overturned)*
November 1977	Civil Service Commission	Overturned
December 1978	Craigavon Borough Council	[1]Overturned
January 1979	Newry and Mourne District Council	Overturned
May 1979	Craigavon Borough Council	Overturned
September 1981	Armagh District Council	[2]Upheld

Date appeals lodged	Organisation involved	Outcome of appeal (findings upheld or overturned)
November 1981	Lisburn Borough Council	Upheld
December 1984	Southern Health and Social Services Board	Overturned
December 1984	Southern Health and Social Services Board	Overturned
April 1985	Derry City Council	Overturned
April 1985	Northern Ireland Electricity Service	[3]Overturned
February 1986	Department of the Environment (NI)	Overturned
November 1986	The Village Inn	Upheld
November 1986	The Village Inn	Upheld
May 1987	Ministry of Defence	Upheld

[1] Original FEA findings upheld by Court of Appeal.
[2] Original FEA findings overturned by Court of Appeal.
[3] FEA appeal pending at Court of Appeal.

Table 3

Appeals by complainants against FEA findings of no discrimination under section 28(3) of the Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act 1976

Date appeal lodged	Respondent Organisation	Outcome of appeal (findings upheld or overturned)
June 1979	Department of Health and Social Services	Upheld
July 1984	Department of the Environment	Upheld
October 1984	F. A. Wellworth Co. Limited	Upheld
January 1985	Anglo Irish Meats	Overturned
November 1985	Short Brothers PLC	Upheld
April 1986	NI Postal and Telecommunications Board	Upheld

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which employers have made a compensatory payment to a complainant under the Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act 1976; what have been the sums involved in each case, the original date of each settlement, the eventual date of payment from 1976 to the present.

Mr. Viggers *[holding answer 20 April 1988]:* This is a matter for the chairman of the Fair Employment Agency. I understand that there have been 39 cases, the details of which are in the table. It would not be in the best interests of the work of the agency to release the names of parties involved in cases under section 24 of the Act.

Respondent	Date of settlement	Date of payment	Amount £
Food, Drink and Tobacco	22 September 1980	7 October 1980	750
Textile and Clothing	14 January 1982	3 March 1982	750
Construction	6 June 1981	10 March 1982	500
Manufacturing	11 June 1982	18 July 1982	5,500
Local Authority	6 August 1982	26 August 1982	1,000
Other Employer	14 September 1982	16 September 1982	550
Health and Social Services Board	27 August 1982	22 September 1982	4,350
Local Authority	30 November 1982	22 December 1982	3,000
Other Public Body	19 October 1983	14 November 1983	1,500
Food, Drink and Tobacco	25 October 1983	17 November 1983	1,500
Local Authority	20 October 1983	2 December 1983	1,500
Other Public Body	24 October 1983	22 December 1983	2,500
Health and Social Services Board	25 January 1984	9 March 1984	1,400
Vocational Organisation	7 March 1984	3 May 1984	10,000
Education and Library Board	8 June 1984	12 October 1984	1,500
Vocational Organisation	26 October 1984	15 November 1984	250
Vocational Organisation	26 October 1984	15 November 1984	250
Vocational Organisation	26 October 1984	15 November 1984	250
Distributive	6 December 1984	14 December 1984	350
Other Employer	1 May 1985	2 May 1985	1,000
Food, Drink and Tobacco	8 November 1985	20 December 1985	2,100
Education and Library Board	Not available	11 April 1986	2,000
Engineering	Not available	15 October 1986	507·50
Engineering	Not available	15 October 1986	510
Other Employer	Not available	30 October 1986	4,900
Education and Library Board	Not available	18 November 1986	4,759·04
Education and Library Board	Not available	12 May 1987	3,279·48
Local Authority	13 May 1987	17 June 1987	1,500
Other Employer	13 May 1987	23 June 1987	1,892·28
Education and Library Board	Not available	13 October 1987	2,035·26
Local Authority	Not available	12 November 1987	3,425·75
Manufacturing	16 November 1987	19 November 1987	2,350
Manufacturing	Not available	28 November 1987	5,000
Construction	Not available	22 December 1987	3,500
Engineering	5 January 1988	5 January 1988	2,000
Health and Social Services Board	Not available	3 February 1988	1,673·80
Health and Social Services Board	Not available	29 March 1988	4,000
Other Employer	Not available	8 April 1988	1,000
Education and Library Board	Not available	14 April 1988	3,541·09

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many complaints under section 24 of the Fair Employment Act (NI) 1976 of unlawful discrimination, the Fair Employment Agency has declined to pursue; and what reasons have been given in each case.

Mr. Viggers *[holding answer 20 April 1988]:* I understand from the chairman of the Fair Employment Agency that the agency has declined to pursue 100 complaints under section 24 of the Fair Employment (NI) Act 1976 for the reasons specified:

	Number
(1) Adjudged frivolous	34
(2) Outside the time limits	48
(3) Outside the scope of the legislation	12
(4) Considered by another statutory body	1
(5) Failure by complainant to provide sufficient information	5

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make available the results of the Fair Employment Agency for Northern Ireland's monitoring of recruitment to the *Belfast Telegraph* since 1983.

Mr. Viggers *[holding answer 20 April 1988]:* It would not be in the best interests of the work of the Fair Employment Agency to publish full details of the information obtained from its monitoring or recruitment by specific employers, but a summary of such information in respect of the *Belfast Telegraph* if contained in the 11th annual report of the agency, a copy of which is available in the Library.

Firearms

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will give details of incidents in which firearms, previously in the possession of the security forces have been used by paramilitary groups.

Mr. Viggers *[holding answer 26 April 1988]:* Weapons formerly in the possession of the security forces which have been stolen or otherwise improperly acquired could well fall into the hands of paramilitary groups and be used for terrorist purposes. However, only if these weapons are subsequently recovered can they be linked forensically with particular acts of terrorism. To provide details of all such cases would involve disproportionate costs and some details may be confidential, but if there are particular cases that the hon. Member has in mind and he could give me the details, I will look into them.

Sexual Assaults

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information is available as to the current investigation by the Royal Ulster Constabulary into alleged sexual assaults on a 13-year-old boy at the Gleneyre and Burnside children's home; what information relating to such alleged assaults was made available to Sir George Terry during his investigation into Kincora and other children's homes in 1982; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Stanley *[holding answer 26 April 1988]:* The RUC fully investigated allegations of misconduct concerning children in care in Gleneyre and Burnside children's homes, Craigavon. The papers were referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions (Northern Ireland) who directed no prosecution. However, in recent months, following further information received, this inquiry has been reopened and is currently under investigation by the RUC. I cannot comment on the information available to the police in the context of their current investigation.

As far as the information available to Sir George Terry is concerned, I cannot add to what is said in his report (a copy of which is in the Library).

Psychological Warfare

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what changes there have been in policy on psychological operations and psychological warfare as implemented by the security forces in Northern Ireland from 1979 to the current date.

Mr. Stanley *[holding answer 26 April 1988]:* It is not the general practice to comment on detailed matters of security policy.

Mr. Fred Holroyd

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary as to why he has refused Mr. Fred Holroyd's request for the return of photographic material supplied by him to the police.

Mr. Stanley *[holding answer 26 April 1988]:* No. I understand that the RUC has already made its reasons known to Mr. Holroyd.

Kidnapping

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if any members of the security forces have paid civilians to kidnap individuals from the Irish Republic.

Mr. Stanley *[holding answer 26 April 1988]:* I am not aware of any such payments.

Information Units

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was *(a)* the role, *(b)* the composition and *(c)* the years of operation of (i) the information policy unit, (ii) the information liaison unit, and (iii) the information planning unit, from 1971 to the current date.

Mr. Stanley *[holding answer 26 April 1988]:* Various groups and committees of officials have met; often on an ad-hoc basis, to co-ordinate the work of the information departments within the security forces and the Northern Ireland Office. Detailed records have not been kept on their role and composition because it was judged neither necessary nor cost effective to do so.

Murder Investigations

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will call for a report from the Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary as to the stage at which investigations have reached into the murders of

(a) Royal Ulster Constabulary Sergeant Joseph Campbell in February 1977, *(b)* Mr. John Francis Green in January 1975 and *(c)* Mr. John Turnley in 1980, and the shootings of (i) Captain William Black of the Ulster Defence Regiment in 1973, and (ii) the journalist Mr. Jim Campbell in 1984.

Mr. Stanley *[holding answer 26 April 1988]:* No.

DEFENCE

Departmental Contracts

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many new jobs have been created in the north-west during the last 12 months, as a result of contracts for his Department.

Mr. Sainsbury: Estimates of the number of jobs in the north-west related to new contracts placed by MOD in a particular year could not be derived except at disproportionate cost. In 1985/86, about 23,000 people are estimated to have been employed on work for my Department placed with main contractors in the north-west.

British Military Advisory Team (Bangladesh)

Mrs. Wise: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the purpose of the British military advisory team in Bangladesh.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The team assists in the direction and teaching of staff courses for middle ranking officers at the Bangladesh defence services command and staff college in Dhaka.

Tucano

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many flying hours have been carried out on the Tucano aircraft.

Mr. Sainsbury: Some 37.5 hours have been flown at the aircraft and armament experimental establishment, Boscombe Down, and some 200 hours have been flown on production aircraft at Short Bros.

United States Aircraft

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the United States very low frequency communication aircraft have ever been used, and are currently being used to provide communications with the United Kindom's Polaris fleet.

Mr. Ian Stewart: No.

Glen Garry Transmitter

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the Glen Garry extremely low frequency transmitter in Scotland is expected to be in operation; and if he will make statement on its progress.

Mr. Sainsbury: It is too early to say when the extremely low frequency transmitter at Glen Garry Forest is likely to be in operation. A notice of proposed development will probably not be submitted to the Highland regional council before the autumn and the start of construction work is unlikely before 1990.

Trident

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if the new Trident missile submarine programme is being complemented by improvements to the capabilities of existing submarine command, control and communications systems;

(2) if the new Trident missile submarine programme is being complemented by efforts to reduce the vulnerability of elements of the existing submarine command, control and communications system;

(3) if the new Trident submarine programme is being complemented by any new submarine command, control and communications system.

Mr. Sainsbury: Communications system for Trident submarines will be fully effective on its introduction into service in the mid 1990s. I am unable to comment further for reasons of security.

Submarines (Sabotage)

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps have been taken to increase manpower available to protect the submarine command, control and communications system from sabotage, in the light of lessons of the Brave Defender exercise in 1985.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Exercise Brave Defender was designed to test the plans for ground defence of vital United Kingdom installations and these have been amended where necessary in the light of post-exercise analysis. For good reasons of security, it is not our practice to discuss the details of such plans.

Fylingdales Early Warning System

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if the upgraded ballistic missile early warning system radar at Fylingdales moor will give the United Kingdom more advanced warning of nuclear attack.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The purpose of the modernisation of the ballistic missile early warning system at RAF Fylingdales is not to improve warning time—*Official Report,* 22 May 1986, columns *263-64*—although it may marginally do so.

Military Installations

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list those military installations in Wales which are regarded as being support facilities rather than operational military units; and whether his Department has any plans for the closure or privatisation of these facilities.

Mr. Freeman: There are the following support facilities in Wales:

RNADS Milford Haven and Trecwn, where a study has been carried out into the future roles and tasks of the depots. A consultative document will be issued in due course.

RNSD Llangennech where a decision to close the facilities was announced in 1981. Other support facilities are located at HM Mooring and Marine Depot, Pembroke Dock, 39 District Workshop, Bridgend, RAC Sennybridge, ASU Brecon, RAF Sealand or RAF St. Athan. There are no plans for their closure or privatisation.

Aircraft Accidents

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the criteria which objectively determine when an aircraft accident is a major or a minor one.

Mr. Freeman: Damage to aircraft is categorised as follows:

Incidents

(a) Category 1—the damage is repairable on site by established first line personnel.[1]

(b) Category 2—the damage is repairable on site by established second line personnel.[2]

Accidents

(c) Category 3—the damage is repairable on site but is beyond unit technical resources. Assistance from a repair and salvage unit or civilian contractor is required.

(d) Category 4—the damage is not repairable on site. The aircraft must be removed to an established depot or civilian repair organisation.

(e) Category 5—the aircraft is damaged beyond repair or is missing, or, in accordance with current Ministry of Defence policy, is not worth repairing.

A minor accident is defined as one where the aircraft damage is classifed as category 3. A major accident is defined as one where the aircraft damage is either category 4 or 5.

[1] First line personnel conduct before flight, after flight and turnround servicing including minor component changes.

[2] Second line conduct deeper servicing, including major component changes and structural repair.

Rating Reform

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what advice or instructions have been issued to servicemen and their families living in his Department's accommodation in Scotland with regard to the completion of any inquiry form issued by registration officers in connection with the community charge in Scotland;

(2) what advice or instruction has been issued to servicemen and their families living in his Department's accommodation in Scotland with regard to *(a)* registration under the Abolition of Domestic Rates &c. (Scotland) Act 1987 and *(b)* payment of a community charge to the relevant local authority.

Mr. Freeman: Service personnel and their families living in public accommodation in Scotland have been instructed to comply with the normal legal requirement to complete community charge registration inquiry forms and return them to registration officers, and advised of their liability to pay the community charge in the area of their sole or main residence.

Educational Institutions

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list and explain the basis on which educational institutions in the United Kingdom and abroad have been in receipt of funding from his Department from 1979 to the current date.

Mr. Sainsbury: The MOD directly funds six defence lectureships at British universities and makes use of university and other higher educational facilities and courses to meet educational and training requirements. The majority of Ministry of Defence expenditure with educational institutions in the United Kingdom is, however, through research agreements and contracts placed on behalf of the defence research establishments. In addition, grants for work of relevance to defence are made under collaborative arrangements with the research councils, and the MOD and the Science and Engineering Research Council co-fund awards to certain students who are jointly supervised by their university and defence research establishments. Involvement with educational institutions overseas is minimal. All activities are in support of the defence programme.

Mr. Colin Wallace

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish in the *Official Report* the text of the letter from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Kettering (Mr. Freeman) to the hon. Member for Brent, East on 18 April, about Mr. Colin Wallace and related matters.

Mr. Freeman: The text of my letter was as follows:

"Thank you for your letter of 22 March. I can confirm that Mr. Wallace was granted a commission as a part-time member of the UDR in the rank of second lieutenant and granted the acting rank of captain with effect from 18 January 1972. His resignation of this commission took effect from 14 November 1975. As an acting captain, he would have been paid as a captain for all military duties carried out with the UDR, would have been entitled to wear the rank badges of a UDR captain, and in the course of his duties would have been addressed by the rank of "Captain"; all this is in accordance with normal Army practice. My reply to your Parliamentary Question of course referred to his substantive rank.

It has not been possible to trace the memorandum to which you refer in your letter, and I cannot therefore comment upon it. There are no records available of what duties Mr. Wallace carried out with the UDR. I understand that Mr. Brian Parker was an Information Officer based at HQ UDR, and that he was responsible to the Commander UDR for public relations and all press matters affecting the UDR.

You ask for assurances on a number of points. I am aware of no evidence whatsoever that explosives were supplied by a member or members of the UDR for the bombings in the Irish Republic on 17 May 1974; or that any serving member or members of the UDR were involved in the murder of John Francis Green or the bombing of a public house in Silverbridge; or that military intelligence personnel have ever supplied weapons or explosives to civilians for unlawful use in Northern Ireland or the Irish Republic; or that Robert Jackson has ever had any connections with military intelligence authorities."

Cruise Missiles

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when a decision was taken to deploy air-launched Cruise missiles on *(a)* North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and *(b)* Royal Air Force aircraft.

Mr. Ian Stewart: There are no plans to deploy air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs) on any aircraft in Europe. ALCMs are deployed on strategic bombers of the United States air force. In his 1985 Montebello implementation proposals, SACEUR called for, inter alia, the deployment of a tactical air to surface missile (TASM); no decisions have yet been taken on how best to meet this requirement.

Security Companies

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what payments have been made by his

Department in each year from 1980 to date to Zeus and Lynx private security companies; and what was the nature of the work undertaken by these companies.

Mr. Sainsbury: I am not aware that the MOD has had any dealings with either of the companies quoted.

Military Buildings, Woolwich

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about the progress of his efforts to preserve military buildings of historic interest in the Woolwich area.

Mr. Freeman *[holding answer 21 April 1988]:* The Historic Military Buildings Committee visited Royal Arsenal west and Connaught barracks on 14 January and had useful discussions about the options available for dealing with historic buildings at both sites. It has been decided to dispose of Connaught barracks once the remaining occupants have been relocated, and in formulating plans for disposal we shall be seeking to ensure that the historic interest and character of the site are respected. No decisions have yet been taken about the future location of the directorate general of quality assurance. However, I expect to outline our proposals for the vacant historic buildings at Royal Arsenal West not directly affected by any decision on the future location of the directorate general of quality assurance before the summer recess.

WALES

Rural Housing

1. **Mr. Geraint Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on housing standards in the rural areas of Wales.

Mr. Peter Walker: The 1986 Welsh house condition survey shows that there have been significant improvements in the condition of Welsh housing. It does also highlight the problem areas. We will use the survey results to direct resources where they are most needed.

National Museum

16. **Mr. Shersby:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what corrective measures have been taken in the light of the 15th report from the Public Accounts Committee, House of Commons Paper No. 38, to ensure that responsibility for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of public funds has been discharged in relation to the national museum of Wales.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Measures to ensure the proper discharge of the Department's sponsorship responsibility for the national museum of Wales are being taken as described in the Treasury Minute published on 28 October 1987 (in response to the Fifteenth Report from the Public Accounts Committee). The financial management and policy review has been completed and the consultants' recommendations are in the process of being implemented. Action is also being taken in response to the internal audit report. A revised financial memorandum is now in operation. Corporate planning is being developed. There is close liaison between the Department and the museum on all these matters, and improved monitoring arrangements have been implemented by the Department.

Farming Unions

17. **Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he last met representatives of the farming unions in Wales; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Peter Walker: I last met representatives of the National Farmers Union (Wales) on Wednesday 30 March and the Farmers Union of Wales on Tuesday 10 May. A full range of issues of concern to the unions was discussed.

A55 (Signposting)

18. **Mr. Raffan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on his policy on signposting on the A55 of tourist attractions in Rhyl and Prestatyn and on the costs and future maintenance of the signs.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: To be eligible for signing from a trunk road an attraction must have over 25,000 visitors a year, be within 20 miles of the nearest junction, have adequate parking and be open for 50 days or more a year. My officials have recently written to Rhuddlan borough council agreeing to signs for Rhyl and Prestatyn at the A55/A525 junction.

It is our policy that the full costs of tourist attraction signs, including on-costs such as maintenance, should be paid by the operators of attractions.

Benefits

19. **Mr. Rowlands:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what assessment his Department has made of the impact of recent changes in housing benefit and rate rebates on people in Wales who were previously in receipt of a 100 per cent. rate rebate.

Mr. Peter Walker: The hon. Gentleman will be aware that this is primarily a matter for the Secretary of State for Social Services. He has made clear in his recent announcement that the combination of changes in housing benefits and other allowances will mean that overall around nine out of 10 recipients of income-related benefits will have either gained or have no change in their cash benefits.

Housing Waiting Lists

20. **Mr. Alan W. Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many people were on local authority housing waiting lists in Wales *(a)* in 1979 and *(b)* in 1987.

Mr. Grist: Information on the number of people on housing waiting lists is not available centrally.

Housing Starts

21. **Mr. Wigley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many housing starts were made in the public sector in Wales during the last year for which full figures are available.

Mr. Grist: 1,924 public sector dwellings were started in Wales during 1987.

Manpower Services Commission Training Programme

22. **Mr. Ray Powell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many agencies in Wales have so far declared that they will discontinue their agencies under the new Manpower Services Commission training programme which replaces the Manpower Services Commission community programme.

Mr. Peter Walker: Local Manpower Services Commission offices in Wales have recently written to potential training providers in their areas inviting them to indicate by 6 June if they intend to take part in employment training. I understand the initial response has been very favourable but full details will not be available until the consultation is complete.

Cardiff Bay Development Corporation

23. **Mr. Gwilym Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the work to date of the Cardiff Bay development corporation.

Mr. Grist: During its first year the corporation has carried forward further technical, financial and ecological studies on the barrage proposal; it has also undertaken some significant environmental projects, commenced on a programme of acquiring strategically important land and buildings, and completed a study of the strategy for regenerating its designated area. That study will be the subject of extensive local consultation. A copy of the consultants' report will shortly be placed in the Library of the House.

Sheep

24. **Mr. Alex Carlile:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he discussed the state of the sheep sector in Wales during his recent meeting with representatives of the Farmers Union of Wales.

Mr. Peter Walker: Yes. When I last met representatives of the Farmers Union of Wales we discussed a wide range of agricultural matters including the state of the sheep sector.

Housing

25. **Mrs. Clwyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on housing conditions in *(a)* Cynon Valley and *(b)* Wales as a whole.

Mr. Grist: The findings of our 1986 Welsh house condition survey show that significant improvements have been made in the condition of the Welsh housing stock but in a few areas much remains to be done. The Cynon Valley stands out as having a large proportion of unfit dwellings, many of which are in need of major repairs. I am disappointed that the significant improvements made in some other areas have not been mirrored in the Cynon Valley. I am, however, pleased that the borough council has now accepted the need for a strategic approach and has published a housing strategy. My officials are to meet the authority shortly and will discuss the approach they propose.

Central Electricity Generating Board

26. **Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he next hopes to meet the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board; and what matters he hopes to discuss.

Mr. Peter Walker: I have no plans at present to meet the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board although I am, of course, in touch with the board about its plans as these affect the Principality.

Planning Appeals

27. **Sir Raymond Gower:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the average time required for decisions in planning appeals; and what progress has been made in reducing the time taken over such appeals, during the past 12 months.

Mr. Grist: In the month of March 1988 inspectors' decisions were issued on 17 appeals which went to inquiry and 68 dealt with by the written method. Median times for these were 32 weeks and 19 weeks, respectively. For March 1987 the comparable figures were nine inquiry cases and 57 written representation cases with medians of 33 weeks and 22 weeks. Average times are not recorded by the Department.

Council House Building

Mr. Holland: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the total expenditure on local authority housebuilding for Wales for each year since, and including, 1979 to 1987 in terms of (i) current prices, (ii) 1986 prices and (iii) share of gross domestic product.

Mr. Grist: Estimated capital expenditure outturn on housebuilding by Welsh local authorities is available only for the years shown:

	1981-82	*1983-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
Current prices £ million	41·375	38·357	44·849	32·827	23·750	22·038
1985-86 prices £ million	51·348	44·440	49·627	34·788	23·750	21·341
£ percentage share of United Kingdom gross domestic product	0·019	0·016	0·017	0·012	0·008	0·007

Windscale Fire

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) what estimates he has of the numbers of people to have developed acute myeloid leukaemia in the counties of Gwynedd and Clwyd as a likely consequence of the effects of the Windscale fire of 1957; and if he will make a statement:

(2) what work has been carried out to ascertain the effects on the health of the population of north Wales of the Windscale fire of 1957; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: I am advised that the level of radioactivity in Gwynedd and Clwyd as a result of the 1957 Windscale fire would have been too low to have had any detectable effect on the incidence of myeloid leukaemia in those counties. For this reason no epidemiological studies of the effects of the fire on the health of the population of north Wales have been carried out.

Synthetic Index

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has made to the European Commission concerning the way in which the synthetic index which ranks the regions of Europe in order of their problems is calculated with regard to Wales.

Mr. Peter Walker: The Government's view that the synthetic index was flawed has been made clear from the outset and a statement to that effect was made at the regional policy committee meeting in April 1987. In putting forward the Welsh case concerning the review of the structural funds, my officials have made detailed submissions pointing to the shortcomings of the index.

Integrated Operations Programme

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what progress is being made with regard to the application by Dyfed, Powys and Gwynedd county councils to the European Community for an integrated operations programme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: The integrated operations programme for Dyfed, Gwynedd and Powys is under active consideration in the European Commission and I hope that a decision will be reached shortly.

Parliamentary Questions (Holding Answers)

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many holding answers have been given to parliamentary questions for priority written answer to the Welsh Office since 25 April.

Mr. Peter Walker: Thirty-one.

Greencroft Hostel, Deeside

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has received concerning the proposed closure of Greencroft hostel, Deeside, Clwyd, for the mentally handicapped; if he will meet the parent membership of Mencap, Deeside to discuss with them the care of their sons and daughters; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: The hostel is the responsibility of the Clwyd social services authority and we have received no representations in respect of it.

Patient Treatment Statistics

Mr. John: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what percentage of patient treatment in Welsh hospitals consisted of re-admission in the five years 1982 to 1987.

Mr. Grist: Information on re-admission to National Health Service hospitals and units is available only in the case of mental illness and mental handicap, for which the latest data are given in the following table:

Re-admissions as a percentage of total admissions

Year	*Mental illness hospitals or units*	*Mental handicap hospitals or units*
1982	66·5	90·5
1983	68·2	95·6
1984	69·3	95·7
1985	71·1	96·9
1986	73·3	98·2

Mr. John: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether the statistics for hospital patient treatments in Wales includes re-admission of patients; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: Statistics for in-patient treatment in National Health Service hospitals in Wales are collected upon discharge. Consequently the emphasis is on the current diagnosis and treatment and not the previous history of the patient. Data about the number of re-admissions are not collected centrally other than in the specialties of mental illness and mental handicap.

Nurses (Pay)

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his answer of 18 May, whether the £27·41 million for nurses' pay is to be paid out of the existing Welsh Office budget.

Mr. Grist: The resources to be provided to district health authorities to meet the estimated additional costs of the nurses' pay award this year will come from non-recurrent funds made available to the Department from the contingency fund. Provision for future years will be determined in the course of drawing up spending plans for 1989-90 and subsequent years.

Rating Reform

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) of 10 May, *Official Report*, column *72-3*, he will give the average domestic rate bill payable per household for 1988-89 in each local authority area in Wales and the initial safety-netted community charge payable.

Mr. Grist: Illustrative figures are given in the following table. The figures shown for each district area include the county council and community council precepts. Each county figure is the average of the total precepts of all the councils in that county area.

Average domestic rate bill per household and initial safety-netted community charge per adult for each Welsh district 1988-89

	Average Domestic Rate Bill per household £ *(1)*	*Initial Safety Netted Community Charge* £ *(2)*
Alyn and Deeside	352	176
Colwyn	351	198
Delyn	344	176
Glyndwr	287	155
Rhuddlan	339	170
Wrexham Maelor	313	162
Carmarthen	243	123
Ceredigion	257	136
Dinefwr	213	110
Llanelli	262	137
Preseli Pembrokeshire	239	126
South Pembrokeshire	280	152
Blaenau Gwent	221	116
Islwyn	249	127
Monmouth	340	167
Newport	349	185
Torfaen	297	154
Aberconwy	324	173
Arfon	222	129
Dwyfor	247	160
Meirionnydd	246	158
Ynys Môn	279	154
Cynon Valley	200	108
Merthyr Tydfil	235	124
Ogwr	308	151
Rhondda	159	85
Rhymney Valley	274	139
Taff Ely	289	145
Brecknock	255	131
Montgomeryshire	236	138
Radnor	237	135
Cardiff	354	179
Vale of Glamorgan	343	166
Port Talbot	296	154
Lliw Valley	274	142
Neath	298	154
Swansea	381	192
Clwyd	331	172
Dyfed	250	131
Gwent	300	154
Gwynedd	266	154
Mid Glamorgan	253	129
Powys	243	131
South Glamorgan	350	175
West Glamorgan	335	172
Total Wales	286	150

(1) These figures are provisional, and will be updated in due course with better information which has now been received from all local authorities. No allowance has been made for the transitional safety-net arrangements. The calculations are based on present needs assessments which are under review.

(2) Average rate bills per household are on a basis comparable with the community charge figures and exclude any use of balances. Households are defined, for this purpose, as domestic hereditaments.

Assisted Consultancies

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many applications have been received from companies in Wales for assisted consultancies under the enterprise initiative.

Mr. Peter Walker: Up to 30 April there had been 230 applications. This amounts to 4·8 per cent. of the total applications from all companies which I am pleased to say is higher than the proportion of VAT registered companies which are in Wales (4·4 per cent.).

Labour Statistics

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what change took place in the numbers of *(a)* unemployed and *(b)* employed in Wales in the four years to July 1987.

Mr. Peter Walker *[holding answer 20 May 1988]:* The available information is as follows:

(Thousands at mid June)

	1984	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*
Unemployed claimants[1]	163	173	174	151
Employees in employment	886	877	861	863
Self employed	144	146	154	148

Source: Department of Employment

[1] Because of a change in the compilation of the unemployment statistics unadjusted figures from February 1986 are not directly comparable with earlier figures.

Latest figures show a further decrease of 11,000 for unemployed claimants (unadjusted, April 1988) an increase of 700 for employees in employment (December 1987).

The current unemployment figure is now the lowest since 1981.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Rating Reform

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will introduce legislation to prohibit any information collected for tax purposes being disclosed to a community charge officer; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: With a few statutory exceptions which would not be relevant in this instance, the Inland Revenue is not permitted, under the law as it now stands, to disclose to a third party information about a taxpayer's affairs without his express consent. The present rule would apply in the case of a community charge officer. My right hon. Friend has no plans to introduce legislation to change this position.

Workplace Nurseries

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will consider methods of encouraging workplace nursery places.

Mr. Norman Lamont: It is for individual employers to decide what child care support is appropriate for their staff.

Self-employed Workers

Mr. David Howell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* 714 and *(b)* 715 certificates were issued or refused during 1987 to self-employed workers.

Mr. Lawson: In the 1987 calendar year 232,539 714 exemption certificates were issued and 13,070 applications were refused. 715 vouchers—which must be tendered to contractors in return for gross payment—are issued to those who hold valid exemption certificates. The vouchers come in books of 25 and 415,283 books were issued during 1987.

Mr. David Howell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether manpower or other constraints impose any limitation on the ability of Inland Revenue officials to deal with the growing number of self-employed workers.

Mr. Lawson: No. The Revenue's resources are decided on a basis which takes account of the growth of the numbers of self employed.

Mr. David Howell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many cases in which employed or self-employed status was in dispute came to the attention of Inland Revenue officials in 1987.

Mr. Lawson: The Inland Revenue and Department of Health and Social Security introduced new procedures in April 1987 to help those who were uncertain of their employment status. Each local tax and DHSS office now has a designated officer responsible for advice and decisions on employment status. A decision made by one Department will be accepted by the other provided all the relevant facts were accurately and clearly given at the time and the circumstances remain the same.

Since those new arrangements were introduced the designated officers in tax offices have handled some 15,000 inquiries and decisions on employment status. The number of these cases in which a decision was disputed is not known. Normally any dispute would be resolved in the course of further discussions with the tax office; but if agreement cannot be reached the taxpayer can appeal to the general commissioners (the independent local appeal body). During the same period only 22 cases directly involving employment status disputes were heard by the general commissioners.

Schedule D Accounts

Mr. David Howell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what progress has been made with the computerisation of Inland Revenue schedule D accounts.

Mr. Lawson: Computerisation of schedule D assessing was introduced by the Inland Revenue in two of its 15 regions in April 1987. This proved to be a successful pilot exercise and in April of this year, on schedule, the system was introduced nationally.

External Financing

Mr. Blair: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will place in the Library a copy of the 1981 Ryrie guidelines on external financing by nationalised industries and similar organisations.

Mr. Major: The Ryrie rules are an appendix to the Treasury paper entitled "Private Finance in Public Expenditure" which I placed in the Library of the House on 18 February. (*Official Report*, column 724 refers).

Building Societies

Mr. Holland: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the number of *(a)* registered building societies and *(b)* building societies authorised to accept shares and deposits at the end of 1985, 1986 and 1987.

Mr. Lilley: The following table shows the number of building societies registered and the number of those societies which are also authorised in the United Kingdom at the end of the years shown.

	1985	*1986*	*1987*
Number of Building Societies:			
Registered	171	151	137
Authorised to accept shares and deposits	153	137	124

Government Expenditure

Mr. Holland: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the share as a percentage of gross domestic product of *(a)* general Government expenditure and *(b)* general Government expenditure on goods and services in 1985-86 and 1986-87.

Mr. Major: The following table shows general Government expenditure and general Government expenditure on goods and services as a percentage of gross domestic product:

	Percentage	
	1985-86	*1986-87*
General Government expenditure	43¾	42¾
General Government expenditure on goods and services	23	22¾

Gross National Product

Miss Lestor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the gross national product for the United Kingdom in 1987.

Mr. Major: Provisional estimates suggest that in 1987 gross national product, at current market prices and based on the average measure, was £419·9 billion.

Central Office of Information

Mr. Blair: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if the Government have any plans to allow the Central Office of Information to expand its activities in advertising or otherwise publicising Government services, programmes or any other information on BBC radio and television; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley: I have nothing to add to the answer my right hon. Friend the Paymaster General gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge (Mr. Shersby) on 2 December 1987, at column 543, which applies to radio as well as television.

Mr. Blair: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the number and subject of commercials planned by the Central Office of Information over the period until the end of June.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 18 May 1988]:* The number and subject of TV commercials used in Government advertising campaigns is a matter for departmental Ministers, who draw on COI's experience to advise on their publicity requirements.

VAT

Mr. Carrington: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the regulations to implement the VAT annual accounting scheme under section 11(1) of the Finance Act 1987 will be laid before the House.

Mr. Lilley: The Value Added Tax (Annual Accounting) Regulations 1988 have been made by the Commissioners of Customs and Excise on 16 May 1988 and are being laid before the House today, to come into force on 1 July 1988. This follows a consultation exercise with trade and professional bodies initiated by Customs and Excise, which is now complete.

Taxes

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, in the manner of his reply on 19 April, *Official Report*, columns *417-18*, he will publish a table showing the proportion of gross income paid in income tax, national insurance contributions, domestic rates, and other indirect taxes by *(a)* a single person, *(b)* a married couple with one earner and *(c)* a married man with a non-earning wife and two children, at half, one, one and a half, two, five and 10 times average male earnings in 1988-89; and what were the comparable figures in 1978-79.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 5 May 1988]:* I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown) on 17 May, at columns 423-30.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, in the manner of his reply given on 29 February, *Official Report*, columns *443-45*, he will update and publish the table detailing the breakdown on the costs or yields of reinstating the 1978-79 tax regime, taking the 1988-89 tax base.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 5 May 1988]:* The information is in the table.

Reductions in income tax liabilities in 1988-89 compared with the indexed 1978-79 tax regime

Source of income tax reduction(−)-increase(+)	*Amount £ million*
Increase in personal allowances	−5,190
Abolition of reduced rate band	+2,970
Decrease in basic rate	−11,820
Increase in higher rate threshold	−400
Abolition of higher rates above 40 per cent.	−4,410
Abolition of investment income surcharge	−1,140
Total	−20,000

In the table, the effect of each change has been calculated on the assumption that each of the previous changes has already been made. The figures are based on the 1985-86 survey of personal incomes projected to 1988-89 and are therefore provisional.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* a distributional analysis of all income tax reductions since 1979 taking the gains to the top 1 per cent., top 2 to 5 per

cent., 6 to 10 per cent., top 11 to 20 per cent., top 21 to 30 per cent., top 31 to 50 per cent. and bottom 50 per cent giving the number of tax units for each group, the reduction in income tax for each group compared with 1978-79, and the average per tax unit, in the manner of his reply on 24 July 1987, *Official Report*, columns *566-67*.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 5 May 1988]:* The tables show the latest estimates of reductions in income tax liabilities at 1988-89 income levels of the 1988-89 income tax regime compared with an indexed 1978-79 regime. The comparison thus allows for budgetary changes in tax rates, thresholds and allowances but not for any change in the definition of the tax base. The 1978-79 allowances and threshold have been indexed in line with the increase in the retail prices index between December 1977 and December 1987. As child tax allowances were being phased out in 1978-79 they have been excluded from the comparison.

Reductions in income tax liabilities in 1988-89 compared with 1978-79 indexed tax regime

Point of income distribution in 1988-89[1]	*Number of units*[2] *paying tax in 1988-89*	*Reduction in tax*	*Average*[3] *reduction in income tax compared with the 1978-79 indexed regime*
	millions	*£ billion*	*£ per year*
Top 1 per cent.	·21	4·7	22,680
Top 2 to 5 per cent.	·84	2·8	3,350
Top 6 to 10 per cent.	1·0	1·8	1,770
Top 11 to 20 per cent.	2·1	2·6	1,220
Top 21 to 30 per cent.	2·1	1·9	910
Top 31 to 50 per cent.	4·2	2·8	680
Bottom 50 per cent.	10·5	3·4	290
All	20·9	20·0	910

[1] Based on 20,900,000 single people and married couples expected to pay tax in 1988-89 and excluding 1,100,000 who would pay tax under the revalorised 1978-79 regime.
[2] All information is in terms of tax units, ie married couples are counted as one and their incomes combined.
[3] Based on taxpayers expected to pay tax under a revalorised 1978-79 regime.

PAYE (Overpayments)

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what action he proposes to take to ensure that interest is paid to businesses and organisations whose pay-as-you-earn returns upon checking reveal that overpayments have been made.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 19 May 1988]:* Clause 120 of the current Finance Bill proposes amendments to section 203 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 which will pave the way for payment of interest on repayments of pay-as-you-earn tax to employers made more than one year after the end of the tax year concerned. This change will not come into effect until the necessary computer support is in place, which will not be before 1992. A general interest charge on late payments of pay-as-you-earn by employers will be introduced at the same time.

Higher Rate Taxpayers

Mr. Blair: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the number of taxpayers liable to tax at the higher rate as a percentage of total taxpayers region by region; and what will be the total tax gain in cash terms for each region.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 19 May 1988]:* The latest information available by region relates to 1985-86. In the table, married couples are counted as one unit, members of Her Majesty's forces and the Merchant Navy are excluded, and tax liability is measured before allowing for mortgage interest relief at basic rate given at source.

Region	*Higher rate taxpaying units*		*Total income tax liability*	
	Number	*As per cent. of total taxpaying units*	*All taxpaying units*	*Higher rate taxpaying units*
	000s	*Per cent.*	*£ million*	*£ million*
North	30	2·7	1,870	280
Yorkshire and Humberside	55	3·3	2,900	530
North West	75	3·5	3,750	680
East Midlands	40	3·0	2,490	460
West Midlands	60	3·2	3,040	590
East Anglia	35	4·8	1,400	370
South East	480	7·2	15,700	5,500
South West	70	4·4	2,930	700
Wales	30	3·4	1,440	270
Scotland	75	4·3	3,420	730
Northern Ireland	20	4·0	760	160

Welsh Language

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his policy with regard to dealing with individuals and bodies in Wales who wish to communicate with his Department through the medium of the Welsh language.

Mr. Peter Brooke *[holding answer 20 May 1988]:* When the need arises for interpretation or translation from another language the Treasury either uses a member of its own staff proficient in the language concerned or if necessary calls on the specialist resources in other departments, for example the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. However, we are not aware of any occasions so far where it has been necessary to communicate in Welsh.

Firearms

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many firearms have been seized by customs officials annually over the past five years; and how many of these weapons have subsequently been claimed by their owners.

Mr. Peter Lilley *[holding answer 20 May 1988]:* The number of firearms seized by Customs during the five years 1983 to 1987 are given in the table:

Year	*Firearms*	*Shotguns*	*Other*	*Ammunition (Rounds)*
1983	1,003	5	122	7,998
1984	172	12	142	14,908
1985	263	19	245	13,069
1986	310	24	317	10,363
1987	215	3	578	11,829

Records of the number of owners subsequently claiming release of seized weapons are only kept at individual ports and airports and could not be collated centrally except at disproportionate cost.

TRANSPORT

Car Phones

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what studies his Department has made of the road safety factor arising from the use of car phones by drivers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: None.

We fully recognise the risks involved in using hand-held telephones on the move. That is why the revised "Highway Code" now says hand-held microphones or telephone handsets should not be used when driving.

Legislation places clear responsibility on all drivers to have proper control of their vehicles at all times. Drivers who can afford car telephones, can afford models which do not have to be held.

London Airspace

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has as to how many times in the last year the helilanes into London airspace have been closed without warning to those using them.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Civil Aviation Authority says that advance warning is given where possible by means of a notice to airmen (NOTAM). Detailed information for the period 1 January 1988 to 23 April 1988 indicates that advance notice was given in each of the 22 closures that occurred during that period.

A17 (Sutton Bridge)

Sir Richard Body: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps have been taken to warn the public about the closure of Sutton bridge on the A17; and whether he will make a statement about the number of times the bridge is to be closed in the future and their duration.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Since refurbishment began in October 1987, advance notice of closures, one-way working, and height restrictions have been given by local weekly and daily press, on local television and radio, and in the motoring press. In the case of the complete closures over two weekends in April, publicity included details of alternative routes. These were also signed for motorists.

Two-way working across the bridge was restored on 22 May. It will be maintained throughout the summer months. An announcement will be made shortly.

It will be necessary to revert to one-way working in the autumn. Complete closures of the bridge from then until the end of the contract may again be needed from time to time. The public will be informed in advance.

In addition, the bridge is closed to road traffic from time to time to permit the passage of vessels to and from the port of Wishbech. These and other short closures associated with the bridge alterations cannot be predicted in advance. Every effort is made to keep inconvenience to motorists and the local public to a minimum.

Motor Cycles (Noise)

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what recent representations he has received on noise emissions from motor cycles; and whether he expects to bring forward any further controls;

(2) what recent representations he has received on noise nuisance from motor cycle engines; and whether he has any plans to seek to amend the legislation on pollution as a consequence.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Department regularly receives letters about motor cycle noise. Some complain about the nuisance it causes. Few complain that the regulations we propose to introduce will be too stringent.

We are currently consulting interested parties on draft regulations made under the Motor Cycle Noise Act. These will control the quality of replacement silencers and exhaust systems for motor cycles when they are offered for sale.

We are also preparing regulations to implement the stricter noise limits for motor cycles contained in Community directive 87/56/EEC.

King's Cross Inquiry

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will give details of the action list submitted by London Underground to the King's Cross inquiry indicating (i) which programmes have been implemented, which planned and which considered, (ii) which of these items had previously been considered prior to that fire and

the reasons for non-implementation of that stage and (iii) which items had been suggested prior to the fire by outside bodies as needing action and the source of the suggestion.

Mr. David Mitchell: These are matters for the board of London Regional Transport as falling within its statutory responsibilities.

Settle-Carlisle Railway

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his answer of 16 May, *Official Report*, columns 677-84, whether the offer of a British Rail dowry extends to the Blackburn-Hellifield line; whether running rights over British Rail lines between Hellifield and Settle junction will be granted to any potential purchaser; and whether the use of such facilities has been discussed with British Rail.

Mr. David Mitchell: These are matters to be negotiated in the first instance between British Rail and any prospective purchaser.

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his answer of 16 May, *Official Report*, columns 677-84, how much of the costs of promoting any private Bill required for the private operation of the Blackburn-Hellifield and Settle-Carlisle railways will be met by *(a)* British Rail and *(b)* the Exchequer; and what advice he will be giving to prospective purchasers as to the applicability of the Light Railways Act to any future private operation of these railways.

Mr. David Mitchell: It is for any private operator to choose which form of statutory authority is most appropriate for the type of operation they have in mind. The cost of any private Bill—if necessary—must fall on its promoters, not on the Exchequer.

EC (Maritime Policy)

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proposals he will be making in relation to European Community maritime policy at the meeting of Ministers on 20 June with respect to the employment of non-European Community nationals in Community flagged-ships, and to the establishment of offshore international ship registers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: I have no plans to make proposals with respect to these two matters. I would expect there to be proposals from the Commission on this or related issues well in advance of any substantive discussion in the Council.

London Underground (Fires)

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish in the *Official Report* such information as he has on the fires which have taken place on London Underground over the last five years which *(a)* were not serious and *(b)* did not require evacuation of passengers; and if he will give details of all other fires.

Mr. David Mitchell: London Underground Ltd. is not required to report every fire to the Department. The statutory reporting order requires fires, which interrupt the operation of the railway for more than 30 minutes, to be reported.

Reportable Fires on the London Underground

	1983	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*1988 (May)*
Station and tunnel fires	3	2(2)	11(6)	10(5)	10(7)	11(1)
Train fires	1	1(1)	—	—	1(1)	—

The figures in brackets denote the incidents where it was reported that passengers were evacuated.

Fishing Vessels (Safety)

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when his Department submitted its report to the International Maritime Organisation on stability, load lines and fishing vessel safety; and if he will place a copy in the Library, together with any response which has been received.

Mr. David Mitchell: 13 April 1988, assuming that the report referred to is the information paper submitted to the maritime safety committee concerning the residual damage stability of passenger ships. A copy of that document has been placed in the Library in response to the question from the hon. Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw) on 19 May 1988, at columns 524-25. The report of the maritime safety committee has not yet been published, but a copy will be placed in the Library when it is available.

Ferries (Safety)

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many roll-on/roll-off ferries failed the stability test specified in his Department's report to the International Maritime Organisation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish in the *Official Report* the study on international safety standards on roll-on/roll-off cross-Channel ferries carried out at the request of the International Maritime Organisation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: I refer the hon. Members to the reply given to the hon. Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw) on 19 May 1988, at columns 524-25.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he has made any changes to the inspection and survey of passenger ferries as a result of the P and O dispute;

(2) if he has made any changes in the process certifying seamen as competent with respect to safety procedures on passenger ferries during the P and O dispute.

Mr. David Mitchell: The answer to both questions is no.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received concerning the ability of current roll-on/roll-off ferry design to meet the passenger ship safety regulations with respect to evacuation of passengers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: None, but one organisation has questioned the possibility that passengers may not be safely evacuated in a very short time. We have commissioned a research programme to look into additional escape arrangements from roll-on/roll-off passenger ships.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the statement of the Royal Institution of Naval Architects on the safety and vulnerability on roll-on/roll-off ships of 21 March.

Mr. David Mitchell: My noble Friend the Minister with responsibility for Aviation and Shipping met representatives of the institution, including their president, on 21 March to discuss their proposals to improve the safety of ro/ro ships. There was a great deal of common ground and indeed the research programme into possible fundamental design improvements that will be undertaken by my Department includes an investigation of basic design changes as suggested by the Royal Institution of Naval Architects.

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he proposes to implement the safety standards requested by the International Maritime Organisation on cross-Channel roll-on/roll-off ferries.

Mr. David Mitchell: Regulations are already in force that implement the improved safety standards for ro/ro passenger ships that were recently adopted by the International Maritime Organisation and which will come into effect internationally from 1989.

Marine Surveyors

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will give the number of marine surveyors in his Department; and what were the comparable figures over the last five years.

Mr. David Mitchell: The information is as follows:

Marine surveyors in post

	Number
1988	208
1987	233
1986	246
1985	264
1984	279
1983	281

The number of ships of over 500 gross tons on the United Kingdom register decreased from 866 in 1983 to 509 in 1987 (the latest figure available). Since 1983 the ratio of marine surveyors to merchant ships of this size has increased.

Air Miss (Birmingham)

Mr. John M. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement concerning the near miss in the flight path into Birmingham airport on the afternoon of Wednesday, 18 May, involving two aircraft at approximately the same altitude and at a short distance apart laterally.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I understand from the Civil Aviation Authority that the incident occurred 3 miles east ot Warwick at about 5,000ft and involved two British Airways BAC1-11 aircraft, one descending into and the other departing from Birmingham airport. Full details are not yet known. It appears that the aircraft were separated by about a quarter of a mile laterally and no avoiding action was taken.

The incident will be investigated by the independent joint airmiss working group. The report will be published. It will be the responsibility of the Civil Aviation Authority to take any necessary safety action; this need not wait until the report is published.

A40 (Improvement)

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what procedure for conducting cost-benefit analysis of an on-line solution was adopted by his Department when considering the Western avenue A40 junction improvement at Long lane, Hillingdon; and if he will place details in the Library.

Mr. Peter Bottomley *[holding answer 20 May 1988]:* Both the Department's published scheme and the on-line alternative, which was put forward at the public inquiry into the proposals, were evaluated using COBA9, a computer-based system for the cost-benefit analysis of road schemes. Copies of relevant documents from the public inquiry are being placed in the Library.

ENVIRONMENT

Unfit Houses (Compensation)

Mr. Heddle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he proposes to review the Land Compensation Act 1973 in general and the code for site value compensation in particular.

Mr. Waldegrave: In the normal course of business we monitor the operation of the Land Compensation Act 1973. We recognise that the present arrangements under the Housing Act 1985 providing compensation for the compulsory acquisition of unfit houses, currently payable at site value, can give rise to anomalies and we intend to introduce legislation as soon as possible to provide for full market value compensation to all house owners.

Inward Migration (South-East)

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what is his Department's latest forecast, based on the Serplan forecasts, for net inward migration to the south-east region, excluding London, in the last decade of the 20th century;

(2) what has been the level of net inward migration to the south-east region, excluding London, in the periods 1957 to 1967, 1967 to 1977 and 1977 to 1987.

Mr. Waldegrave: The available information is as follows:

Net inward migration into south-east England (excluding London): Estimates and projections[1]

Thousands

	Estimates				*Projections*		
	1961-71	*1971-76*	*1976-81*	*1981-86*	*1986-91*	*1991-96*	*1996-2001*
Total	[3]	+160[2]	+210[2]	+215[2]	+176	+149	+138
Annual average	[3]	+32	+42	+43	+35	+30	+28

Source: Office of Population Censuses and Surveys: official estimates and projections.

[1] Figures include international migration.

[2] Figure rounded to nearest 5,000.

[3] It is estimated that the corresponding figures for 1961 to 1971 are: (total) in excess of +900,000 and (annual average) in excess of +90,000.

In the years for which information is available net migration from London into the rest of the south-east more than accounted for the net migration into the area. Migration between the south-east excluding London and areas outside the south-east shows net outflows as follows:

Thousands (per annum)

1976-81	*1981-86*
−14	−5

Source: Office of Population Censuses and Surveys: official estimates and projections.

Property Services Agency

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how many acres of public sector freehold land the Property Services Agency has responsibility for in the civil estate;

(2) how many acres of leasehold land the Property Services Agency has responsibility for in the public civil estate;

(3) how many square metres of buildings the Property Services Agency has responsibility for in the civil freehold estate;

(4) how many square metres of buildings the Property Services Agency has responsibility for in civil leasehold estate with leases of over five years to run;

(5) how many acres of civil freehold land under the Property Services Agency's control are surplus to requirements or are currently not being used for operational purposes;

(6) how many square metres of buildings in the civil freehold estate are surplus to requirements or not currently being used for operational purposes;

(7) how many square metres of buildings are surplus to requirements or not being used for operational purposes in the Property Services Agency's civil leasehold estate.

Mr. Chope: The following statistical table shows the position at 31 March 1988:

	Total	*Surplus*
Land		
Freehold[1]	24,959 acres	201 acres[3]
Leasehold[1]	762 acres	—
Buildings		
Freehold	6·026 million square metres	144,000 square metres[3] (2·4 per cent.)
Leasehold[2]	4·103 million square metres	58,000 square metres (1·4 per cent.)

[1] Includes area of land covered by buildings.

[2] Buildings with leases of over five years to run.

[3] Includes land and buildings currently being disposed of as well as property currently not being used for operational purposes.

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how many acres of freehold land the Property Services Agency has responsibility for in the Government's military estate;

(2) how many square metres of buildings the Property Services Agency has responsibility for in the military freehold estate;

(3) how many square metres of buildings the Property Services Agency has responsibility for in the military leasehold estate with buildings with leases of more than five years to run;

(4) how many acres of freehold land are surplus to requirements or not being used for operational purposes in the Property Services Agency's military estate;

(5) how many square metres of freehold buildings are surplus to requirements or not being used for operational purposes in the Property Services Agency's military estate.

Mr. Chope: Management responsibility for the Government's military estate is divided between the Ministry of Defence, which owns it, and the Property Services Agency, which acts as MOD's agent and adviser in its day-to-day management. As at 31 March there were 554,012 acres of freehold land on the defence estate in the United Kingdom of which 4,022 acres were surplus to defence requirements and with PSA for disposal. A great deal of information about buildings on the freehold and leasehold estate is held locally but could not be collated centrally other than at disproportionate cost. The responsibility for any land and buildings which may not be being used for operational purposes lies with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence.

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how many sq m of central London offices are occupied for public sector purposes within the Property Services Agency's leasehold and freehold estate;

(2) how many sq m of central London offices, leasehold and freehold, were occupied by Government Departments and other public sector bodies within the property Services Agency estate in 1979.

Mr. Chope: Approximately 1.6 million sq m of office space are currently occupied for public sector purposes within the PSA's estate in the following central London postal districts: WC1 and 2, W1, SW1, SE1 and EC1-4. Equivalent figures for these postal districts are not available for 1979. As a comparison, however, the total amount of office space occupied in Greater London as a whole in 1979 was 2.9 million sq m compared with 2.2 million sq m today.

Floor Space (London)

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the average floor space per civil

servant in the central London estate, and what information he has on the average floor space per employee in the London financial district.

Mr. Chope: Information on the average floor space per civil servant in central London is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost. For Greater London as a whole the total floor space in offices on PSA's estate works out at an average of 18.8 sq m per non-industrial civil servant. No information is held on the average space per employee in the London financial district.

Water Supply

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the number of disconnections carried out in each of the last five years in the Thames water authority area.

Mr. Moynihan: The table shows the number of disconnections carried out by the Thames water authority for non-payment of bills in each of the last five years. The Department does not hold statistics for disconnections on other grounds, or for disconnections carried out by statutory water companies.

Year	*Number*
1983-84	1,794
1984-85	992
1985-86	255
1986-87	599
1987-88	1,819

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department has any information about the dangers of water contamination by pesticides; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: Water undertakers have been asked to monitor water supplies for pesticides which are regularly used in their area. I am not aware of any public water supplies containing traces of pesticides at levels which would constitute a health risk.

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give details of all types of test carried out to detect contamination and pollution of water supplies, including the frequency of the tests.

Mr. Moynihan: Water undertakers test public water supplies at treatment works, service reservoirs, in the distribution system and at consumers' taps. They test for the parameters in the following list, some of which are contaminants. They also test for other substances if there is any suspicion of contamination. The frequency of the tests varies according to the parameter and the situation but is usually considerably greater than the minimum frequencies laid down in the EC directive relating to the quality of water intended for human consumption. In no case is the frequency less than the minimum specified in the directive.

Colour
Turbidity
Odour
Taste
Temperature
pH
Conductivity
Chlorides
Sulphates
Ammonium
Kjeldahl Nitrogen
Oxidisability
Total Organic Carbon
Hydrocarbons
Phenols
Boron
Surfactants
Trihalomethanes
Silver
Arsenic
Cadmium
Cyanides
Chromium
Mercury
Nickel
Lead
Antimony
Calcium
Magnesium
Potassium
Aluminium
Total hardness
Dry residues
Nitrate
Nitrite
Iron
Manganese
Zinc
Phosphorus
Fluoride
Suspended solids
Residual Chlorine
Barium
Selerium
Pesticides in common use
Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons
Total Coliforms
Fecal Coliforms
[1] Fecal Streptococci
[1] Sulphate reducing Clostridia
Total bacteria

[1] As necessary.

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on consumer choice with regard to fixed charges or metering of water supplies.

Mr. Moynihan: At present all water authorities and companies operate a meter option scheme, whereby customers can choose to pay to have a meter installed, and so be charged by measure rather than by rateable value. Following the abolition of domestic rateable values it will be for each water undertaker to decide how to charge customers at present assessed on RVs for their water services, including whether customers should have the choice of being metered.

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give a breakdown of the costs involved *(a)* to the relevant authority, and *(b)* to the consumer, in the current water metering trials.

Mr. Moynihan: One of the objectives of the metering trials is to obtain information on the cost of installing and reading meters in an area, rather than in individual properties. So it is not yet possible to provide reliable estimates of the cost of each proposed trial, the details of which have yet to be submitted for consideration by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State under section 4 of the Public Utilities Transfers and Water Charges Act 1988. However, preliminary estimates by the water undertakers concerned suggest that the cost of the proposed large scale

trial on the Isle of Wight may be in the region of about £9 million and each of the 10 smaller trials between £200,000 to £600,000, depending on the location of the meters and the equipment to be used. These costs are in addition to the cost of some preliminary work in the trial areas on monitoring overall consumption for which the Government agreed to pay last year.

The Government have also agreed to contribute 50 per cent. of the approved costs of the proposed trial on the Isle of Wight and the ten smaller trials, together forming a co-ordinated programme prepared by the water industry. The remaining share of the costs of the trials will be spread across the generality of each water undertaker's consumers, not only those consumers in the trial areas.

Local Authorities (Grant-aid)

Mr. Heddle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much grant-aid has been given to each local authority in Staffordshire since 1982 under the development land grant and associated programmes.

Mr. Trippier: The amounts of derelict land grant paid to individual local authorities in Staffordshire since 1982 are given in the following table. Figures are not yet available for 1988-89.

No grant-aid has been given to the authorities under the urban development grant or urban regeneration grant.

Derelict land grant paid to local authorities in Staffordshire

Grant paid £

Local authority	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*
Cannock Chase	88,057	69,940	389,482	1,700,310	809,156	698,512	246,276
East Staffordshire	—	—	4,750	—	—	—	—
Lichfield	100,292	—	199,361	156,879	186,591	18,117	262,500
Newcastle under Lyme	40,123	259,096	162,138	82,954	274,635	157,978	49,196
Stafford	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
South Staffordshire	742,771	277,892	355,844	592,260	170,807	89,900	28,014
Staffordshire Moorlands	21,388	—	47,563	317,126	—	81,807	5,943
Stoke-on-Trent	554,393	1,740,263	2,728,589	4,122,995	1,882,240	323,842	297,339
Tamworth	1,226	11,458	40,427	6,955	15,205	6,955	94,361
Staffordshire County Council	206,725	326,549	150,549	949,672	267,667	1,016,554	642,383

Water Privatisation

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he last met the chairman of the Water Companies Association to discuss the privatisation of the water industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley) on 20 April 1988, at column 489.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from parties with an interest in fresh water angling with regard to the privatisation of the water industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: In response to the consultation paper on the National Rivers Authority issued in July 1987, we received comments from the following bodies:

National Anglers Council
Institute of Fisheries Management
Wye Salmon Fishery Owners Association
National Association of Specialist Anglers
Hereford and District Angling Association
Dee Fishery Association
Commercial Fisheries Association
Welsh Salmon and Trout Association
Tamar and Tributaries Fisheries Association
United Usk Fishermen Association
Wear and Tees Fisheries Consultative Association
Atlantic Salmon Trust
The Angling Foundation
Sussex Anglers Consultative Committee
Carmarthenshire Fisheries Federation
River Ouse Fisheries Consultative Association
Thames Fisheries Consultative Council
Salmon and Trout Association
Welsh Anglers Council
Welsh Federation of Coarse Anglers

Since the end of the consultation period we have received a number of further representations and I have met representatives of the National Anglers Council and the Leicestershire Angling Federation. The vast majority of these organisations have supported our proposal to create a National Rivers Authority with responsibility for fisheries management.

Storm Sewers

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what estimate his Department has made of the cost of repairing storm sewers in each water authority area; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: I do not have the information on which to base an estimate.

Water Authorities

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what has been the effect of switching from historic cost accounting to current cost accounting on profit targets set by the Government for each water authority; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: Profit targets for water authorities have been set in current cost terms since their introduction in 1981-82.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the currently estimated value of the assets of each water authority; what was the figure during the financial year 1983-84; what it will be in 1989-90; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: Figures for assets for 1981-82 to 1986-87 are published in the water authorities' accounts for 1986-87. The figures for 1987-88 will be available shortly when the 1987-88 accounts are placed before Parliament. Figures for later years are not available.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the current income of each water

authority from sources other than water rates; what is the current expenditure of each on assets not directly connected with the maintenance of the water supply; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: The information requested by the hon. Member is published in the water authorities' annual accounts which are laid before Parliament. The 1987-88 account will be available shortly.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much was spent by each English water authority in 1987-88 on *(a)* water quality regulation, *(b)* water resources, *(c)* water supply, *(d)* land drainage and flood protection, *(e)* recreation, amenities, fisheries and navigation, and *(f)* sewage collection, treatment and disposal.

Mr. Moynihan: The information requested by the hon. Member will be published in the annual accounts of the water authorities, which will be laid before Parliament in July.

Water Pipes (Corrosion)

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has, for each water authority, as to the approximate number of homes supplied through piping which suffers from what the relevant water authority considers an unacceptable level of corrosion; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: This information is not held centrally.

Lost Water

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has for each water authority for each year since 1980, as to the percentage of water which enters the mains pipes which is lost; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: This information is not held centrally.

Planning Permissions

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will instigate an inquiry into the number of cases where the granting of agricultural licences has been followed by granting of planning permission for dwellings in the green belt areas; and if he will make a statement;

(2) how many planning permissions for dwellings were given to owners of agricultural smallholdings in the years 1986-87 and 1987-88;

(3) if he will instigate an inquiry into the number of cases where the sale of agricultural holdings has been used to obtain planning permission for a dwelling; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: Ninety eight per cent. of planning permissions are granted by local planning authorities. Information collected by my Department does not separately identify cases of the kind mentioned in the hon. Member's questions. Existing planning guidance about agricultural dwellings is in the annex to DoE circular 24/73.

Rivers and Lakes

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the estimated total length of riverways and total surface area of freshwater lakes administered by each of the English regional water authorities.

Mr. Moynihan: The lengths of rivers administered or controlled by water authorities vary for different functions and responsibilities. For example, the lengths of designated main rivers under the English water authorities' management for the purposes of the Land Drainage Act 1976 are:

Authority	*km*
Anglian	6,518
Northumbrian	1,459
North West	5,807
Severn Trent	3,548
Southern	2,757
South West	1,465
Thames	5,072
Wessex	2,242
Yorkshire	1,806
TOTAL	30,674

The lengths of rivers surveyed for the purposes of the river quality survey 1985 were:

Authority	*km*
Anglian	4,328
Northumbrian	2,784
North West	5,323
Severn Trent	5,150
Southern	1,992
South West	2,941
Thames	3,546
Wessex	2,467
Yorkshire	5,767
TOTAL	34,298

Information about the surface areas of freshwater lakes within a particular water authority's area would only be obtainable from the water authority in question.

Housing Associations

Sir George Young: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what are his proposals for the role of local authorities in enabling housing associations to provide dwellings in their areas.

Mr. Waldegrave: Under the provisions of the Housing Bill, the Housing Corporation will become the sole channel for the payment of Exchequer grants to housing associations. Last September, in its policy paper "Finance for Housing Associations: The Government's Proposals" the Government said that they considered there were advantages in precluding the payment of housing association grant towards housing association schemes funded by local authorities. In the light of representations made to them, however, the Government have concluded that it would be wrong to deny Exchequer support to schemes promoted in this way. Collaborative working between associations and local authorities is of considerable importance and some authorities have funded associations under long standing arrangements. The Government have therefore decided that the Housing Corporation should be authorised to pay housing association grant on schemes supported by local authority loans. We intend that the entire costs of such schemes

should count against local authority housing investment programmes, and my officials will be consulting the local authority associations, the Housing Corporation and the National Federation of Housing Associations on the detailed arrangements.

Greater Manchester Residuary Body

Mr. Tom Arnold: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects the Greater Manchester residuary body to be wound up and the assets and liabilities transferred to the metropolitan boroughs.

Mr. Chope: I expect the Greater Manchester residuary body to be wound up well within the five-year period allotted for the completion of its task.

Grant-related Expenditure

Mr. Squire: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the total rateable value grant-related expenditure assessment from 1981-82, population, total expenditure and rateable value per head, in total, for local authorities in each economic planning region, showing separately Greater London, inner London and outer London in each year from 1979-80 to 1988-89, estimate.

Mr. Chope: The following tables list the data requested for each year from 1981-82 to 1988-89: comparable data are not available for the period before the introduction of the present rate support grant system in 1981-82.

1981-82 Rate Support Grant Fourth Supplementary Report Data by Economic Planning Region

	Grant-related expenditure	*Total expenditure*	*Gross rateable value*	*Population for block grant purposes*	*Rateable Value per head*
	£ million	*£ million*	*£ million*	*million*	*£*
Inner London	n/a	n/a	1,094	2·4	451
Outer London	n/a	n/a	806	4·4	181
Greater London	3,217	3,923	1,901	6·9	276
South East	3,346	3,369	1,505	10·0	151
East Anglia	616	609	242	1·9	130
South West	1,446	1,462	520	4·3	121
West Midlands	1,872	1,929	710	5·2	138
East Midlands	1,328	1,335	459	3·8	122
Yorkshire and Humberside	1,762	1,946	509	4·9	104
North West	2,465	2,692	775	6·5	120
Northern	1,142	1,299	333	3·1	108
England	17,194	18,566	6,954	46·4	150

1982-83 Rate Support Grant Third Supplementary Report Data by Economic Planning Region

	Grant-related expenditure	*Total expenditure*	*Gross rateable value*	*Population for block grant purposes*	*Rateable value per head*
	£ million	*£ million*	*£ million*	*million*	*£*
Inner London	n/a	n/a	1,108	2·4	458
Outer London	n/a	n/a	813	4·4	183
Greater London	3,486	4,111	1,921	6·8	280
South East	3,569	3,541	1,536	10·0	153
East Anglia	661	659	248	1·9	132
South West	1,545	1,549	530	4·3	122
West Midlands	2,005	2,015	721	5·2	140
East Midlands	1,417	1,478	466	3·8	123
Yorkshire and Humberside	1,867	2,146	517	4·9	106
North West	2,598	2,836	786	6·5	122
Northern	1,208	1,402	337	3·1	109
England	18,358	19,737	7,061	46·5	152

1983-84 Rate Support Grant Fourth Supplementary Report Data by Economic Planning Region

	Grant-related expenditure	*Total expenditure*	*Gross rateable value*	*Population for block grant purposes*	*Rateable value per head*
	£ million	*£ million*	*£ million*	*million*	*£*
Inner London	n/a	n/a	1,128	2·4	475
Outer London	n/a	n/a	818	4·5	183
Greater London	3,611	4,677	1,946	6·8	284
South East	3,740	3,691	1,561	10·2	153
East Anglia	693	675	252	1·9	133
South West	1,595	1,595	540	4·4	124
West Midlands	2,119	2,126	728	5·2	141
East Midlands	1,489	1,523	474	3·8	123
Yorkshire and Humberside	1,947	2,165	523	4·9	107
North West	2,696	2,921	792	6·5	123
Northern	1,266	1,438	341	3·1	110
England	19,156	20,810	7,156	46·8	153

1984-85 rate support grant fourth supplementary report data by economic planning region

	Grant-related expenditure	*Total expenditure*	*Gross rateable value*	*Population for block grant purposes*	*Rateable value per head*
	£ million	*£ million*	*£ million*	*million*	*£*
Inner London	n/a	n/a	1,124	2·3	486
Outer London	n/a	n/a	818	4·5	184

	Grant-related expenditure £ million	Total expenditure £ million	Gross rateable value £ million	Population for block grant purposes million	Rateable value per head £
Greater London	3,739	4,974	1,942	6·8	287
South East	3,919	3,768	1,521	10·2	154
East Anglia	730	693	256	1·9	134
South West	1,676	1,613	545	4·4	124
West Midlands	2,214	2,146	727	5·2	140
East Midlands	1,569	1,528	479	3·9	124
Yorkshire and Humberside	2,047	2,181	525	4·9	107
North West	2,807	2,954	792	6·4	123
Northern	1,304	1,429	343	3·1	110
England	20,003	21,285	7,191	46·8	154

1985-86 rate support grant third supplementary report data by economic planning region

	Grant-related expenditure £ million	Total expenditure £ million	Gross rateable value £ million	Population for block grant purposes million	Rateable value per head £
Inner London	n/a	n/a	1,130	2·3	489
Outer London	n/a	n/a	818	4·4	184
Greater London	3,927	4,735	1,948	6·8	288
South East	4,128	3,935	1,596	10·3	155
East Anglia	773	721	260	1·9	135
South West	1,791	1,683	551	4·4	125
West Midlands	2,343	2,242	729	5·2	141
East Midlands	1,659	1,577	484	3·9	126
Yorkshire and Humberside	2,192	2,269	527	4·9	107
North West	3,033	3,084	791	6·4	123
Northern	1,409	1,473	346	3·1	111
England	21,255	21,719	7,233	46·9	154

1986-87 rate support grant third supplementary report data by economic planning region

	Grant-related expenditure £ million	Total expenditure £ million	Gross rateable value £ million	Population for block grant purposes million	Rateable value per head £
Inner London	n.a.	n.a.	1,139	2·3	492
Outer London	n.a.	n.a.	825	4·4	186
Greater London	4,313	5,114	1,964	6·8	291
South East	4,392	4,205	1,621	10·4	157
East Anglia	829	776	266	1·9	137
South West	1,925	1,878	560	4·5	125
West Midlands	2,541	2,378	735	5·2	142
East Midlands	1,774	1,754	489	3·9	126
Yorkshire and Humberside	2,339	2,557	531	4·9	108
North West	3,286	3,430	797	6·4	125
Northern	1,524	1,663	347	3·1	112
England	22,924	23,757	7,310	47·0	156

1987-88 rate support grant supplementary report data by economic planning region

	Grant-related expenditure £ million	Total expenditure £ million	Gross rateable value £ million	Population for block grant purposes million	Rateable value per head £
Inner London	n.a.	n.a.	1,155	2·3	497
Outer London	n.a.	n.a.	832	4·4	187
Greater London	4,569	5,433	1,986	6·8	294
South East	4,612	4,654	1,649	10·4	158
East Anglia	88	869	271	2·0	138
South West	2,030	2,058	569	4·5	126
West Midlands	2,685	2,704	739	5·2	143
East Midlands	1,871	1,952	495	3·9	127
Yorkshire and Humberside	2,483	2,693	534	4·9	109
North West	3,477	3,708	803	6·4	126
Northern	1,596	1,778	349	3·1	113

	Grant-related expenditure (£ million)	Total expenditure (£ million)	Gross rateable value (£ million)	Population for block grant purposes (million)	RV per head (£)
England	24,202	25,847	7,395	47·1	157

1988-89 Rate support grant settlement report data by economic planning region

	Grant-related expenditure £ million	Budgeted total expenditure £ million	Gross rateable value £ million	Population for block grant purposes million	Rateable value per head £
Inner London	n/a	n/a	1,170	2·3	503
Outer London	n/a	n/a	839	4·4	189
Greater London	4,882	5,578	2,009	6·8	296
South East	4,980	5,088	1,678	10·5	160
East Anglia	953	943	276	2·0	139
South West	2,193	2,227	579	4·5	127
West Midlands	2,883	2,949	747	5·2	144
East Midlands	2,019	2,123	504	3·9	128
Yorkshire and Humberside	2,675	2,903	542	4·9	111
North West	3,710	3,944	809	6·4	127
Northern	1,711	1,878	352	3·1	114
England	26,006	27,633	7,497	47·3	159

Note: London-wide authorities, such as the Metropolitan police, mean that it is not possible to produce total GRE and total expenditure figures for inner and outer London separately.

Mr. Squire: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the number of local authorities which spent, respectively, above or below *(a)* their grant-related expenditure assessment and *(b)* any expenditure target set in each year from 1981-82 to 1988-89, estimate.

Mr. Chope: The table lists the number of authorities in each of the categories requested:

Number of local authorities spending	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89
above GRE	241	211	173	181	178	171	308	320
below GRE	173	203	241	233	233	255	118	105
above target	367	244	164	178	174	n/a	n/a	n/a
below target	46	166	213	175	166	n/a	n/a	n/a

Notes

1. All expenditure figures are those used in the latest supplementary report for the relevant year, or for recent years the figures used for grant payment purposes.
2. In calculation whether an authority spent above or below the expenditure guidance (or target) issued to it, no account has been taken of any amounts or descriptions of total expenditure disregarded for the purpose of calculating liability to grant abatement ("holdback").
3. For 1986-87 and later years no expenditure targets were set.

Council House Building

Mr. Holland: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what percentage of council house building in *(a)* England and Wales excluding Greater London, *(b)* Greater London and *(c)* Scotland was represented by (i) public direct labour schemes and (ii) private contractors' schemes in 1985, 1986 and 1987, respectively.

Mrs. Roe: Following is available information which is about construction output in new housing for the public sector including council housing.

New public sector housing: construction output Great Britain

	1985	1986	1987
£ million (current prices)	918	842	932
of which: direct labour (%)	3·8	3·9	3·4
contractors (%)	96·2	96·1	96·6

Reliable estimates for sub-divisions of Great Britain are not available.

Mr. Holland: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the total expenditure on local authority housebuilding for 1986-87 in terms of (i) current prices, (ii) 1986 prices and (iii) share of gross domestic product.

Mrs. Roe: Capital expenditure on house building by English local authorities in 1986-87 is estimated to have been £493 millions (0·13 per cent of GDP) and equivalent to £477 millions at 1985-86 prices. The figure for 1985-86 given in reply to the hon. Member in March 1987 has since been revised to £579 million in current (1985-86) prices, still 0·16 per cent. of GDP.

Walker Park Project, Newcastle

Mr. Trotter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what contribution his Department has made towards the funding of the Walker park project in Newcastle; and whether Newcastle city council has advised him of who has been invited to open it.

Mr. Trippier: I understand that Newcastle city council has invited the right hon. Member, the Leader of the Opposition, to be the principal guest at the ceremony to commemorate the centenary of Walker park and the completion of the project to improve its facilities. I am glad to see him supporting a project which has received approval for urban programme grant of £942,000, to which my Department has contributed £634,500 for capital expenditure and £72,000 for revenue expenditure as against £211,500 capital and £24,000 revenue from the local authority.

Civil Servants (Outside Activities)

Mr. John: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many civil servants in his Department and the Property Services Agency are also directors or consultants in *(a)* public liability companies, *(b)* companies limited by guarantee, *(c)* building societies, *(d)* other friendly societies and *(e)* commercial undertakings other than the above; and what rules or instructions govern these activities with particular reference to remuneration.

Mr. Ridley: The following non-executive directorships of outside bodies have been arranged for officers of the Department of the Environment and the Property Services Agency:

	Number
(i) public limited companies and companies limited by guarantee	14
(ii) building societies	2

No consultancies have been arranged in this way.

For the most part these appointments are unpaid. Any fees which are paid are passed directly into public funds.

Rents (West Yorkshire)

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many applications were made to the rent officer in West Yorkshire to have rents registered over the last eight years.

Mrs. Roe: Figures are available only from 1981. The information for 1981-87 is as follows:

Year	*Number*
1981	16,150
1982	14,408
1983	22,169
1984	15,799
1985	21,198
1986	16,984
1987	19,705

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the percentage rises in rents as recommended by the rent officer for West Yorkshire for each year since 1979.

Mrs. Roe: The mix of properties for which rents are registered varies from year to year for a number of reasons; for example, the extension of decontrol in 1981 and the reduction from three to two years in the minimum period for re-registration which led to re-registrations in 1983 of rents previously registered in both 1980 and 1981. Estimates of percentage rises are best derived from previous and new registered rents for private regulated tenancies where there has been no material change in terms or in the physical condition. For rents in West Yorkshire fixed in each year, the estimated increases are:

Year of registration	*Annualised per cent. increase*
1979	12
1980	13
1981	14
1982	14
1983	13
1984	10
1985	8
1986	9
1987	9

Government Cars (Lead-free Petrol)

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what advice he has issued to ensure that all ministerial cars run on lead-free petrol; and if he will list all ministerial and departmental cars, indicating which of those actually use lead-free petrol.

Mr. Chope: It is Government policy to replace all ministerial cars with vehicles capable of running on unleaded petrol as they fall due for replacement. There are currently 21 ministerial cars running exclusively on unleaded fuel, three of which are allocated to the Department of the Environment.

The Crown Suppliers (a trading fund of the Department of the Environment) operates approximately 4,400 vehicles which are hired to Government Departments and public sector organisations. Of these some 2,250 can either run now or can be adapted to run on lead free petrol where this is available.

Rates (Non-payment)

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the number of summonses issued and the number of prosecutions that have taken place for the non-payment of the general rate in each of the rating authorities for each year since 1983.

Mr. Chope: Information on the number of summonses issued by local authorities and the number leading to further enforcement action, is contained in the annual rate collection statistics published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, copies of which are available in the Library.

Farm Buildings (Conversion Programme)

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what evidence he has of disturbance of bird nesting sites as a result of the conversion of farm buildings under programmes run by the Rural Development Commission; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: I understand that neither the Rural Development Commission nor the Nature Conservancy Council is aware of any evidence of bird nesting sites being disturbed as a result of conversions grant-aided by the commission. However the Department have asked the Commission to bear this possibility in mind for the future.

Rating Reform

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what minimum payment of the community charge, including community water charge, would have been payable by pensioners on basic retirement pension income in the current financial year, for each local authority; if he will express each sum payable as a percentage of the total community charge in that area; and if he will make a statement about the average proportion of the community charge which will have to be met by those on low incomes.

Mr. Howard *[holding answer 16 May 1988]:* In all cases pensioners wholly reliant on state pensions will be eligible for 80 per cent. reductions in their community charges. The amounts payable in each local authority area in England are, therefore, 20 per cent. of the illustrative community charge figures published on 27 June 1987. No community water charge will be payable in England.

Flooding (Ealing)

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to make money available to those affected in Northolt, Greenford, Hanwell and the Ealing area by recent severe flooding; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 18 May 1988]:* It is for local authorities to deal with emergencies affecting their area, and local authorities have wider discretionary powers under section 138 of the Local Government Act 1972 to incur expenditure to alleviate the effects of such eventualities. As far as private householders are concerned, flood damage is normally covered by house insurance.

Local Government Expenditure

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if the scheme in the London Docklands Development Corporation area to provide 74 homes for homeless families in Newham under a leasing agreement with the East London housing association will be affected by the Local Government (Prescribed Expenditure) (Amendment) Regulations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 19 May 1988]:* Newham borough council has applied to my right hon. Friend for an additional capital allocation to cover prescribed expenditure which it proposes to incur in connection with this scheme.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what he expects to be the average delay between submission and decision of schemes under the Local Government (Prescribed Expenditure) (Amendment) Regulations;

(2) how much additional prescribed expenditure allocation will be available for schemes which will now need to be approved under the new Local Government (Prescribed Expenditure) (Amendment) Regulations;

(3) on what criteria he will be allowing additional capital allocations for schemes which will now have to be approved as a result of the Local Government (Prescribed Expenditure) (Amendment) Regulations.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 19 May 1988]:* The Local Government (Prescribed Expenditure) (Amendment) Regulations 1988 redefine the circumstances in which acquisitions by local authorities of leasehold interests in land result in the incurring of prescribed expenditure. The regulations do not require my right hon. Friend's consent to such acquisitions to be obtained. My right hon. Friend indicated on 25 April at columns 103-4, certain criteria against which applications for additional capital allocations for particular schemes would be considered. No limit has at present been placed on the amount of such allocations as the criteria imply that schemes for which allocations are granted should be broadly neutral in public expenditure terms. The time taken to deal with applications will depend on their number and on the adequacy of the supporting information provided.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if the Woodlands estate phase I scheme in West Ham, due to provide 56 homes for the homeless of Newham, will be exempt from the Local Government (Prescribed Expenditure) (Amendment) Regulations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 19 May 1988]:* I understand that this scheme does not include the leasehold acquisition of land or buildings. It will not therefore be affected by the regulations referred to in the question. My right hon. Friend is considering an application from Newham borough council for an additional capital expenditure allocation to cover prescribed expenditure which the council proposes to incur in connection with this scheme.

National Rivers Authority

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will provide a job description for the position of chairman of the National Rivers Authority advisory committee, including hours and conditions of work.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 19 May 1988]:* My right hon. and noble Friend Lord Crickhowell has been appointed as the non-executive chairman of the National Rivers Authority advisory committee. The terms of reference of the committee are:

> To advise the Secretaries of State and the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on the implications for the water authorities of the reorganisation needed to provide a separate organisational structure for their water supply and sewerage functions, and the functions that will be performed by the new National Rivers Authority; and to advise them on the acceptability of the scheme proposed by each Water Authority, and to ensure that it will enable the NRA adequately to fulfil the tasks proposed to be allocated to it.

The remuneration for the chairman's appointment is £40,000 per annum.

I expect that the post will require between two and three days work a week on average.

Lomax Site

Mr. Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to announce the result of the public inquiry into the Opencast Executive's application to mine the Lomax site in Greater Manchester; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 20 May 1988]:* My right hon. Friend expects to receive the report on the inquiry into British Coal's proposals for the Lomax site in the very near future. Following consideration of the report he will reach his decision as soon as possible, and the hon. Member will be notified of the decision.

House of Commons (Floor Coverings)

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will arrange for the carpet in the doorway of the room of the Opposition Chief Whip to be made safe; and if he will take steps to ensure that all floor coverings are in a safe condition.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 17 May 1988]:* The work was carried out on Friday 13 May, the earliest opportunity after it was reported, in which the room could be made available to the carpet layers.

The incident demonstrates that the system for reporting requirements for repairs and for carrying them out works adequately and I have no plans to change the present arrangements.

Water Rates

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give the average annual cost of water rates and the environmental services component respectively, for the current year and 1987, for each regional water authority in England.

Mr. Moynihan: The information requested by the hon. Member relating to 1987-88 is contained in the table. The information for 1988-89 is not yet available.

Household water charges: 1987-88

	Total £·p	*Environmental services* £·p
North West	91·12	1·02
Northumbrian	88·63	·01
Severn Trent	89·53	1·39
Yorkshire	97·72	·82
Anglian	124·03	1·98
Thames	87·74	1·09
Southern	109·01	1·41
Wessex	114·45	1·63
South West	116·08	2·84

Source: Water Authority returns to DOE.

Palace of Westminster (Toilets)

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give the reasons for the delay in putting up a notice giving an emergency telephone number to contact in the event of emergency cleaning being required in the gentleman's toilets off the Committee Room Corridor, and all other toilets in the House.

Mr. Chope: Following the Accommodation and Administration Sub-Committee's resolution on 23 March that the signs should be placed in the lavatories the work has been accepted as a late addition to the Parliamentary Works Offices summer recess works programme. There has been no undue delay.

Lead-free Petrol

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Davyhulme (Mr. Churchill) of 28 March, *Official Report*, columns *306-7*, if he will list by constituency the number of petrol stations currently selling lead-free petrol; and what steps he is taking to encourage a more uniform distribution of such outlets throughout the United Kingdom.

Mr. Moynihan: The information requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. A copy of the latest available list of petrol stations selling unleaded petrol (a total of 713 on 15 February 1988) and a map showing their distribution have been placed in the Library of the House. I understand that the total number of such stations now exceeds 1,000. The distribution of these petrol stations within the United Kingdom is reviewed at meetings of the unleaded petrol group, which I chair.

SOCIAL SERVICES

North West Region

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the amount of Government funding for each year since 1979 to *(a)* Burnley Pendle and Rossendale health authority and *(b)* the North West regional health authority (i) in acted amounts, (ii) in real terms at 1988-89 prices and (iii) in real terms at 1988-89 prices based on the National Health Service inflation rate.

Mr. Newton: The table provides the information that is presently available.

Net revenue and capital expenditure[1]

£ million

Year	*Revenue*			*Capital*		
	Cash	*1986-87 prices*		*Cash*	*1986-87 prices*	
		Using GDP deflator	*Using HCHS pay and prices deflator*		*Using GDP deflator*	*Using HCHS capital deflator*
North Western RHA						
1978-79	380·364	742·318	845·549	37·559	73·300	71·250
1979-80	460·211	768·502	848·629	50·613	84·518	79·564
1980-81	599·071	843·708	863·261	60·405	85·072	75·446
1981-82	674·346	864·168	898·229	83·228	106·656	100·706
1982-83	724·780	867·062	905·975	81·826	97·889	97·445
1983-84	763·382	872·248	908·425	68·080	77·789	79·449
1984-85	808·198	884·371	909·223	82·708	90·503	92·716

Year	Revenue			Capital		
		1986-87 prices			1986-87 prices	
	Cash	Using GDP deflator	Using HCHS pay and prices deflator	Cash	Using GDP deflator	Using HCHS capital deflator
1985-86	854·688	882·551	913·661	80·389	83·010	85·052
1986-87	916·526	916·526	916·526	56·319	56·319	56·319
1987-88[3]	1,005·000	957·142	926·610	74·000	70·476	68·228
1988-89[4]	1,038·800	946·731	[6]—	73·200	66·712	[6]—
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale HA[2]						
1982-83	41·982	50·223		1·391	1·664	
1983-84	43·100	49·247		1·220	1·394	
1984-85	45·428	49·710	[5]—	1·686	1·845	[5]—
1985-86	48·571	50·154		1·190	1·229	
1986-87	51·327	51·327		0·247	0·247	
1987-88[3]	64·945	61·852	[5]—	1·486	1·415	[5]—
1988-89[4]	66·354	60·475		[7]—	[7]—	[7]—

Source: (for years 1978-79 to 1986-87) Health authorities' summarised accounts.
Notes:
[1] Outturn expenditure figures for 1987-88 and 1988-89 are not yet available. True comparisons can only be drawn therefore between the years up to 1986-87.
[2] Prior to 1st April 1982, when the health authority's predecessor health district formed part of Lancashire AHA, district expenditure figures were not collected centrally.
[3] Cash limit incorporating all in-year adjustments.
[4] Initial cash limit.
[5] It is inappropriate to revalue district health authority expenditure by reference to centrally assessed movements in NHS pay and prices as the composition of that expenditure can differ substantially from the national average.
[6] Not yet available.
[7] Not yet allocated.

Broadmoor Hospital

Mr. Irving: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will provide details of the estimated value of the present Broadmoor hospital site.

Mr. Newton: This information is not available. Consideration will be given to all the special hospital estates, in accordance with the action being taken more widely in the National Health Service.

Community Services

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give details by regional area health authority and by district health authority of the cost of community services for *(a)* the elderly, *(b)* the mentally ill, *(c)* the mentally handicapped and *(d)* the disabled; and what percentage of this cost was for institutional provision.

Mr. Newton: I regret that information on health authorities' expenditure on community health services is not collected in the form requested.

Nurses

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on recruitment levels at schools of nursing.

Mr. Newton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply to the hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing) on 10 May at columns 140-41.

Health Authorities (Costs)

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what percentage of Health Service costs in Trafford, Sheffield, North Lincolnshire, Wandsworth and West Lancashire health authorities is devoted to the administration of the local service; and what is the proportion of medical to non-medical staff in those health authorities.

Mr. Newton: Such information as is held centrally is in the table. The hon. Member may wish to contact the health authority chairmen concerned for the other details he seeks.

DHA	1986-87 NHS staff in post		
	[1]Expenditure on headquarters administration as a percentage of total revenue expenditure	[2]Medical and dental as a percentage[4] of total NHS staff	[3]Non-medical staff as a percentage[4] of total NHS staff
Trafford	4·31	3·7	96·3
Sheffield[5]	1·92	5·4	94·6
North Lincolnshire	2·96	2·5	97·5
Wandsworth[5]	2·38	7·2	92·8
West Lambeth	3·78	3·1	96·9

Sources: 1986-87 Annual Accounts of the health authorities and DHSS. Annual censuses of NHS medical and non-medical manpower.

[1] This excludes the cost of clerical and secretarial support staff employed in departments at hospital and unit levels. These costs are regarded as operational.

[2] Includes permanent paid, honorary staff. Excludes senior registrars and consultants in non-teaching district health authorities and senior registrars in teaching districts as these staff have their contracts with regional health authorities.

[3] Excludes nursing and midwifery agency staff.

[4] Percentage calculated on un-rounded whole-time equivalents.

[5] Indicates teaching district.

Mental and Physical Handicap Nurses

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many community mental and physical handicap nurses are employed per resident in each health authority in the north-west and in Greater London.

Mr. Newton: Such information as is held centrally is in the table. The hon. Member may wish to get in touch with the RHA chairmen concerned for the remaining details.

Community psychiatric nursing at 30 September 1986
North western regional health authority by district

District health authority	*[1] Whole-time equivalent staff in post per 100,000 population*
Lancaster	9·9
Blackpool/Wyre/Fylde	5·3
Preston	12·0
Blackburn/Hyndburn/Ribble Valley	6·6
Burnley/Pendle/Rossendale	—
West Lancashire	7·5
Chorley and South Ribble	7·8
Bolton	4·6
Bury	7·5
North Manchester	9·0
Central Manchester	7·9
South Manchester	8·6
Oldham	2·7
Rochdale	—
Salford	7·9
Stockport	4·8
Tameside and Glossop	4·5
Trafford	6·9
Wigan	4·6
North western regional health authority	5·7

Sources: DHSS Annual Census of NHS Non-Medical Manpower. Office of Population Censuses and Surveys.

[1] Calculated on unrounded whole-time equivalent staff in post and resident population numbers.

Community psychiatric nursing staff in post
at 30 September 1986
District health authorities within Greater London

District health authority	*Whole-time equivalent per 100,000 population[1]*
Barnet	5·3
Harrow	7·4
Hillingdon	3·4
Hounslow and Spelthorne	4·2
Ealing	9·0
Brent	3·9
Paddington and North Kensington	5·0
Riverside	9·0
Barking/Havering/Brentwood	2·8
Hampstead	18·4
Bloomsbury	7·5
Islington	4·8
City and Hackney	3·6
Newham	4·4
Tower Hamlets	1·3
Enfield	1·1
Haringey	1·0
Redbridge	1·3
Waltham Forest	1·4
Bexley	5·9
Greenwich	5·0
Bromley	0·3
West Lambeth	12·2
Camberwell	4·0
Lewisham and North Southwark	6·1
Croydon	4·1
Kingston and Esher	8·4
Richmond/Twickenham/Roehampton	3·9
Wandsworth	16·8
Merton and Sutton	4·2
Greater London[2]	5·1

[1] Calculated on unrounded whole-time equivalent staff in post and resident population estimates.

[2] Includes district health authorities listed above—designated as "Greater London" area.

Sources: DHSS annual Census of NHS Non-Medical Manpower. Office of Population Censuses and Surveys.

Pharmacists

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what is the current shortfall of hospital pharmacists in hospitals in the United Kingdom; what impact he assesses this as having on patient care; and what measures he proposes in order to alleviate the shortfall;

(2) whether he intends to take steps to bring National Health Service hospital pharmacy service salary levels into line with those applicable in the industrial and retail branches of pharmacy in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: It is for health authorities to decide the levels of staffing within the various staff groups, and details of any shortfalls are therefore not available centrally.

Within the Department the manpower planning advisory group and for Wales the Welsh manpower steering group are undertaking the following projects, looking into a variety of aspects of the role of hospital pharmacists:

1. An attitudinal study among female pharmacists, which has the backing of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (PSGB).
2. A workshop is to be held in the autumn with pharmacy managers based on the results of this attitudinal study and on the work undertaken by the WMSG. The results of the WMSG are to be made available to the Department.
3. Building on the findings of these two initiatives an in-depth study of hospital pharmacy skill mix is to be undertaken which is likely to commence early 1989.

Pay is a matter for negotiation in the pharmaceutical Whitley council. I understand that the council has agreed a timetable for implementing a more flexible grading structure for hospital pharmacists in the current pay round.

Family Practitioner Committees

Mr. Bill Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services on what basis the level of funding for each family practitioner committee is decided.

Mr. Newton: Our aim for the past three years has been to reduce the effects of such anomalies as arose from the negotiations in 1984-85 between district health authorities and family practitioner committees (FPCs) to determine the appropriate funds to be transferred to the newly-independent committees. The formula used to achieve this aim has been accepted by FPC interests as the best which could be devised for the purpose and, by agreement, is now regarded as having served this purpose after use in the current financial year.

Overseas Pensioners

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what is his policy towards the payment of United Kingdom retirement pensions to retired employees of central and local government service overseas;

(2) how many persons formerly employed by the United Kingdom public service overseas are not entitled to a United Kingdom pension; and in which part of the Government service they were employed;

(3) what would be the cost of extending payment of retirement pensions to all retired employees of Her Majesty's Government in both central and local public service overseas.

Mr. Scott: United Kingdom retirement pensions are payable anywhere in the world to anyone who satisfies the contribution and retirement conditions, including retired employees of Her Majesty's Government in central and local government service overseas. No statistics are available to show the number of such employees who are not entitled to a national insurance retirement pension. I am therefore unable to estimate the cost of extending payment of retirement pensions to them, though it would seem inappropriate to extend entitlement to people who do not satisfy the basic conditions.

Mr. Maginnis: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps he intends to take in order to resolve the problem of the freezing of British pensions paid to persons living in Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

Mr. Scott: It would have cost about £14·5 million this year to pay the pension uprating to British pensioners living in Australia, Canada and New Zealand and the cost would rise substantially year by year thereafter until all pensions were being paid at full United Kingdom rates. To pay full United Kingdom rates immediately would cost approximately an additional £165 million a year at current rates. In view of these substantial costs, I cannot say when competing priorities will allow the Government to allocate sufficient resources for this purpose, but the question will be kept under review.

Opren

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what information he has as to whether any of the doctors who prescribed Opren to individual patients after its product licence was withdrawn were participating in research programmes sponsored by Eli Lilly;

(2) how many people were given Opren, after its product licence was withdrawn, on a named person basis; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 29 April 1988]:* Under the Medicines Act 1968, doctors are free to be supplied with and to prescribe any unlicensed drug on a named patient basis if they judge it to be in the patient's best interest. There is no requirement under the Act for any notification of such prescribing so we have no record of how many people may have been given Opren, or how many doctors may have prescribed it on this basis after the licence was surrendered in August 1982. I am aware of a press report of 25 April claiming that under a private agreement with "the research arm of Eli Lilly" a doctor used this freedom to treat patients with Opren on "compassionate grounds" after the licence for the drug had been surrendered. Only Eli Lilly can confirm whether to its knowledge this or any other doctor who may have prescribed Opren after 1982 was at the time participating in a research programme sponsored by it.

AIDS

Mr. Jopling: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the cost of a test for AIDS.

Mr. Newton: This information is not available centrally other than for the blood transfusion service and the public health laboratory ervice. The cost of testing a blood donation for HIV antibody is estimated as 90p. The estimated average cost of testing by the PHLS is between £3 and £5; this figure is higher because the laboratories' work includes the lower-volume and more expensive confirmatory testing of initial positive tests. Costs of counselling associated with testing would have to be added for tests for people who are concerned they might have been infected.

Mr. William Shelton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his estimate of the number of deaths resulting from AIDS which was transmitted heterosexually, for each year from 1983 to 1987.

Mr. Newton: The reported number of deaths in the United Kingdom in each year from 1983 to 1987 from AIDS thought to have been acquired heterosexually is shown in the table. There may have been others, unreported.

Year	*Number of reported deaths*
1983	4
1984	2
1985	1
1986	7
1987	6

Doctors' Contracts

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Nottingham, North of 10 May, *Official Report*, column 91, he will make it his policy to collect centrally information on the number of doctor's contracts which are *(a)* whole time and *(b)* less than whole time.

Mr. Newton: Although we do not collect information centrally on the number of doctors who have applied to have their contracts varied from whole time to less than whole time, we do collect information on the number who hold each type of contract. The latest available information is set out in the table.

Hospital and Community Health Service medical staff[1] analysis by nature of contract at 30 September 1986 (England only)

	All staff[2]
Total	51,700
Whole-time	29,900
Part-time[3]	21,800

[1] Figures include permanent paid and honorary staff and excludes Community Health Service locum staff only.
[2] Includes maximum part-time and honorary staff.
[3] Figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred.

Community Care

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many representations he has received regarding the Griffiths report on community care; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: We have received 30 representations from interested individuals and organisations and will take account of them in framing our own proposals.

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what action he proposes to take in the light of the report of the Public Accounts Committee, published on 18 May, relating to community care.

Mr. Newton: We are considering the PAC report on community care developments and will issue our response in due course.

Pensioner Premiums

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether pensioners aged between 60 and 67 years who become sick or disabled after their 60th birthday and who do not qualify for attendance allowance will qualify for the higher pensioner premiums.

Mr. Scott: The higher pensioner premium is automatically payable to an income support claimant who, or whose partner, is aged 80 or over. Other pensioners aged 60 to 79 are eligible for it if they, or their partner, have an invalid carriage, are blind or receive a long-term incapacity or disability benefit: including not only attendance allowance but also mobility allowance, mobility supplement, severe disablement allowance and invalidity pension.

NHS Land

Mr. Ralph Howell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Norfolk, North on 16 November, *Official Report*, column *441* and 27 November, columns *319-21* and 19 April, column *382*, what was the basis in each case on which the figures for the acreage and value of National Health Service land were calculated; and to what factors he attributes the reduction in each.

Mrs. Currie: The figure of £12·7 billion was based on a 1985 valuation by district valuers and was an approximation of the existing use value of the NHS property estate (land and buildings) at that time. The 1987 valuation by district valuers has produced a provisional estimate of £6·8 billion for the open market value of the estate.

Nurses (Education and Training)

Mr. Stokes: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a further statement on the project 2000 proposals for the reform of nurse education and training.

Mr. Moore: I have today announced our broad acceptance of the United Kingdom Central Council's proposals for major reform of nurse education and training. This entails acceptance of the proposals for a common foundation training between the various nursing specialisms, to be followed by specialist training; a significant reduction in nursing students' rostered contribution to service, without, however, substantially altering the essentially practical orientation of their training; and a move to full student status and replacement of salaries with non-means-tested bursaries. A number of outstanding points remain to be resolved, including the role and training of support staff to nurses and the timetable for the cessation of enrolled nurse training. I hope that further work with the council will enable us to agree a firm timetable as soon as possible.

A copy of the Government's response to the UKCC has been placed in the Library.

Tastrak Plastic

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what contracts, and to what value, have been placed with the university of Bristol for the funding of Tastrak plastic and radiation effects; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: No contracts have been placed concerned specifically with Tastrak which is the trade name of a plastic indicator. This is being used in the study, described in my reply to the hon. Member on 16 May at column *339*,to determine the levels of activity present in teeth. The total cost of the study is £24,000.

Windscale (Fire)

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what research has been carried out into the effects on the health of the public of the Windscale fire in 1957 and the radiation leaks connected with the fire; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The report of the independent advisory group 1*, established in 1983 to investigate the possible increase incidence of cancer in west Cumbria, was based on evidence of estimated radiation doses to the public from all sources over the period 1951 to 1982. This evidence included the effects of the Windscale fire in 1957. A subsequent report 2*, which reassessed this evidence was produced by the independent committee on medical aspects of radiation in the environment in 1986 and concluded that the substance and essential conclusions of the independent advisory group remained unchanged. Copies of both reports are in the Library.

1* "Investigation into the Possible Increased Incidence of Cancer in West Cumbria" (HMSO 1984).

2* "The implications of the new data on releases from Sellafield in the 1950s for the conclusions of the Report on the Investigation of the Possible Increased Incidence of Cancer in West Cumbria" (HMSO 1986).

Child Allowances

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will set out in a table the child allowances paid to families with one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine and 10 children in each of the European Community member states.

Mr. Scott: I refer the hon. Member to the Department's publication, "Tables of Social Benefit System in the European Communities (Position at 1 January 1987)", a copy of which is in the Library. Section VIII contains information on child allowances in the European Community member states.

Government Forms (Welsh Language)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services why the letter, "An Important Message for Widows and Pensioners—Now There's An Easier Way to Get Your Pension", (BR 2196) was not sent out in a bilingual form in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: Pensioners are identified by our Newcastle computer on the basis of pension number. It is not possible to select recipients in Wales, or in any other place.

Mentally Ill People

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many places at present exist in England and Wales in hospital-hostels for chronically mentally ill people; and what plans he has to increase the number of such places.

Mrs. Currie: Statistics on hospital-hostel places are not collected centrally. It is a matter for health authorities to assess their requirements for such provision.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what measures are being undertaken by his Department to ensure that those chronically mentally ill people who need permanent asylum and care receive adequate care in the community on discharge from hospitals; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: It is no part of the Government's policy that chronically mentally ill people who need permanent asylum should be discharged into the community. Where closure of a mental hospital is proposed, alternative district in-patient provision must be available before closure takes place.

GPs (Psychiatry Training)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what progress is being made by his Department in ensuring a review of general practitioner training in psychiatry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: It is for the appropriate professional bodies, and not the Department, to review the content of training for general practice. Experience in psychiatry is recommended by the General Medical Council which has responsibility for overseeing the content of undergraduate medical education, and features in all undergraduate medical courses. Psychiatry is also an option in the mandatory two years of hospital experience which forms part of vocational training for general practice. Established general practitioners decide how best to keep their knowledge up to date and have access to a wide range of continuing educational courses and activities.

Community Psychiatric Nurses

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what progress is being made on his Department's intentions to train additional community psychiatric nurses; and when he expects the English training board to publish its report on how it hopes to meet the need for such additional nurses.

Mr. Newton: Officials of the Department have had discussions with regional nursing officers and officers of the English National Board (ENB) in regard to the education and training of community psychiatric nurses. The need for flexibility in the provision of clinical courses was stressed, and the hon. Member may wish to note that the English National Board has established a panel to review the curriculum of the current training course 811. The Department is represented by an observer on the panel. The panel will report to the board later this year. In addition, the ENB has approved an increase in the number of centres approved to conduct course 811—from 10 in 1985 to 24 in January 1988. There have also been other developments such as the opportunity to undertake course 811 by distance learning programmes and on a part-time basis which are being evaluated.

Salmonella Food Poisoning

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many cases there have been of salmonella food poisoning, and where they have been over the past 10 years; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: About 137,000 cases of salmonella infection including food-borne infection were reported from laboratories in England and Wales between 1977 and 1987. Evidence suggests the greatest proportion of these were outbreaks affecting families in the home. A smaller number of outbreaks were associated with restaurants/ receptions, hospitals and other institutions. The Government acknowledge the problem and studies have identified a number of measures to help deal with it. Of particular importance is the imminent distribution of a trial information leaflet advising the public about good hygienic practice in the domestic kitchen.

Foetal Tissue

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he intends to reply to the questions dealing with the use of foetal tissue in transplantation operations which were tabled for answer on 21 and 22 April by the hon. Members for Pembroke, Hexham (Mr. Amos) and Derbyshire, West (Mr. McLoughlin).

Mr. Newton: Shortly.

Hospitals (Private Sector Leasing)

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list those health authorities which have leased hospitals to the private sector; and if he will list health authorities known by his Department to be considering such a move.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that information of this kind is not held centrally.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what guidance has been issued to health authorities about the leasing of hospitals to the private sector; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: Health authorities are aware of their responsibility to dispose advantageously of their surplus property. But they may grant short leases at the appropriate market rates on property awaiting disposal.

Private Ambulances

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will introduce legislation to involve health authorities in the standards achieved by private ambulances so as to bring them into line with other private health services.

Mrs. Currie: I have nothing to add to my reply to the hon. Member on 27 April 1988 at column *179*.

Midwives (Refresher Courses)

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will ensure that heath authorities meet the total costs for statutory refresher courses for midwives who are holding bank contracts.

Mr. Newton: It is for health authorities to decide in the light of local circumstances whether or not to meet the costs of statutory refresher courses for midwives who are holding bank contracts.

Civil Servants (Outside Activities)

Mr. John: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many civil servants in his Department are also directors or consultants in *(a)* public liability companies, *(b)* companies limited by guarantee, *(c)* building societies, *(d)* other friendly societies and *(e)* commercial undertakings other than the above; and what rules or instructions govern these activities with particular reference to remuneration.

Mr. Portillo: I am unable to give precise details of officers in DHSS who are directors or consultants in private industry as comprehensive figures are not available.

The private activities of civil servants are governed by general principles of conduct, laid down centrally. No officers may undertake private activities which impair their usefulness as public servants or are inconsistent with their official role or which conflict with the interests of their Department.

In DHSS, because of the nature of the work, there are additional restrictions. Officers must not undertake private employment with finance companies or with an organisation where there is a likelihood that they would meet and deal with the same people in both their official and private roles. Officers employed on social security work must not deal with a private employer's wage records or with the insurance or benefit side of friendly societies and they are prohibited from holding sub-post masterships. Individuals are also required to seek official permission before undertaking work about which they have any doubts.

Provided that the rules are observed, remuneration is a matter for the officer concerned.

Legionnaires' Disease (Broadcasting House)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what discussions have taken place between his Department and British Broadcasting Corporation management regarding the outbreak of Legionnaires' disease at Broadcasting house;

(2) if he will hold a public inquiry into the causes of the outbreak of Legionnaires disease at BBC Broadcasting house; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he will call for a report from the chief medical officer about the outbreak of Legionnaires' disease at BBC Broadcasting house;

(4) what information he has about the origins and extent of recent outbreaks of Legionnaires' disease at BBC Broadcasting house.

Mrs. Currie: At the beginning of the outbreak an infection control committee was set up comprising the medical officer for environmental health for the City of Westminster, the communicable disease surveillance centre, the public health laboratory service and representatives from the BBC. The Department has been kept very closely in touch with the handling of the outbreak and contacted all doctors and health authorities early this month to help ensure that any possible cases were identified.

Legionella bacteria of the type responsible for the outbreak were found in the BBC cooling tower which was shut down and thoroughly disinfected. Other cooling towers in the area have also been checked.

On Friday 20 May there were 44 confirmed cases of the disease, of whom two have died, and a further 44 suspected cases.

The Department continues to monitor the outbreak closely. I understand a number of investigations by the responsible authority are currently under way.

There are no plans to hold a public inquiry into the outbreak. The committee of inquiry into the outbreak of legionnaires' disease in Stafford in April 1985 made two reports. The second of these, published in December 1987, made general recommendations about measures to reduce the danger of further outbreaks of the disease and the departments concerned, together with other interested bodies, are following up these recommendations.

Attendance Allowance

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how long appeals against refusal of attendance allowance are normally taking; and what is the maximum time for which an appeal has been outstanding.

Mr. Portillo: Social security appeal tribunals hear lay questions on attendance allowance; the attendance allowance board reviews decisions on medical questions on this benefit. The national administrative statistics for social security appeal tribunals show that in Great Britain, for the quarter ending 30 September 1987, the latest available figures, the average time taken between the lodgement and hearing of appeals was 35·1 weeks for attendance allowance. While the maximum time for the hearing of such an appeal is not readily available, 27 of the

40 appeals heard in this quarter took 21 weeks or more. I regret that equivalent estimates are not available for reviews by the attendance allowance board.

Low-income Families

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he now expects to publish the latest available figures for the numbers in low-income families.

Mr. Portillo: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Great Yarmouth (Mr. Carttiss) on Thursday 19 May 1988 at columns *563-64*.

Deaf Children

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps he is taking in the light of the report from the National Deaf Children's Society on the failure of certain health authorities to discharge their statutory duty to deaf children under the Education Act 1981, to gather information from all health authorities about their degree of compliance with the Act.

Mr. Scott: The report is currently being studied, and we shall consider what action to take in the light of our conclusions.

Additional Payments (Newham)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the current backlog of claims for additional payments at each of the offices of his Department in the London Borough of Newham; what is the estimated time needed to clear them given the present level of staffing resources; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: There are three local offices in the London borough of Newham. The numbers of claims for single payments of supplementary benefit which were uncleared at 20 May 1988 are given in the table.

	Claims Outstanding
Plaistow	998
Woodgrange Park	425
Canning Town	249

All claims were examined on receipt and priority has been given to urgent cases. Each of the offices concerned has its full complement of staff. At the current rate of clearance it is anticipated that the majority of outstanding claims will have been cleared by the end of July.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when the hon. Member for Walsall, North will be receiving replies to his questions regarding the working of the special unit of his Department and related matters involving transitional payments over housing benefit and to which a holding answer was given on 12 May.

Mr. Scott: I replied to the hon. Member today.

Benefits

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people under the age of 23 years were in receipt of *(a)* supplementary benefit and *(b)* housing benefit at the latest available date; and what were the corresponding figures for 1983 and 1986.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer 4 May 1988]:* On 31 May 1987, the latest date for which information is available, 738,000 people under the age of 23 years were in receipt of supplementary benefit. The corresponding figures for 1983 and 1986 were 807,000 and 843,000, respectively.

Source: Annual Statistical Enquiries.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what arrangements are to be made for liaison between the proposed special unit of his Department which will be involved in the transitional arrangements for housing benefit, the local authorities and local offices of his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 9 May 1988]:* These details continue to be discussed between the Department and representatives of the local authorities associations.

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether claimants will be able to make representations *(a)* direct to the proposed special unit of his Department or *(b)* to local offices of his Department if they are dissatisfied with the amount of housing benefit during the transitional arrangements; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 9 May 1988]:* Although there will be no formal appeal mechanism built into the transitional payment scheme the Department will ensure that when queries about entitlement arise cases are looked at again by staff within the unit.

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many staff will be involved in the proposed special unit of his Department which will be involved in the transitional arrangements for housing benefit.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 9 May 1988]:* The number of staff required will be decided in the light of claims received.

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services who will be heading the proposed special unit of his Department which will be involved in the transitional arrangements for housing benefit; and what will be his grading for salary purposes and his location.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 9 May 1988]:* The grade 6 manager of the transitional payments unit in Glasgow will be Mr. David Bradbury.

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make it his policy to make an oral statement in the House when he has reached a decision on the setting up of the proposed special unit of his Department that will be dealing with the transitional arrangements for housing benefit.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 9 May 1988]:* No. Announcements will continue to be made in the normal way.

Cervical Cancer Screening

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the average length of training for medical laboratory scientific officers involved with cervical cancer screening.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 18 May 1988]:* Because cytology is not recognised as a separate specialty for state registration of medical laboratory scientific officers but is included with histopathology, we have no information on the average length of training. Negotiations are currently under way with the professions supplementary to medicine to define a new training course specifically for cytology. The recommendation for this course is a minimum training period of 12 months in a cytology laboratory during which time at least 3,000 smears should have been examined under supervision.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 24 May 1988

WALES

Waiting Lists (Gwent)

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what urgent action is now proposed to reduce the waiting lists in Gwent following the meeting with the chairman of Gwent area health authority on 13 May.

Mr. Grist: As I announced yesterday, £1 million has been made available to Welsh health authorities under the hospital waiting times initiative in the current financial year. Of this, Gwent health authority has been offered £225,000 to help tackle waiting list problems in trauma and orthopaedic. In addition, Gwent has recently submitted its revised waiting list action plan and in conjunction with Welsh Office officials, it is actively working on its waiting list problems.

Homeless People

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many people were classified as homeless in 1979; and what is the most recent figure.

Mr. Grist *[holding answer 16 May 1988]:* The numbers of persons accepted as homeless during 1979 and 1987 were 12,698 and 13,345 respectively.

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many people were classified as homeless in 1979; and what is the most recent figure, excluding the area covered in the valleys initiative.

Mr. Grist *[holding answer 20 May 1988]:* The number of persons accepted as homeless in districts other than those which are in the valleys initiative area, during 1979 and 1987 were 8,755 and 9,817 respectively. The valley initiative programme launched during 1986 includes the following districts: Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil, Cynon Valley, Rhondda, Ogwr, Lliw Valley, Torfaen and Islwyn.

Housing Statistics

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) how many housing starts there were in 1979; and what is the most recent figure;

(2) how many housing completions there were in 1979; and what is the most recent figure.

Mr. Grist *[holding answer 16 May 1988]:* A total of 11,426 dwellings were started during 1979 compared with 10,665 during 1987. A total of 11,265 dwellings were completed during 1979 compared with 9,254 during 1987.

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many houses in Wales were built before 1919.

Mr. Grist *[holding answer 18 May 1988]:* There were 440,000 dwellings in Wales at 31 December 1987 which were built before 1919.

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many Welsh pensioners are living in houses classified as unfit to live in.

Mr. Grist *[holding answer 16 May 1988]:* In 1986 there were 46,800 persons of pensionable age in Wales living in dwellings classified as unfit.

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many Welsh pensioners are living in houses classified as unfit to live in, excluding the area covered in the valleys initiative.

Mr. Grist *[holding answer 20 May 1988]:* In 1986 there were 32,800 persons of pensionable age in Wales excluding the local authorities covered by the valleys initiative, living in dwellings classified as unfit. The valleys initiative programme launched during 1986 includes the following districts: Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil, Cynon Valley, Rhondda, Ogwr, Lliw Valley, Torfaen, Islwyn.

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) how many houses in Wales, excluding the area covered in the valleys initiative, lack *(a)* one or more basic amenity, *(b)* an inside toilet and *(c)* a fixed bath;

(2) how many houses in Wales are classified as unfit to live in excluding the area covered in the valleys initiative.

Mr. Grist *[holding answer 20 May 1988]:* In 1986 in Wales, excluding the local authorities covered by the valleys initiative, there were 31,700 dwellings lacking one or more basic amenity, 12,500 dwellings lacking a WC inside the dwelling, 11,000 dwellings lacking a fixed bath or shower and 57,100 dwellings classified as unfit. The valleys initiative launched during 1986 includes all of the following districts: Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil, Cynon Valley, Rhondda, Ogwr, Lliw Valley, Torfaen and Islwyn.

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many houses in Wales are classified as being seriously in need of repair, excluding the area covered in the valleys initiative.

Mr. Grist *[holding answer 20 May 1988]:* In 1986 there were 90,300 dwellings in Wales classified as being in serious disrepair (that is, with repair costs of £3,000 or more), excluding the local authorities covered by the valleys initiative. The valleys initiative programme launched during 1986 includes the following districts: Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil, Cynon Valley, Rhondda, Ogwr, Lliw Valley, Torfaen and Islwyn.

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) how many housing starts there were in 1979; and what is the most recent figure, excluding the area covered in the valleys initiative;

(2) how many housing completions there were in 1979; and what is the most recent figure, excluding the area covered in the valleys initiative.

Mr. Grist *[holding answer 20 May 1988]:* The number of dwellings started in the districts other than those which are covered by the valleys initiative area, during 1979 and 1987 were 9,614 and 9,183 respectively. The number of dwellings completed for the same districts and years were 9,496 and 7,848. The valleys initiative launched during 1986 includes all of the following districts: Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil, Cynon Valley, Rhondda, Ogwr, Lliw Valley, Torfaen and Islwyn.

Synthetic Index

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how the synthetic index which ranks the regions of Europe in order of the intensity of their problems is calculated with regard to Wales.

Mr. Peter Walker *[holding answer 23 May 1988]:* The method of calculation of the synthetic index which forms part of the 3rd periodic report published by the European Commission (COM(87)230 final) is described at annex 2.3.1-D of the report. It is applied to level II regions; statistical information is made available by the United Kingdom Government, but the calculation of the index is entirely the responsibility of the Commission.

ENERGY

Electricity (Privatisation)

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what amount has been provisionally committed for publicity and advertising purposes in the forthcoming privatisation of the electricity industry.

Mr. Michael Spicer: At present no provisional commitments have been made for these purposes.

Oil-based Muds

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he has any plans to seek to tighten the criteria presently applied for the use of oil-based muds in the North sea.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The Government are at present seeking to reduce pollution in the North sea by limiting the quantities of oil discharged into the sea associated with cuttings from wells drilled using oil-based muds. On the United Kingdom continental shelf steps are already being taken by the oil industry to reduce the extent of pollution from this source.

Liverpool

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on his recent visit to Liverpool.

Mr. Parkinson: I visited the Merseyside Council for Voluntary Services on 12 February to show my support for the community insulation project which it sponsors under the community programme. This project, known as "Keep Warm", has now draughtproofed over 2,500 homes of pensioners and low-income households in Liverpool. I was impressed by the enthusiasm of the sponsors of the project, and the success that they have achieved. I have since been in correspondence with the Merseyside Council for Voluntary Services about the points it raised with me during this visit.

North Sea Employees

Mr. Eadie: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has on the extent to which certain operators in the North sea oblige employees to bear the financial cost of health, safety and survival training for working offshore.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I am aware of only one instance where a contractor in the North sea obliged his employees to bear the financial cost of survival and fire-fighting training courses for working offshore. I understand that the contractor ceased this practice in 1986.

Mr. Eadie: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has on the extent to which certain employees working on North sea oil platforms are not being paid two weeks' leave pay in accordance with the work practice of two weeks off and two weeks on.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I understand that it is not uncommon in the offshore contracting industry for employees to be paid only for the weeks in which they work.

Plutonium (Transport)

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central of 11 May, *Official Report*, column *110*, he will list the agencies other than the police which are to be involved directly or indirectly, in the physical protection of plutonium transported from Sellafield to Japan.

Mr. Michael Spicer: For security reasons it would not be prudent to add to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member on 11 May 1988 at column *110*.

PRIME MINISTER

Basingstoke

Q25. **Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Prime Minister when she last paid an official visit to Basingstoke.

The Prime Minister: I have not recently visited Basingstoke.

Denmark

Q76. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Prime Minister when she next expects to pay an official visit to Denmark.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Land Statistics

Q103. **Mr. Steen:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will ensure that all Government Departments publish details of vacant, dormant, derelict and underutilised land in their possession.

The Prime Minister: Details of unused and underused land in the ownership of Government Departments in England and Wales are currently entered on the registers of such land maintained by my right hon. Friends the Secretary of State for the Environment and the Secretary of State for Wales. These registers are available for inspection by the public.

Following the announcement by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Enviroment on 7 March that public bodies would themselves publish information about unused and underused land they own, similar publication of information by Government Departments is under consideration.

Northern Region

Q125. **Mr. Fallon:** To ask the Prime Minister when she next expects to pay an official visit to the northern region.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Avon

Q142. **Mr. Hayward:** To ask the Prime Minister when she next intends to pay an official visit to Avon.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Engagements

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 24 May.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 24 May.

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 24 May.

The Prime Minister: This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today. This evening I hope to have an Audience of Her Majesty the Queen.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Procedure Committee

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Lord President of the Council which reports of the Procedure Committee in the 1983-87 Parliament have yet to be debated.

Mr. Wakeham: I refer the hon. Member to the replies given to the hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen) on 25 April at columns *17-18* and to my hon. Friend, the Member for Basildon (Mr. Amess) on 30 March at columns *521-24*.

Parliamentary Pensions

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Lord President of the Council when the TSRB report on parliamentary pensions is to be published; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham: During the passage of the Parliamentary and other Pensions Act 1987 there was a feeling among some Members of the House that the time had come for a review of certain features of the parliamentary pension scheme. In my written answer of 24 July at column *502*, I explained that I had, therefore, invited the TSRB to review aspects of the scheme, the pensions of the Prime Minister, the Speaker and the Lord Chancellor, and ministerial severance pay. The report was published today and a copy has been placed in the Library of the House. I would like to thank the review body for the time and effort it has devoted to these issues.

The TSRB recommends revised early retirement arrangements under which a full accrued pension would be payable from a "pensionable age" of between 60 and 65, depending on length of service at the date of leaving the House. When the pension is brought into payment before the pensionable age it would be subject to an abatement, to be calculated on a broadly actuarial basis. The TSRB also recommends that the death in service gratuity should be two years' salary. We will be consulting the trustees of the parliamentary pension scheme on these and the other recommendations affecting the scheme itself, including the suggestion that the holders of the office of Prime Minister and Speaker be allowed to participate in it. Depending on the outcome of those consultations, the Government would expect to lay before the House regulations under the Parliamentary and other Pensions Act 1987.

The remaining recommendations, and that proposing that the Speaker and Prime Minister be allowed to participate in the parliamentary scheme, will require legislation to amend the Parliamentary and other Pensions Acts. We will bring this forward in due course.

We accept the TSRB's recommendations that the holders of the offices of Prime Minister, Speaker and Lord Chancellor should be entitled to pensions of half final salary, that the cap on pensions increases payable to former office holders should be removed and the recommendations on ministerial severance pay. We propose that these arrangements should apply after the necessary Bill has received Royal Assent.

Opposition Parties (Financial Aid)

Mr. Hanley: To ask the Lord President of the Council if his review of the scheme for financial assistance to Opposition parties has been completed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham: A comprehensive review of the scheme for financial assistance to Opposition parties, or "Short" money, the first since it was introduced in 1975, has now been completed, and I intend to table shortly the necessary motions, embodying a number of proposed changes to the present resolution.

In particular, it is proposed that the existing separate arrangements, which pre-date the introduction of "Short" money, whereby certain office equipment, postal facilities and stationery, are provided for the official Opposition out of departmental Votes shall be brought to an end. The current arrangements for the employment of four officially paid staff in the official Opposition Whips' Office would however, remain unaltered.

It is also proposed, following discussion with the Opposition parties, that certain detailed changes should be made in the accounting procedures for these funds; in particular, that an independently certified statement should in future be made annually on behalf of the entitled parties that the amounts claimed have been expended on purposes in accordance with the resolution of the House.

The review has also taken account of the recommendation made by the Top Salaries Review Body (report No. 24) for a similar "Short-type" scheme to be introduced in the House of Lords. The Government agree, in principle, that such assistance should be provided. Whilst, therefore, it is not proposed to establish a separate scheme for the House of Lords, it will be recommended that the amounts made available under this scheme to Opposition parties should in future be on the understanding that a substantial part of that assistance will be allocated to their work in that House.

In the light of these proposed changes in the scope of the scheme, and the rises in relevant costs since the formula for calculating the amounts payable to entitled parties was last approved by the House, it is proposed that the new annual amounts payable under this scheme shall be based on £2,550 for each seat won by the qualifying party at the last general election plus £5·10 for every 200 votes. This new formula represents a rise of 70 per cent. in the formula approved for the existing scheme in 1985, but is not, of

course on a comparable basis. The new arrangement would be backdated to the date of the last general election, and is on the basis that there will be no further rise during this Parliament. It is further proposed that, in so far as the eligibility for assistance under the terms of the existing resolution is related to parties as they stood at the last general election, exceptional provision shall be made for the allocation of financial assistance to the Social and Liberal Democratic party and the present Social Democrat party, relating to their existing parliamentary membership.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Biwaters Project (Malaysia)

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his answer of 31 March, Official Report, column *599*, whether the Coopers and Lybrand/Sir William Halcrow and Partners value-for-money check contains figures other than Biwaters own published specifications.

Mr. Chris Patten: The value for money study provided a detailed review of costings supplied by the Biwater group and was based on the group's own costings and those of its prospective suppliers and sub-contractors.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the Overseas Development Administration, when considering grant/aid for Biwaters' Malaysia project, took into account the findings of the contemporaneous Nigerian inquiry into similar equipment under Mr. Justice Awoniyi.

Mr. Chris Patten: I refer the hon. Lady to the answer my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister gave her on 26 April at columns *95-96*. The Nigerian Government did not accept the recommendations of the commission of inquiry.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish the cost comparisons with other plant of similar purpose and capacity contained in the Coopers and Lybrand/Sir William Halcrow and Partners value-for-money check on Biwaters' Malaysia project.

Mr. Chris Patten: No. The report contains commercially confidential information.

Overseas Aid

Miss Lestor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the gross public expenditure on overseas aid in 1987.

Mr. Chris Patten: In 1987 gross public expenditure on overseas aid totalled £1,283 million.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Weapons Control (EC Proposal)

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is Her Majesty's Government's policy towards the European Commission's proposal for a directive on the control of the acquisition and possession of weapons (COM (87) 383 FINAL).

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) on 14 January at column *352*.

Jury Service

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to strengthen the rights of people who because of conscientious objection do not wish to take part in jury service; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: My right hon. Friends the Secretary of State and the Lord Chancellor have received a number of representations on this issue and are considering them.

Coach Parking, Westminster

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will request the Commissioner of the Police of the Metropolis to consider whether the parking of coaches opposite Parliament and the consequential congestion is consistent with the Sessional Order requiring the passage through the streets to be kept free and open.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I am advised by the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that the parking restrictions prohibit coaches from parking in the area referred to by my hon. Friend, but that they do allow coaches to stop to set down and pick up passengers. Traffic wardens are deployed to prevent coaches from parking and to limit the number of coaches stopping at any one time. The police prevent coaches stopping when this causes difficulties; for example, during lobbies of Parliament.

Tactical Aid Unit (Merseyside)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the chief constable of Merseyside as to the purpose and functions of the tactical aid unit and for the reason for the uniform it adopts while in action; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Merseyside police tactical aid unit comprises police firearms instructors and other officers with experience and expertise in the use of firearms and firearms tactics. The unit provides a small specialist firearms team to deal with operations such as entry and search of premises where the subject is known or believed to be armed; siege situations; armed surveillance in support of the CID; and the destruction of dangerous animals. Members of the unit are routinely engaged on other police duties and are called upon as and when their specialist skills are required. The unit is not limited to a uniformed role but is able to respond in a manner appropriate to the circumstances of a particular operation.

Entry Clearance Applications

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the current delay in inquiries being made into entry clearance applications being referred to the United Kingdom for further inquiry; what proposals he has to increase staff who are undertaking such inquiries; and what proposals he has to expedite inquiry reports being submitted to overseas post.

Mr. Renton: The time taken to make inquiries into entry clearance applications referred by overseas posts to the Home Office depends on the individual nature of the case, in particular whether an interview is needed. Entry clearance inquiries are an integral part of the work of the immigration department and are taken into account in determining staffing levels. Further, the recent immigration rules changes were designed to reduce the burden of routine work and thus to release resources to enable staff to deal more speedily with the other aspects of their work, including entry clearance referrals.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many entry clearance applications have been referred to him for inquiries to be made in the United Kingdom in each of the last five years; how many such refusals have been made in 1988 to the latest available date; how many immigration officers are involved full-time with such inquiry work; what is the minimum and maximum delay in arranging interviews currently; and what is the current minimum and maximum time taken between a case being referred to his Department and reports being received by the appropriate overseas post.

Mr. Renton: The information is not available in the form requested. The available information is as follows:

Entry clearance applications referred to immigration service headquarters for inquiries to be made through local immigration offices:

Year	*Number*
1983	2,336
1984	2,351
1985	2,258
1986	2,109
1987	2,084
[1]1988	1,169

[1] 1 January to 13 May.

These inquiries represent only part of the duties of immigration officers at the ports involved and no officers are currently employed full-time on entry clearance interviews.

Arrangements for interviews are made immediately on receipt of the file at most ports although the maximum time at others before these arrangements can be made is up to a month.

Immigration

Mr. Churchill: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many immigrants have been admitted for settlement in the 10 years 1978 to 1987; what is his best estimate of the number likely to be admitted over the years 1988 to 1997; what estimate has been made of the cost to public funds of providing housing, school and hospital places to meet this influx; and what budgetary provision has been made to meet it.

Mr. Renton: The numbers persons subject to immigration control who were accepted for settlement in the United Kingdom in each of the last 10 years is as follows:

	Number
1978	72,330
1979	69,670
1980	69,750
1981	59,060
1982	53,870
1983	53,460
1984	50,950
1985	55,360
1986	46,820
1987	45,980

There is no estimate made of the numbers of likely to be granted settlement in the next 10 years or of the costs or contributions to public funds which might result from this component of the total likely change in the population of the United Kingdom over that period.

Plans for the provision of housing, school and hospital places take into account overall changes in population, including estimates of net migration. These are the subject of projections produced by the Government Actuary's Department (national figures) and by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys with the Department of the Environment (for local authorities).

Neighbourhood Watch Schemes

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the cost of producing the Home Office research unit's study of neighbourhood watch schemes by Professor Rosenbaum published on 16 May.

Mr. John Patten *[holding answer 23 May 1988]:* Professor Rosenbaum contributed a chapter to a book entitled "Communities and Crime Reduction." This followed his contribution at an open conference in 1986 on crime prevention. This book was produced by the Home Office research and planning unit and published by HMSO on 16 May. A copy has been placed in the Library. He was not paid a fee and the cost to the Home Office was nil.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Durham County Council

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received from Durham county council and other interested parties about its inability to meet its obligations through Government spending restrictions.

Mr. Dunn: My right hon. Friend has received representations from the Durham local education authority about the level of its education prescribed expenditure allocations for 1987-88 and 1988-89. The criteria used for determining those allocations are designed to ensure that all LEAs receive fair and equitable treatment and that none should find itself unable to fulfil its statutory obligations.

Glasgow and Edinburgh Universities (Veterinary Colleges)

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list in the *Official Report* the names and status of those University Grants Committee members who visited the veterinary colleges of Glasgow and Edinburgh universities during the week beginning 16 May.

Mr. Jackson: In its review of veterinary education, the UGC is being advised by a committee of six experts

chaired by Sir Ralph Riley, DSc, FRS, former secretary and deputy chairman of the Agricultural and Food Research Council. Only Professor T. A. Douglas, PhD, MRCVS (department of veterinary clinical biochemistry, Glasgow university) is also a member of the UGC. Because of a clash of interests, Professor Douglas did not visit the Glasgow veterinary college. Otherwise, all members of the review group visited both establishments.

City Technology Colleges

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what sums in total his Department has allocated for spending on capital, current and other costs of city technology colleges for the current financial year and for 1989-90, 1990-91 and 1991-92.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: Overall planned expenditure on the city technology colleges programme is £19 million for the current financial year, £33 million for 1989-90 and £34 million for 1990-91. Future plans will be the subject of review during the year since 1991-92 falls outside the current public expenditure planning period. It is not possible at this stage to provide a breakdown showing capital and recurrent costs separately as this depends on a number of factors including the nature and condition of premises acquired, and the speed at which sponsors' plans are implemented.

Teachers (Qualifications)

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has any proposals to amend the arrangements for granting qualified teacher status in England and Wales.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: After consultation with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales I am today issuing a consultation document proposing new arrangements for granting qualified teacher status in England and Wales.

I propose to simplify the arrangements governing the employment in England and Wales of teachers from other parts of the United Kingdom and from overseas and to introduce clearer and better arrangements for the entry to teaching of persons with relevant experience and other qualifications who have not completed courses of pre-service training.

My objectives are to:

- enhance quality by requiring that—except in closely prescribed cases—all those entering teaching by other than the normal initial training route should have demonstrated the necessary knowledge, personal qualities and teaching ability in the classroom before being granted qualified teacher status;
- ensure that the arrangements for granting qualified teacher status are better able to serve the needs of employers;
- reduce significantly the administrative complexity of the present arrangements.

With certain limited exceptions, primarily for teachers from other parts of the United Kingdom or other parts of the education service, I therefore propose that all entrants to teaching by other than the standard training route should have to have satisfactorily completed a period of service as a licensed teacher and any associated training required by the employer before being eligible for qualified teacher status.

To secure that appropriate statutory authority exists for the new arrangements as these may be implemented in the light of the process of consultation, the Government will table appropriate amendments to the Education Reform Bill now being considered in another place.

I am also proposing to revoke the regulations providing for a statutory system of probation for teachers. The present system has proved cumbersome and ineffective. It should be the responsibility of the employer to provide support for the beginning teacher, to monitor his performance and, if necessary, to decide that that performance is unsatisfactory.

Full details of my proposals are set out in the consultation document: copies are being placed in the Libraries of both Houses and in the Vote and Printed Paper Offices. I shall invite replies to the consultation document by mid-October.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Overseas Takeover Bids

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make it his policy to ensure that there is full reciprocity in connection with bids for British companies from companies located overseas which protect themselves by devices such as the weighting of voting rights in order to enable minority shareholders to retain control; if he will investigate the wide variety of such obstacles permitted in the state of Delaware in the United States of America; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: It is the responsibility of the Director General of Fair Trading to consider all aspects of a proposed merger when preparing his advice to the Secretary of State on the question of reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission under the provisions of the Fair Trading Act 1973. With regard to inward investment, one consideration that may be relevant in some cases is the extent to which United Kingdom companies have reciprocal freedom to acquire companies based in the home country of the prospective acquirer.

I am aware of Delaware state takeover law.

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what consideration he has given to the economic and social implications of business decisions affecting the future of British companies, their shareholders and employees, being transferred to centres offshore and outside the European Community; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: As stated in the DTI Blue Paper on mergers policy, issued March 1988, the Government's general attitude towards inward investment is to welcome it, whether it be by acquisition or by direct inward investment.

Nevertheless, there are instances in which foreign ownership of the United Kingdom company may raise particular concerns, and in such cases the power to make a reference if the proposed merger to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission is available. Each case is considered individually on its merits in accordance with the provisions of the Fair Trading Act 1973.

The main consideration in deciding whether to make a reference to the MMC is the effect on competition but other relevant aspects of a case are also taken into account, including wider public interest issues.

Trade Statistics

Mr. Hood: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what, for each year since 1975, was the percentage fluctuation in the foreign trade of Belgium, Denmark, France, Holland, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, West Germany and Japan.

Mr. Alan Clark: The information is in the following table:

Total visible trade
Percentage changes on previous year (in United States dollar terms)

Exports	*Belgium/ Luxembourg*	*Denmark*	*France*	*Netherlands*	*United Kingdom*	*United States of America*	*Federal Republic of Germany*	*Japan*
1975	2	13	14	6	14	9	1	0
1976	14	5	7	12	5	7	13	21
1977	14	11	14	13	22	4	16	20
1978	20	18	20	15	22	20	20	21
1979	25	23	28	27	27	27	21	5
1980	15	15	14	16	28	21	12	26
1981	−14	−5	−9	−7	−7	6	−9	17
1982	−6	−4	−9	−3	−5	−9	0	−9
1983	−1	4	−1	−1	−5	−6	4	6
1984	0	−1	2	0	2	9	1	16
1985	4	7	4	4	8	−2	7	4
1986	28	24	23	18	5	2	32	19
1987	21	[1]19	20	15	22	16	21	10
Imports								
1975	3	5	3	6	−1	−4	8	−7
1976	15	20	19	13	5	26	18	12
1977	14	7	9	15	13	21	15	9
1978	20	11	16	16	20	17	20	12
1979	25	25	31	27	31	20	31	39
1980	19	5	26	14	16	16	18	28
1981	−14	−9	−11	−14	−10	8	−12	1
1982	−7	−4	−4	−5	−4	−7	−5	−8
1983	−6	−4	−9	−2	1	6	−1	−4
1984	2	2	−1	1	5	26	0	8
1985	1	10	4	6	4	6	4	−4
1986	22	25	20	15	15	7	20	−3
1987	21	[1]9	22	21	22	10	20	18

[1] Estimate
Source: OECD Trade Series 'A'.

Trading Standards Officers

Mr. Cox: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what information he has on the present number of trading standards officers in England and Wales on 30 April and for the same period in 1987 and 1986.

Mr. Butcher: The information is not available for 1988 or in the form requested for the previous years. However, the following table provides figures for the years ending 31 March 1986 and 1987.

Number of qualified trading standards officers in post with local weights and measures authorities

	Year ending 31 March	
	1986	*1987*
England	1,277	1,196·6
Wales	95	97
Total England and Wales	1,372	1,293·6

Notes:
1. The figures have been collated from the annual returns of local weights and measures authorities.
2. Provisional figures have been entered for the small number of local weights and measures authorities for whom information is not available.

Pirate Radio (Birmingham)

Dame Jill Knight: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what steps he intends to take to deal with the increase in pirate radio broadcasting in Birmingham.

Mr. Butcher: During 1987, my Department's radio investigation service (RIS) carried out 19 raids on three unlicensed stations in Birmingham. So far this year, the RIS has raided four Birmingham stations eight times, and interviewed eight people for possible prosecution under the Wireless Telegraphy Act 1949. The RIS will continue to act to remove unlicensed transmitters causing interference to authorised radio services, and we shall be seeking to strengthen the terms of the law concerning the unlicensed use of radio as soon as possible.

Biwater Project

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many British officials *(a)* testified to and *(b)* submitted written evidence to the Awoniyi commission of inquiry into the Biwater project.

Mr. Alan Clark: No British officials testified to the Awoniyi commission of inquiry. Her Majesty's Government submitted written responses to questions put to it by the commission.

Radio Britannia

Mr. Cox: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what action his Department is taking to stop the illegal broadcasting by Radio Britannia in south London.

Mr. Butcher: A recently established unlicensed broadcaster calling itself Radio Britannia on a frequency

of 95·3 MHz was raided by radio investigation service officers on 18 May. One person was interviewed for possible prosecution under the Wireless Telegraphy Act, and the station's equipment was seized.

Anglo-Soviet Trade

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will give the figures for trade between the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union for each year between 1975 and 1987.

Mr. Alan Clark: The information is as follows:

United Kingdom Trade with the Soviet Union 1975-1987

Value in £ millions

	Imports	*Exports*
1975	235·8	211·4
1976	460·1	241·5
1977	545·1	347·1
1978	488·8	422·9
1979	491·6	416·2
1980	422·0	449·2
1981	426·7	408·3
1982	645·4	356·1
1983	729·9	445·4
1984	855·3	734·8
1985	726·5	536·5
1986	702·1	542·5
1987	875·4	491·6

Source: Overseas Trade Statistics.
Note: 1987 figures provisional.

Turkish Yarn (Imports)

Mr. Madden: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster which companies have made representations to him about trading difficulties caused by Turkish yarns imports in the last two years.

Mr. Alan Clark: The following United Kingdom producer companies have made representations to the Department about problems resulting from the import of Turkish acrylic hosiery yarn:

Benson, Turner Ltd.
Courtaulds plc (on behalf of Courtaulds Spinning)
Listers & Co. plc.
Mossley Wool Combing & Spinning Co. Ltd.
Thomas Burnley and Sons Ltd.

In addition, representations have been made on behalf of this sector by the British Textile Confederation and the Confederation of British Wool Textiles.

Representations have also been made by hon. Members on behalf of United Kingdom producers and of United Kingdom users writing in their support.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what action he is taking and what representations he is making to reduce the volume of Turkish yarn imports into the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: Following the renewal, from 1 January 1988, of the informal voluntary restraint arrangement between the European Community and Turkish textile export associations which covers cotton yarn and acrylic hand knitting yarn and was extended to cover acrylic hosiery yarn for the first time, the Department is monitoring the situation closely. In fact the volume of acrylic yarn imports from Turkey has fallen off sharply in the first three months of 1988, compared with the same period last year. The Department's unfair trade unit is assisting the United Kingdom industry in preparing an anti-dumping complaint on Turkish acrylic hosiery yarn.

Mr. Battle: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations he has received from Courtaulds Spinning about the effect of Turkish textile imports on production at the factory at Broad lane, Bramley, Leeds; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: The Department has received a number of representations from representatives of Courtaulds plc, on behalf of Courtaulds Spinning, about the effect of imports of Turkish acrylic hosiery yarn on their business over the past year. Most recently Courtaulds provided detailed information on 4 May concerning the impact of these imports on its activities at Bramley, and at Worksop, in support of an anti-dumping complaint being prepared by the industry.

Mr. Battle: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations listed by date and reference, he has received from Courtaulds plc about the impact of Turkish textile imports in the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: My Department has received a number of representations from Courtaulds plc about the impact of Turkish textile imports over the last 12 months. These have either been made direct to the Department or as part of representations made by the sector as a whole. It is not possible to list them in the form requested.

Civil Servants (Outside Activities)

Mr. John: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many civil servants in his Department are also directors or consultants in *(a)* public liability companies, *(b)* companies limited by guarantee, *(c)* building societies, *(d)* other friendly societies and *(e)* commercial undertakings other than the above; and what rules or instructions govern these activities with particular reference to remuneration.

Mr. Butcher *[holding answer 23 May 1988]:* Members of staff of the Department of Trade and Industry are not permitted in their private capacity to hold directorships (other than in small, private, "family-type" companies); or to engage in consultancy work which has a connection with official duties or is on behalf of a firm or concern which is in a contractual or other special relationship with the Department. Currently no member of staff has permission to hold a directorship or act as consultant in a private capacity. Permission is granted only if the directorship or consultancy does not require attendance during office hours; would not impair the officer's usefulness as a civil servant; and does not conflict with the interests of the Department. If permission is granted no restriction as to remuneration is attached.

As part of the Department's policy of encouraging and maintaining close links with industry and commerce, seven members of staff have been appointed in their official capacity as directors of public liability companies on a part-time basis. No central record is kept of consultancies undertaken by members of staff as part of official duties. Officials are not separately remunerated for directorships or consultancies, but expenses incurred on the business of the private organisations may be reimbursed.

ENVIRONMENT

Sewage Sludge

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has plans to apply restrictions on the applications of sewage sludges with high nitrogen and phosphorus content to arable land; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: No. The Department and the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service have already published advice to water authorities and farmers respectively about the disposal of sewage sludge to land.

Barter Deals

Mr. Heddle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the qualifications and criteria by which barter deals between local authorities and the private sector will be judged to be bona fide transactions.

Mr. Chope: My right hon. Friend announced on 25 April, at columns 103-104, the criteria against which he would consider applications for additional capital allocations for schemes affected by the measures he announced on 9 March. Guidance on how to apply for such allocations will be issued to local authorities shortly.

Property Services Agency

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment which office buildings, whether leasehold or freehold, in central London within the Property Services Agency control in both the civil and military estates are going to be surplus to requirements in the next four years; and what is their floor area.

Mr. Chope: It is the aim of the Property Services Agency to dispose of accommodation, whether freehold or leasehold, when it becomes surplus to Government requirements. A number of leases in central London are due to terminate during the next four years and the landlords may wish to recover possession of the buildings for refurbishment or redevelopment. The PSA will take the opportunities as and when they may arise to rationalise its holdings with the aim of minimising overall costs of accommodation to the Exchequer. Negotiations with landlords are always conducted on a commercial and therefore confidential basis. The future of office buildings in central London on the military estate is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence.

Council House Sales

Mr. Gerald Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to the reason for the delay in the acknowledgement by Southwark LBC of the right-to-buy application of Mrs. E. Stevens of 138A Coplestor Road, Peckham SE15.

Mrs. Roe: According to Southwark council, shortage of staff and high volume of work. The application was accepted on 19 May.

Rate Support Grant

Mr. Squire: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the total rate support grant paid to local authorities in *(a)* the south-east region, *(b)* Greater London, *(c)* outer London and *(d)* inner London, in total, in each year from 1979-80 to 1988-89, estimate.

Mr. Chope: The information is as follows:

Rate support grant

	South east region £ million	*Greater London £ million*	*Outer London[1] £ million*	*Inner London[2] £ million*
1979-80	2,473	1,285	772	513
1980-81	2,856	1,470	894	576
1981-82	2,798	1,363	777	358
1982-83	2,844	1,452	840	375
1983-84	2,749	1,343	825	382
1984-85	[3]2,711	1,316	836	342
1985-86	2,740	1,506	830	396
1986-87	2,841	1,613	[3]850	[3]595
1987-88	2,859	1,700	912	622
1988-89	2,835	1,789	976	647

[1] Outer London boroughs only.
[2] Inner London boroughs (including City of London) only.
[3] London boroughs' grant entitlements changed in 1986-87, following the abolition of the GLC.
Notes:
Rate support grant comprises needs, resources and domestic elements in 1979-80 and 1980-81 and block grant, domestic rate relief grant in the following years.
The figures given are the latest available grant entitlements. These are final for the years 1979-80 to 1984-85 inclusive.

Ealing

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what were the housing investment programme allocations, and what was the total spending power out of capital receipts of the London borough of Ealing in each of the last five years and for the current year; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Roe: HIP allocations (in £ million) have been made as follows:

	£ million
1983-84	16·283
1984-85	15·140
1985-86	12·553
1986-87	11·812
1987-88	10·653
1988-89	[1]10·864

[1] Initial allocation only.

The total spending power out of capital receipts, from figures supplied by Ealing council, was £13·8 million for 1985-86 and £18·2 million for 1986-87. Information for other years is not available.

Local Government Superannuation Scheme

Mr. Bell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will reconsider reducing the age of entry into the local government superannuation scheme from 18 to 16 years; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will abolish the 12-month waiting period for manual workers to enter the local government superannuation scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: No. The rules which debar admission to the scheme to employees under the age of 18 and to manual workers during their first year of service were made many

years ago with the agreement of the local government employers and the unions. There is nothing in the recent social security legislation which requires an occupational pension scheme to admit classes of employees who have previously been excluded.

Mr. Bell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what estimates have been made of workers nearing the end of their service who have opted out of the local government superannuation scheme and, because of the diminished advantage of a personal pension, joined the state earnings-related pension scheme; and how this will affect the Government's plan to reduce the cost of the state earnings-related pension scheme.

Mr. Chope: The regulations under which employees may elect to leave the local government scheme only came into force on 6 April, and it is too early to estimate the numbers and ages of those who will take advantage of the new provisions.

Opencast Mining

Mr. Hardy: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish his reply to the letter he has received from the Ramblers Association dated 13 May on the subject of planning precedents and opencast mining.

Mr. Trippier: An official reply was sent to the Ramblers' Association on 19 May: publication is a matter for the association. I have no objection to its doing so.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Heddle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he proposes to issue a consultation document on local government finance with reference to the use of capital receipts.

Mr. Howard: My right hon. Friend hopes shortly to put forward proposals for a new legislative framework for all aspects of local authority capital expenditure and finance.

"News on Sunday"

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what action he plans to take against those local authorities which invested pension funds in *News on Sunday*; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Hendon, South (Mr. Marshall) on 3 December 1987 at column *642*.

Palace of Westminster (Toilets)

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give the last two occasions when the wall tiles in the ladies' toilets of the Committee Room Corridor were fully cleaned; when the floor was cleaned; and if he will give the same information for each of the ladies' toilets in the Palace of Westminster.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 23 May 1988]:* The wall tiles and floors were cleaned in accordance with the terms of the contract today and yesterday.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Disarmament (Verification)

97. **Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has any information on progress being made on verification procedures in the INF and START talks.

Mr. Mellor: Mr. Shultz and Mr. Shevardnadze announced that they had resolved the outstanding United States-Soviet problems on the INF treaty verification procedures in Geneva on 11-12 May. They also reviewed the progress made in the START negotiations which of course include detailed verification provisions.

Maori Warrior's Head (Sale)

Mr. Robert Hicks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received from the New Zealand Government, the National Maori Council, Survival International, and any other organisations or individuals about the proposed sale of a Maori warrior's head at a London auction house on Friday 20 May; what response he has made and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: We have received representations from Survival International and the Maori Council of New Zealand. These are being studied in the light of the litigation at present under way.

Hong Kong

Mr. Dunnachie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when and how he intends to make representations to the Government of China in relation to the Basic Law of Hong Kong.

Mr. Mellor: The drafting of the Basic Law is the responsibility of the Chinese Government. However, as my right hon. and learned Friend stated in Parliament on 20 January, we will wish to satisfy ourselves that the Basic Law accurately reflects the provisions of the joint declaration. The draft Basic Law has already featured in a number of our exchanges with the Chinese authorities. If there are points which we consider are inconsistent with the joint declaration, we will make our views known to the Chinese authorities clearly and firmly.

Japanese Wartime Signals

Mr. Allason: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if, in the light of the release of Japanese diplomatic intercepts to the national archives in the United States of America and the availability of the same material in Japan, he will authorise the transfer to the Public Records Office of the 1,800 decrypts of signals sent by the wartime Japanese naval attaché in Berlin presently retained by his Department.

Mr. Mellor: No.

St. John's Church, Maseru

Mr. Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will make representations to the Government of Lesotho stressing the historical importance and significance of St. John's

church, Maseru, and the war memorial which it contains; and if he will seek assurances that the church will not be demolished;

(2) if he will seek clarification from the High Commissioner in Lesotho about reported proposals that the historic British church of St. John, Maseru, and the war memorial which it contains, are to be demolished; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: This is a matter for the Anglican Church in Lesotho. I understand that the diocesan and church councillors are considering ways of developing the site, but that they are concerned to preserve the church and its war memorial.

Entry Clearance Applications

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received concerning delays in decisions being taken on entry clearance applications made on the Indian sub-continent because of the need for inquiries to be made in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: We receive a number of representations from hon. and right hon. Members concerning individual cases. Specific statistics about such letters are not kept separately.

Gibraltar (Shootings)

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Gibraltar coroner about the postponement of the inquest into the deaths of three IRA personnel from June until August.

Mr. Mellor: The date of the inquest is a matter for the coroner. He announced in Gibraltar on 23 May that the inquest would not now be held in June, and a further statement giving the new date would be made as soon as possible.

Cash Limits

Sir Peter Blaker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he proposes to make any changes to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office cash limits.

Mr. Eggar: Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary revised and Supplementary Estimates, the cash limit for Class II Vote 1 (overseas representation) will be reduced by £2,861,000 from £434,883,000 to £432,022,000 and the cash limit for Vote 3 (BBC external broadcasting and monitoring) will be increased by the corresponding amount of £2,861,000 from £114,621,000 to £117,482,000. This reflects the rationalisation of the operation of the three FCO broadcast relay stations at Orfordness, Masirah and Cyprus whereby the BBC external services will take over financial responsibility from the FCO for certain United Kingdom-based BBC support staff, technical maintenance and utilities costs. The transfer does not represent increased funding for additional broadcasting activity; nor does it add to the planning total of public expenditure.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Belfast Urban Area Plan Inquiry

Rev. Ian Paisley: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) by what authority permission was granted to representatives of Sinn Fein to make representations in Irish before the public inquiry into the Belfast urban area plan;

(2) what was the cost of providing a translator when representatives of Sinn Fein made representations in Irish before the public inquiry into the Belfast urban area plan on 5 May.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 19 May 1988]:* All arrangements for the public inquiry are the responsibility of the independent Planning Appeals Commission. I understand, however, that the cost of providing a translator was in the region of £25.

SCOTLAND

Departmental Staff

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the number of staff employed in the private offices of his Parliamentary Under-Secretaries in July 1987 and April 1988.

Mr. Rifkind: There were 2·25 whole-time equivalent staff in each of the private offices of the two Parliamentary Under-Secretaries of State on 1 July 1987 and 1 April 1988.

Nurses

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the average increase in weekly pay for nurses in Scotland following the increase approved in April.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The Government's acceptance of the recommendations made by the Nurses' Pay Review Body this year will result in a wide range of pay increases from 4·2 per cent. to 33·6 per cent. with the largest percentage increases going to staff covered by the new clinical grading structure. For individuals with posts in the new clinical grading structure the outcome will be dependent on their placing within it but the total cost of this year's award has been estimated as 14·5 per cent. excluding the cost of London supplements. Examples of annual salaries for nursing staff in direct patient care areas from 1 April 1988 are shown in the table in terms of scale minima and maxima. The salaries payable from 1 April 1987 are shown for comparison, as are the equivalent gross increases in weekly pay.

Grade	*1987 £ year*	*1988 £ year*	*Approximate gross increase £/week*
Student Nurse			
Minimum	4,540	4,825	5·48
Maximum	5,170	5,575	7·79
Nursing Auxiliary			
Minimum	4,565	5,000	8·37
Maximum	5,855	6,300	8·56
Enrolled Nurse			
Minimum	6,250	6,975	13·94
Maximum	7,750	8,300	10·58
Staff Nurse			

Grade	1987 £ year	1988 £ year	Approximate gross increase £/week
Minimum	7,300	8,025	13·94
Maximum	8,600	10,650	39·42
Nursing Sister			
Minimum	9,000	10,200	23·08
Maximum	12,000	13,925	37·02

News Releases

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list in full, the names of all organisations and individuals who are on the Scottish Information Office's distribution list for news releases.

Mr. Rifkind: I shall arrange for a list to be placed in the House of Commons Library as soon as possible.

Cairngorms

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans to alter the national planning guidelines on skiing to allow a road to be built into the northern corries area of the Cairngorms.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans to do so.

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether his Department treats the Cairngorms as qualifying for designation under the World Heritage convention; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. and learned Friend has received a recommendation from the Nature Conservancy Council, supported by the Countryside Commission for Scotland, that the Cairngorms should be inscribed on the World Heritage list. The recommendation is being considered in the light of the criteria for natural sites set by the World Heritage convention. My right hon. and learned Friend will announce his decision in due course. The status of the Cairngorms as a national scenic area, and of large parts of it as national nature reserve or as sites of special scientific interest, already provide protection for the special qualities of the area.

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when the Cairngorms will be notified as a special protection area under the European Community directive on the conservation of wild birds (EC 79/409); and whether the area notified will include the northern corries site of special scientific interest.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I understand that it is the Nature Conservancy Council's intention to put forward detailed advice to the Secretary of State later this year on the classification of the Cairngorms as a special protection area under EC directive 79/409, and that the council may recommend inclusion of the northern corries site of special scientific interest within the area to be classified. I cannot say when the Secretary of State will thereafter reach a decision.

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has as to the number of days that the main Cairngorm chairlift was operating each month during the period April to October, inclusive, for each of the past five years; and if he will list the number of chairlift tickets sold in each month during the last five years.

Mr. Lang: These are operational and commercial matters concerning the Cairngorm Chairlift Company which is a private enterprise.

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has as to what guidance is given to visitors using the Cairngorm chairlifts in order to reduce damage inflicted upon sensitive plants and wild animals in the Cairngorms.

Mr. Lang: The chairlifts are operated by the Cairngorm Chairlift company which is a private enterprise. The hon. Member may wish to note, however, that the Highlands and Islands Development Board as owner of the Cairngorm Estate has recently published a management plan, which sets out its policies for managing the estate. A copy has been placed in the House of Commons Library.

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give details of what steps have been taken, or are planned, by the chairlift operators as landowners of the Cairngorm skiing grounds to reduce damage by visitors to sensitive plants and wild animals found on the Cairngorm plateau; and if he will specify how much has been spent in these matters in each of the past five years.

Mr. Lang: The skiing area is leased to the Cairngorm Chairlift Co. Ltd. by the Highlands and Islands Development Board. The board and the company have no direct responsibility for conservation of the Cairngorm plateau. This is owned privately and, as a national nature reserve, is the subject of a management agreement with the Nature Conservancy Council.

East Kilbride (Housing)

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what consultations have taken place between officials of the East Kilbride development corporation and the private sector on the sale of all or any part of the public sector housing stock under the management of the development corporation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: No such consultations have taken place.

Rating Reform

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a further statement on the application of the poll tax to monastic communities.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend has given careful consideration to the position of members of religious orders under the community charge system and has decided that there should be an exemption from the personal community charge for members of religious communities the principal occupation of which is prayer, contemplation, the relief of suffering, education or such other activities as may be prescribed. The exemption will be limited to monks and nuns who are dependent on the community for their material needs and who have no income or capital of their own. Income from a pension in respect of a former employment will however be disregarded. Appropriate amendments to the Local Government Finance Bill will be brought forward in due course.

Quality Street Housing Association

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the discussions taking place between officials of Glenrothes development corporation and Quality Street housing association.

Mr. Lang: The Scottish new town development corporations regularly meet representatives of private sector companies to discuss proposals for the further development of the towns. The present discussions between Quality Street and Glenrothes development corporation represent but one example of that continuing dialogue. The present discussions are at a very preliminary stage. Should definite proposals be agreed between the parties it will then be a matter for the development corporation to approach my Department in the usual manner to seek the Secretary of State's consent. Meantime, I welcome the prospective participation of Quality Street in Glenrothes and hope that satisfactory proposals can be developed which will add to the housing options available to residents in the town.

New Town Development Corporations

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will detail the regulations or advice given to new town development corporations on the timing and disclosure of information to board members or meetings of development corporations or sub-committee.

Mr. Lang: These matters are determined by the boards of the development corporations on the advice of the appropriate chief executive—managing director.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give details of regulations or advice given to new town development corporations on the disclosure of information to press and public.

Mr. Lang: It is for each development corporation to determine whether or not to open board meetings to the press and public. Glenrothes development corporation held its first open board meeting in November 1986, and Livingston development corporation in summer 1987.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give details of the regulations or advice given to new town development corporations on the disclosure of information to his Department.

Mr. Lang: New town development corporations disclose information to my Department on request.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the present members of new town development corporation boards, the nominating organisation and the date of appointment and the date of termination of appointment of each member.

Mr. Lang: This information is available in the annual report of each of the Scottish new town development corporations, copies of which are available in the Library.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give details of the official guidance available to new town development corporations involved in disposing of public sector housing or development land.

Mr. Lang: The terms on which new town development corporations may dispose of land are detailed in section 18(5) of the New Towns (Scotland) Act 1968. That section provides that, except with the consent of the Secretary of State, development corporations shall not dispose of land otherwise than on the best terms that can reasonably be obtained. The same statutory prescription of the terms governing disposal also applies to public sector housing, since "land" in Scots law includes buildings situated upon that land.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the total amount of housing land available and owned by development corporations in each of Scotland's new towns.

Mr. Lang: As part of the review announced by the Secretary of State for Scotland on 13 May 1988, *Official Report*, column *280*, an exercise is presently under way to establish precisely the information sought. Once that exercise is concluded, I shall write to the hon. Member with the information he requests.

Ro-Ro Ferries

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make financial provisions to assist the operators of roll-on/roll-off ferries which serve the Scottish islands to either replace or adapt those vessels which do not comply with new IMO stability standards.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: International Maritime Organisation stability standards for new vessels will not be considered for adoption until later this year. Until that time it will not be possible to assess the implications for ferry operators.

New Towns (Housing)

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if any discussions have taken place between Ministers or officials and representatives of Glenrothes development corporation on the sale of housing assets in the new town.

Mr. Lang: Discussions have taken place on this subject on a number of occasions in recent years between my officials and officers of Glenrothes development corporation. The developments at Alexander road, Huntly drive and Durris drive arise directly from those discussions. Furthermore, Glenrothes development corporation's sales of housing to sitting tenants have proved very successful and the 5,000th such sale is expected to take place in the very near future.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met with Scottish local authorities with new towns to discuss the future of public sector housing in Scotland's five new towns.

Mr. Lang: The last such meeting took place on 3 October 1986. I am due to meet SLANT (Scottish Local Authorities with New Towns) in London in early June.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he or any of his officials have met Kirkcaldy district council in its current year to discuss the future of the public sector housing stock in Glenrothes new town.

Mr. Lang: No.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if any discussions have taken place between

Ministers or officials and representatives of Quality Street housing association on the sale of housing assets in Glenrothes new town.

Mr. Lang: No.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if any discussions have taken place between either Ministers or officials of the Scottish Office and Quality Street housing association on the sale of new town housing assets in Scotland.

Mr. Lang: No.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make it his policy to ensure that Scottish new towns do not enter into agreements to sell public housing assets to organisations other than individual tenants in advance of the coming into force of the Housing (Scotland) Bill.

Mr. Lang: No. Scottish new town development corporations have over the last three years successfully concluded agreements whereby 608 houses have been sold to the private sector for refurbishment and subsequent sale to new town residents. Of these, 99 houses were in Glenrothes in the Alexander road, Huntly drive and Durris drive areas. The Government's proposals in clause 67 of the Housing (Scotland) Bill are designed to remove the limitations in section 18 of the New Towns (Scotland) Act 1968, whereby disposals by a development corporation may be solely for the laying out or development of the new town. Given the maturity of the Scottish new towns, the Government concluded that this constraint was both dated and unnecessary.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the total number of public sector houses and flats in each of Scotland's new towns.

Mr. Lang: The information is available at page 36 of the "Scottish Housing Statistics 1986", published in 1987, copies of which are available in the Library, although separate information on houses and flats is not available centrally.

House Sales

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give details of district council or new town corporation sales of public sector housing in stock approved by him in each year from 1983 to 1987.

Mr. Lang: The information is contained in SDD statistical bulletin, HSIU No. 34—Q4(87), table 5, a copy of which was sent to all Scottish Members in April 1988.

Local Authorities (Compensation)

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what arrangements he makes to compensate local authorities for the costs of reinstatement grants or repurchasing of houses under part XIV of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Under section 296 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, the Secretary of State may contribute to local authorities' expenditure in giving assistance under the Act as follows:

Reinstatement: 90 per cent. of the annual loan charges on the amount of the grant.

Repurchase: 75 per cent. of the loan charges on the relevant amount where the dwelling was originally sold by the authority or a predecessor; or 100 per cent. where it was sold by another public sector body.

(The relevant amount is the price paid by the authority plus the seller's reasonable legal and other expenses, less the defective value of the house).

Defective Housing

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will estimate how many houses categorised as defective under part XIV of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 remain in the ownership of *(a)* each local housing authority, *(b)* each new town development corporation or *(c)* the Scottish Special Housing Association.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information requested, based on returns by the bodies concerned to the Scottish Development Department, is set out in the table. No houses of the type described are owned by any of the new town development corporations or by those local authorities not entered in the table.

Houses designated as defective under Part XIV of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987

Public sector authority	*Number of houses owned*
Ettrick and Lauderdale	48
Roxburgh	50
Tweeddale	6
Clackmannan	81
Falkirk	599
Stirling	313
Nithsdale	42
Stewartry	40
Wigtown	74
Dunfermline	274
Kirkcaldy	283
North East Fife	63
Aberdeen	292
Banff and Buchan	87
Kincardine and Deeside	68
Moray	86
Inverness	129
Lochaber	167
East Lothian	208
Edinburgh	920
Midlothian	263
West Lothian	217
Argyll and Bute	156
Bearsden and Milngavie	89
Clydebank	479
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	172
Cumnock and Doon Valley	297
Cunninghame	363
Dumbarton	813
Glasgow	2,496
Hamilton	522
Inverclyde	120
Kilmarnock and Loudoun	79
Kyle and Carrick	49
Monklands	254
Motherwell	606
Renfrew	146
Strathkelvin	103
Angus	43
Dundee	1,146
Perth and Kinross	230
Western Isles	1
SSHA	2,147

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many houses which are categorised as

defective under part XIV of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 have been purchased by sitting tenants since the passage of the Housing (Scotland) Act; and how many have subsequently been *(a)* repurchased by the land authority or *(b)* reinstated with grant aid.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Assistance under the Housing Defects Act 1984, now consolidated as part XIV of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, is generally available only to those persons who bought their houses before the designated cut-off date of 26 April 1984. No information is therefore held centrally on defective houses purchased by sitting tenants after that date or of any subsequent resale to the authority.

Council House Sales

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has on the typical cost to a local housing authority of *(a)* the discount on the sale of a house to a tenant who qualifies for the maximum discount, *(b)* the cost of repurchasing the house at 95 per cent. defect-free value under part XIV of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 and *(c)* reinstating the house to the required structural standard.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The discount element of a sale under the right to buy legislation does not involve a housing authority in any cost, whilst the sale generates receipts which would not otherwise be realised.

The average cost of repurchasing a house designated as defective under the provisions of part XIV of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, at 95 per cent. of the defect-free value, is £21,000. During the course of each financial year, housing authorities are issued with special supplementary capital allocations to cover such liabilities.

In Scotland, no reinstatements have yet been completed, so typical costs for this work cannot be determined.

Fife Health Board

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the decision of Fife health board to appoint Colonel Francis Gibb to the position of general manager of Fife health board; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: No. The appointment of a general manager is a matter for Fife health board.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he or his officials have met the chairman of Fife health board to discuss the appointment of Colonel Francis Gibb to the post of general manager.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: No. In the usual way the short list of candidates for the post was cleared in advance with my right hon. and learned Friend.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the costs incurred by Fife health board in appointing a firm of consultants to find suitable applicants for the post of general manager.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: No. The costs incurred by Fife health board are a matter for the board.

Health Boards (Managers)

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the names, together with details of previous occupations, of all health board general managers in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information requested is as follows:—

Health Board	*General Manager*	*Previous Occupation*
Argyll and Clyde	Mr. I. C. Smith	Health Service Treasurer
Ayrshire and Arran	Mr. J. M. Eckford	Health Service Secretary
Borders	Mr. D. A. Peters	Health Service Secretary
Dumfries and Galloway	Mr. M. D. Cook	Health Service Treasurer
Forth Valley	Mr. A. R. Robertson	Health Service Secretary
Grampian	Mr. H. Fullerton	Director, Wiggins Teape
Greater Glasgow	Mr. L. Peterken	Controller of Operational Services, Greater London Council
Highland	Mr. R. R. W. Stewart	Health Service Secretary
Lanarkshire	Mr. F. Clark	Health Service Secretary
Lothian	Mr. W. J. Tayler	Health Service Administrator
Tayside	Dr. R. C. Graham	Chief Administrative Medical Officer
Orkney	Dr. J. Cromarty	Chief Administrative Medical Officer
Shetland	Mr. D. C. March	Health Service Secretary
Western Isles	Mr. J. Glover	Health Service Secretary

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what advice is given to health boards on the appointment of general managers; and what regulations apply to such appointments.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Advice to health boards on the appointments of general managers is contained in NHS circular 1985 (GEN)4 issued on 8 March 1985. A copy of the circular is in the Library of the House. This advice was issued for the initial appointments and central advertising is not undertaken for subsequent appointments. There are no statutory regulations applying to these appointments.

Drug Tariff

Mr. Bill Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans to add to the drug tariff in Scotland any health care products that are currently available only through the hospital or community health services.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: In the White Paper "Promoting Better Health" published on 25 November 1987, the Government announced that as soon as the necessary arrangements could be made they would make both blood glucose testing strips for diabetics and a new range of wound care products available on prescription. I am pleased to be able to announce that from 1 June 1988 that blood glucose testing strips together with single use lancets will be available on prescription in Scotland; and that

from 1 July 1988 general practitioners in Scotland will be able to prescribe two of the new wound care products, namely Granuflex and Sorbsan dressings.

Both the diabetic test equipment and the new types of wound care products are currently available through the hospital and community health services. But by making them available through family doctor prescription, a better and more convenient service to patients will be provided. In the case of diabetic testing materials, the wider availability will make a valuable contribution to enabling diabetics to treat and monitor their condition independently in their own homes. The new wound care products are more comfortable for patients than traditional dressings and make for quicker healing.

Tayside Region (Assistance)

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the level of *(a)* regional selective assistance *(b)* regional development grant, *(c)* European Community loans paid through the European Investment Bank, *(d)* national selective assistance and *(e)* the Government's loan guarantee scheme which is paid to the Tayside region; and what proportion this represents of the respective totals for *(a)* Scotland and *(b)* the United Kingdom as a whole.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 25 April 1988]:* Comprehensive information in the precise form requested is not available. Available information for 1986-87 and 1987-88 is set out in the table:

	Tayside payments		*Tayside as percentage of Scottish total*		*Tayside as percentage of Great Britain total*	
	1986-87 £ million	*1987-88 £ million*	*1986-87 Per cent.*	*1987-88 Per cent.*	*1986-87 Per cent.*	*1987-88 Per cent.*
Regional selective assistance	2·9	2·0	8·3	5·3	2·3	1·4
Regional development grant I[1]	5·1	0·6	4·6	1·8	1·6	0·6
Regional development grant II	3·1	3·8	8·2	8·7	2·6	2·6
National selective assistance	Nil	Nil	0	0	0	0

	Tayside loans disbursed		*Tayside as percentage of Scottish total*		*Tayside as percentage of United Kingdom total*	
	1986-87 £ million	*1987-88 £ million*	*1986-87 Per cent.*	*1987-88 Per cent.*	*1986-87 Per cent.*	*1987-88 Per cent.*
European investment bank loans[2]	2·2	—	16·0	—	3·3	—
Loan guarantee scheme	0·1	0·4	3·4	11·4	0·3	0·8

[1] Changes to the Regional development grant scheme were introduced in 1984. For the earlier scheme RDG I, data refers to payments over £25,000 as comprehensive figures are not available on a local basis.

[2] Information is available only for loans for which cover was provided under the exchange risk guarantee scheme. The scheme has not applied to European Investment Bank loans since 18 July 1985 and figures for 1986-87 relate to offers made before that date.

Chernobyl (Compensation)

Mr. Martlew: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many applications have been received for a review of their case from farmers in Scotland claiming to have suffered losses as a result of the Chernobyl disaster but who had not been compensated under the Government's scheme; if he will give the dates between which they were made; if each such application was considered individually; on what date a decision was taken on them; how many of them he has rejected; and if he will make a statement on the general pattern of the defects in the applications which led to their rejection.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 19 May 1988]:* A total of some £1·5 million has been paid to sheep farmers in Scotland since 1986 to compensate them from the effects of the Chernobyl disaster. The compensation arrangements have in general been welcomed by the National Farmers Union of Scotland, who have not found it necessary to submit any cases for review on the lines adopted by their counterparts in England and Wales. No cases are at present under review in Scotland, but two farming businesses have made, and are continuing to make, representations to the effect that they have not been compensated for losses which they claim to have suffered as a result of restrictions imposed in the aftermath of the Chernobyl incident.

EMPLOYMENT

Departmental Advertising

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how much money has been spent by his Department on television advertising in each of the past three years.

Mr. Cope: The total amount of money spent by this Department on television advertising in 1985, 1986 and 1987 was as follows:

Department of Employment

	£ million
1985-86	Nil
1986-87	9·3
1987-88	[1]3·7

[1] Includes Employment Service expenditure.

Benefits

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many women with dependants have been excluded from eligibility for benefit under the new claims experiment.

Mr. Lee: The experiment involved using more senior staff to interview newly unemployed people. Its aim was to see whether it was possible to provide more advice on both benefit procedures and employment opportunities at the initial point of contact with an unemployed person.

The entitlement rules for benefit remained unchanged during the experiment. Information was not collected on the number of women with dependants who were disallowed benefit during the experiment.

Labour Statistics

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the current trends in unemployment in the United Kingdom regions.

Mr. Lee: Unemployment has fallen in all regions of the United Kingdom over the last 12 months. The largest falls in the unemployment rate have been in the west midlands, north-west and the north.

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many job vacancies were registered at jobcentres in the city of Durham, at the most recent available date; what this figure represented as a percentage of registered unemployed; and what the comparable percentage is for the United Kingdom.

Mr. Lee: The table shows the number of unfilled vacancies at jobcentres and the number of unemployed claimants for the city of Durham and the United Kingdom in April 1988. It is not meaningful to calculate the ratio of unfilled vacancies at jobcentres to unemployed claimants, since only about a third of all vacancies in the economy are notified to jobcentres.

	Unadjusted	
	Unfilled vacancies	*Unemployed claimants*
City of Durham	447	3,839
United Kingdom	251,300	2,535,989

Tourism

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many overseas visitors visited regions other than London during the last period for which full figures are available.

Mr. Lee: It is estimated that, in 1986, overseas residents made approximately 7·9 million visits to the United Kingdom that included at least one night spent in a region outside London, which represents 57 per cent. of the total number of visits made that year. An equivalent estimate for 1987 will be available later this year.

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the number of schemes in receipt of funds administered under section 4 of the Development of Tourism Act 1969, during the years 1985, 1986 and 1987.

Mr. Lee: Figures are not available in the form requested. The numbers of projects in England to which section 4 assistance was offered were:

	Year	*Projects*
Projects with assistance totalling £11·5 million	1985-86	542
Projects with assistance totalling £13·9 million	1986-87	630
Projects with assistance totalling £14·8 million	1987-88	609

Economic League

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what assessment he has made of the implications for industrial relations of the use by employers of the services of the Economic League.

Mr. Nicholls: I have made no such assessment.

Benefit Fraud (Glasgow)

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the total cost of the operation which led to the identification of Glasgow taxi drivers who were illegally claiming benefit.

Mr. Lee: The total cost to my Department for the Glasgow taxi drivers exercise was £4,328.

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what means of electronic surveillance was used in Glasgow as part of the operation mounted to detect taxi drivers illegally claiming benefits.

Mr. Lee: Electronic surveillance is not used by my Department.

Mines and Quarries Act 1954

Mr. Illsley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has consulted British Coal on the replacement of the Mines and Quarries Act 1954; and whether these consultations will be published.

Mr. Nicholls: The Health and Safety Commission and Executive have consulted British Coal on the renewal of mines and quarries legislation. This forms part of the extensive consultation programme which involves all interested parties within the mining and quarrying industries.

Responses to consultations are not published. The views of all consultees are taken into account both when proposed regulations and codes of practice are drafted and also by the commission when it considers proposals for new legislation.

Cash Limits

Mr. Dickens: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether any changes will be made to his Department's cash limits or running cost limits for 1988-89.

Mr. Fowler: Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary revised and summer Supplementary Estimates, the following changes will be made:

The cash limit for class VII, vote 1 (employment programmes) will be reduced by £327,452,000 from £1,621,069,000 to £1,293,617,000. The reduction reflects the transfer of provision to class VII, vote 5 (Manpower Services Commission).

The cash limit on class VII, vote 2 (Department of Employment: administration) will be reduced by £702,000 from £263,872,000 to £263,170,000. This is the net effect of the reduction of administrative costs paid to the Manpower Services Commission in respect of the community programme and further adjustment of the provisional split of capital and running costs between the Department of Employment (DE) and the Manpower

Services Commission (MSC) agreed at the time of the 1988-89 main Supply Estimates in respect of certain employment and enterprise functions transferred from MSC to DE on 26 October 1987.

The cash limit for class VII, vote 5 (MSC) will be increased by £281,927,000 from £1,656,251,000 to £1,938,178,000 in order to introduce the employment training programme that I announced on 16 February 1988 at column 825. The increase is the net effect of transfers from class VII, votes 1 and 2, offset by appropriations in aid totalling £46,227,000 from the Industry Department for Scotland (class XVII, vote 4) and the Welsh Office (class XVI, vote 4) towards expenditure on employment training.

The cash limit for class XVI, vote 4 (MSC Scotland) will be increased by £23,719,000 from £186,363,000 to £210,082,000 to meet the proportion of the MSC increases described above which can be specifically identified as applicable to Scotland.

The cash limit for class XVII, vote 4 (MSC Wales) will be increased by £22,508,000 from £120,213,000 to £142,721,000 to meet the proportion of the MSC increases described above which can be specifically identified as applicable to Wales.

Finally, there is a token £1,000 cash limit on the new vote for the sale of professional and executive recruitment (PER), class VII, vote 6.

Consequently the cash limits total for the Department of Employment group as a whole is reduced by £46,226,000 from £3,654,953,000 to £3,608,727,000.

The Department of Employment's running costs limit will be increased by £6,000 from £611,290,000 to £611,296,000. This is the net effect of the transfer back to DE from the MSC of £1,397,000 running costs in respect of the transfer of certain employment and enterprise functions in October 1987 and the reclassification of PER seconded staff salaries out of running costs.

The transfer of running costs to DE has resulted in the MSC's running costs limit being reduced by £1,397,000 from £225,055,000 to £223,658,000.

Consequently the running costs total for the Department of Employment group as a whole is reduced by £1,391,000 from £945,916,000 to £944,525,000.

"Action for Jobs"

Mr. Blair: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the total expenditure by the Central Office of Information on the Government's "Action for Jobs" programme for each month since its inception to the present day, distinguishing television advertising from other expenditure.

Mr. Cope *[holding answer 18 May 1988]:* The information requested is not available. Total expenditure by the Central Office of Information on the Government's "Action for Jobs" programme is as follows:

	£ million
1986-87	
Television advertising	9·3
Total expenditure	12
1987-88	
Television advertising	2·2
Total expenditure	5

Government Campaigns

Mr. Blair: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will place in the Library copies of all leaflets and brochures from the "Action for Jobs" and "Action for Cities" campaigns.

Mr. Cope *[holding answer 18 May 1988]:* I have arranged for the following leaflets and brochures to be placed in the Library:

— "Action For Jobs" booklet PL843.
— "Action for Jobs" booklet (ethnic language versions) PL782 Hindi, Vietnamese, Urdu, Gujerati, Bengali, Punjabi, Cantonese.
— "Action for Cities" brochure.
— "Action for Cities Guide for Action."

Mr. Blair: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list, giving the dates of their employment, those advertising firms employed by the Central Office of Information on the "Action for Jobs" and "Action for Cities" campaigns.

Mr. Cope *[holding answer 18 May 1988]:* Davidson Pearce Ltd. was appointed by the Central Office of Information in April 1986 to the "Action for Jobs" campaign.

The "Action for Cities" campaign does not employ an advertising agency. The "Action for Cities" breakfast presentations are organised by the Commercial Presentations Group, a conference and presentations company which was appointed directly by the Department of Trade and Industry in January 1988.

Turkish Yarn (Imports)

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is his latest estimate of the total number of workers who have been *(a)* put on short-time working and *(b)* declared redundant as a result of Turkish yarn imports; and if he will name the companies involved.

Mr. Alan Clark: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested on short-time working and redundancies is not available from official sources, as there is no reliable way of relating redundancies to imports from a particular country—or indeed to imports in general. The acrylic yarn sector has also been affected by a fall in demand for knitwear.

THE ARTS

Museums, Galleries and Theatres

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Minister for the Arts what plans are currently under consideration for the establishment of new museums, galleries and theatres; and where these will be located.

Mr. Luce: I know that the trustees of the national nuseums and galleries which I sponsor are considering a number of exciting new developments. For example, the Victoria and Albert museum is investigating the possibility of displaying part of its Indian collection at Bradford; the Imperial War museum has plans to establish an American air museum in a new building at Duxford airfield; and the Science museum is looking at a number of possible sites for a new national museum of food and farming. The Tate gallery is about to open the Tate galiery in Liverpool, and

the National Portrait gallery is opening a new outstation at Bodelwyddan castle in association with Clwyd county council.

I am aware of some proposals to establish new theatres, such as the plan to set up a theatre in Spitalfields to take productions from the Royal exchange, Manchester; and the moving of the Empire, York, to a new building. The trend for new development in these areas is most encouraging.

Galleries and Museums (Funding)

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Minister for the Arts what is the proportion of public funds *(a)* given and *(b)* loaned to galleries and museums in England and Wales during each year since 1983.

Mr. Luce: The expenditure plans of the Office of Arts and Libraries are published every January in the public expenditure White Paper. The principal channels of funding to museums and galleries are:

(i) as grants or grants-in-aid to the national museums and galleries and other directly funded museums in England;

(ii) as grant-in-aid to the Museums and Galleries Commission which then makes grants to the English area museum councils and to non-national museums and galleries throughout the United Kingdom; and

(iii) as rate support grant to English local authorities.

No loans are made from the arts and libraries expenditure programme.

CIVIL SERVICE

Public Bodies

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what percentage of those appointed to national governmental public bodies each year since 1985 are women.

Mr. Luce: Figures are as follows, in each case referring to the percentage of appointments on 1 April that year:

	Per cent.
1985	18
1986	19
1987	19

The figure for 1988 will be published in "Public Bodies" later this year.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Building Societies

Mr. Holland: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the share, respectively, of the top three, top six and top 10 United Kingdom building societies as a percentage of total share of deposits and loans of all building societies in 1985 and 1986.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 23 May 1988]:* For 1985 the proportion of total shares, deposits and loans of building societies held by the largest three, largest six and largest 10 societies was 45, 62 and 77 per cent. respectively. For 1986 the figures were 46, 62 and 77 per cent. respectively.

Channel Tunnel (Customs Facilities)

Mr. Adley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on progress on discussions for on-train customs facilities to be provided for Channel tunnel passengers to London.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 23 May 1988]:* I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Dulwich (Mr. Bowden) on 18 March at column *690*.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Sheepmeat (Testing)

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many days elapsed between the taking of sheepmeat samples under the Food and Environment Protection Act 1986 and the results of the tests being available.

Mr. Donald Thompson: There is no standard time between samples being taken and test results being available. Existing arrangements permit most samples to be turned around within 24 hours where this is necessary.

Sewage Sludge

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what action he intends to take to reduce the contamination of sewage sludge by persistent or toxic substances, which accumulate in living organisms.

Mr. Gummer: The presence of such contaminants in sewage sludge disposed of at sea is permitted in only trace quantities to avoid harm to the marine environment. Extraction of such trace quantities is not practicable. Further reduction in contaminant levels must therefore be achieved by water authorities through their controls on trade discharges to sewers, in the context of Government policy to bring about a substantial reduction in the inputs of dangerous substances to rivers and estuaries by 1995.

Industrial Waste

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he plans to prohibit the dumping of industrial waste into the Irish sea.

Mr. Gummer: There is no dumping at present in the Irish sea of either solid or liquid industrial waste, under the licensing controls of part II of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985.

I would examine very rigorously any new application for such dumping.

The Ministry is controlling closely the dumping of sewage sludge and dredged spoil which are also licensed under the Act.

Slimming Products

Mrs. Golding: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what controls there are over foods which claim to be slimming products.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The Food Labelling Regulations 1984 set out the conditions that must be met by any food that claims it is an aid to slimming. These

include requirements for a nutrition statement on the label and that the food must be capable of contributing to weight control or weight reduction. The requirements also extend to the advertising of such products.

Beef

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what inspections take place of beef landed at United Kingdom ports from the Republic of Ireland for onward shipment to the continent; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Animal and public health checks on beef landed at United Kingdom ports from the Republic of Ireland are the same whether the beef is intended for consumption in the United Kingdom or for onward shipment to the continent. Two types of checks are involved: checking of the necessary health certificates against the import documentation is carried out by Customs officers in all cases and physical checking of the meat is carried out on sample consignments by the port health authorities.

Beef entering the United Kingdom for onward shipping to the continent is not eligible for payments of beef variable premium, hence no inspections for this purpose are carried out.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what action is taken to ensure that beef landed at United Kingdom ports from the Republic of Ireland for onward shipment to the continent is not subsequently sold in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Goods in transit are subject to control by the country of export. The authorities in that country must be furnished with proof that the goods have reached their intended destination and are not diverted elsewhere. Moreover, beef sent from the Republic of Ireland to the United Kingdom in transit would not benefit from the United Kingdom mca or the beef variable premium. These taken together contribute a significant disincentive to diversion.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received about the labelling of imported beef which has been produced with the aid of hormones; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: No such representations have been received.

Irradiated Foodstuffs

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and food what recent representations he has received about the case for requiring the labelling of irradiated foodstuffs so as to indicate that they have been irradiated once the ban on irradiation has been lifted; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Many of the people who have written to me about food irradiation express the view that labelling should be required to make it clear when this process has been used. In my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Gloucestershire, West (Mr. Marland) on 24 March, at column *207*, I made it clear that appropriate labelling provisions are among the controls we are examining.

Contamination

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he intends to complete the revision of his Ministry's contingency plans for dealing with emergency contamination and agriculture; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I have nothing to add to the reply I gave to the hon. Member on 9 February at column *158*.

Cod

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will give a table of all cod catch records for all vessels in the Lowestoft fleet for each of the last five years.

Mr. Gummer *[holding answer 12 May 1988]:* Landings of cod by the Lowestoft fleet are not readily available for the previous five-year period, due in part to changes in the fleet over this period and landings by under 40 ft vessels not being individually recorded prior to 1985. Landings of cod into Lowestoft by British vessels for the previous five years together with landings by the Lowestoft fleet during 1987 are however available. These are as follows with figures given in tonnes landed weigh:

Cod landings at Lowestoft by British vessels

	Tonnes landed weight	*Value (£ thousands)*
1983	3,321	2,093
1984	2,382	1,809
1985	1,638	1,422
1986	1,565	1,540
1987	2,122	2,092

Cod landed by vessels in Lowestoft as at end 1987

Tonnes landed weight	*Value (£ thousands)*
1973	1,929

Plant Testing and Seed Certification

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what proportion of the time of his Department's review team which investigated plant variety testing and seed certification systems in the United Kingdom was spent in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, respectively.

Mr. Donald Thompson *[holding answer 23 May 1988]:* Members of the review team made three visits to Scotland, one visit to Wales and one visit to Northern Ireland. In England the team held meetings with various organisations, some of which represented interests for the United Kingdom as a whole. In addition, the team liaised closely with officials in all the Agriculture Departments and with members of the United Kingdom Seeds Executive.

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will name the officials of his Department who conducted the review of plant variety testing and seed certification systems in the United Kingdom, giving any relevant information about their qualifications and experience, and making particular reference to any experience connected to Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.

Mr. Donald Thompson *[holding answer 23 May 1988]:* The names of the four officials who conducted the review are shown in the report on "The Plant Variety Testing and Seed Certification Systems in the United Kingdom." A copy of the report is available in the Library of the House. The team of officials was headed by the controller of plant variety rights for the United Kingdom who is also a member of the United Kingdom Seeds Executive. The team included the chairman of two senior interdepartmental committees with responsibilities for plant variety testing and seed certification matters in the United Kingdom. It is not Government policy to disclose personal details of the qualifications and experience of individual officials.

Civil Servants (Outside Activities)

Mr. John: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many civil servants in his Department are also directors or consultants in *(a)* public liability companies, *(b)* companies limited by guarantee, *(c)* building societies, *(d)* other friendly societies and *(e)* commercial undertakings other than the above; and what rules or instructions govern these activities with particular reference to remuneration.

Mr. Donald Thompson *[holding answer 23 May 1988]:* As part of a programme for improving awareness of the needs of business, senior officials are from time to time appointed as non-executive directors of commercial companies. At present two officials hold such appointments, for which they receive no remuneration.

Where staff have private business interests of the sort referred to, they are required to seek approval if there is any possibility of conflict with the work of the Department. There are no rules about pay from private business interests.

Sheep Variable Premium

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when the sheep variable premium for lowland farmers is likely to be paid.

Mr. Donald Thompson *[holding answer 23 May 1988]:* An announcement on the ewe premium rate on eligible ewes for 1987 was made by the Department on 18 May, following its determination and publication by the European Commission. The final premium will be £6·238 per ewe for lowland producers. LFA producers received an advance of £2·80 per ewe last November and will be paid a balance of £3·438. All payments will be made as soon as possible. Variable premium payments on lambs of certifiable quality have been made throughout the marketing year in the usual way.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Dispensing

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what representations he has received from dispensing doctors about the costs of their service compared with the same service provided by dispensing chemists;

(2) whether he will make a statement about the comparative prices per script dispensed by *(a)* dispensing doctors and *(b)* dispensing chemists.

Mr. Newton: We have received a few representations from dispensing doctor interests to the effect that dispensing by doctors is less expensive than dispensing by pharmacists. However, it is not possible to make such a comparison because the complex remuneration arrangements for general medical practitioners do not permit the precise separation of dispensing from non-dispensing costs. Thus dispensing fees to dispensing doctors do not reflect all their related costs, as they do with pharmacists, since some of the expenses of the former are directly and separately reimbursed in respect of expenditure on staff and premises. In 1986-87 the cost per prescription (excluding VAT) of drugs and appliances dispensed by doctors and by pharmacists was £3·81 and £3·98 respectively.

Health Authorities (Costs)

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list in the *Official Report*, for St. Helens and Knowsley, Southport and Formby, South Sefton, Wandsworth, Islington, Central Manchester and Liverpool health authorities *(a)* the percentage of Health Service costs devoted to the administration of the service, *(b)* child mortality rates at birth and within a month of birth, *(c)* the number of registered nurses in special care baby units per 100 low birthweight births, *(d)* the district nurse contact rate for the over 65s, *(e)* the number of community mental and physical handicap nurses employed per resident in each authority, *(f)* the day-patient attendance rate for the over 65s and *(g)* the extent of meals-on-wheels provision.

Mr. Newton: Such information as is available centrally is in the tables. The hon. Member may wish to contact the health authority chairmen concerned for the other details he requires.

(a) Expenditure on headquarters administration as a proportion of total revenue expenditure

	Per cent.
St. Helens and Knowsley	3·44
Southport and Formby	4·68
South Sefton	3·27
Wandsworth	2·38
Islington	3·17
Central Manchester	2·67
Liverpool	2·92

Notes:

1. Expenditure on headquarters administration includes all current expenditure on the pay and pay related costs of staff of all disciplines (including general managers) employed at headquarters levels and their office costs and overheads. It excludes the cost of clerical and secretarial support staff employed in departments at hospital and unit levels: such costs are regarded as operational.
2. Information derived from the 1986-87 annual accounts (the latest available) of the health authorities concerned.

(b) Child mortality rates

The mortality rates quoted have slightly different criteria. The still birth rate is shown per 1,000 live and still births, whereas the neonatal (deaths in the first 28 days of life) rate is deaths per 1,000 live births. These rates have been calculated from all births ie including low weight births. The latest available data are for 1986.

Rates per 1,000 births

	Still births per 1,000 live and still births	*All neonatal deaths per 1,000 live births*
St. Helens and Knowsley	5·3	4·5
Southport and Formby	4·2	[1]9·3
South Sefton	4·9	4·9
Wandsworth	4·4	4·1
Islington	6·8	5·2
Central Manchester	9·4	6·3
Liverpool	6·1	5·0

Source: OPCS Monitor DH3 87/4

[1] In Southport and Formby, where the birthrate is low, the comparatively high rate of neonatal deaths represents only 11 actual deaths in 1986.

(c) The number of registered nurses and midwives in special care baby units (at 30 September 1986)

	Whole-time equivalent per 100 low birthweight births[1]
St. Helens and Knowsley	2·2
Southport and Formby	8·0
South Sefton	3·2
Wandsworth	7·5
Islington	10·8
Central Manchester	26·6
Liverpool	3·9

[1] Calculated on unrounded whole-time equivalent staff in post and number of births.

Sources: DHSS Annual Census of National Health Service Non-Medical Manpower. Office of Population Censuses and Surveys.

(d) The district nurse contact rate for the over 65s (1986)

	Persons 65 and over treated by district nurses	*Percentage of population aged 65 and over treated by district nurses*
St. Helens and Knowsley	8,336	18·8
Southport and Formby	6,026	26·5
South Sefton	2,847	10·5
Wandsworth	2,438	9·9
Islington	3,464	14·6
Central Manchester	2,315	13·6
Liverpool	16,869	21·7

Source: DHSS form LHS 27/3.

(e) Number of community psychiatric nurses per 100,000 population (at 30 September 1986)

	Whole-time equivalent
St. Helens and Knowsley	10·7
Southport and Formby	7·6
South Sefton	3·9
Wandsworth	16·8
Islington	4·8
Central Manchester	7·9
Liverpool	6·0

Source: DHSS Annual Census of NHS Non-Medical Manpower; OPCS mid-year population estimates.

(f) The day-patient attendance rate for the over 65s

Information, including the age of patients admitted to a hospital bed for treatment as a day case and regular day admissions will be available centrally for the first time later this year. For patients using NHS day care facilities, the specialty function classification will provide some indication of the age groups using the facility.

(g) Meals on wheels provision

Information on meals-on-wheels provision is not available in the precise form requested as data are by local authority area, which is not always conterminous with health authority area. The latest information for the relevant local authorities is given in the table.

Number of main meals provided for elderly and/or physically handicapped people during the year ended 31 March 1987

Health authority	*Local authority*	*Meals at home Number*
St. Helens and Knowsley	St. Helens	144,249
	Knowsley	61,018
Southport and Formby; South Sefton	Sefton	103,626
Wandsworth and part of Richmond, Twickenham and Roehampton (30 per cent. by population)	Wandsworth	382,065
Islington	Islington	268,467
Central Manchester, South Manchester, North Manchester	Manchester	735,936
Liverpool	Liverpool	404,103

Benefit Entitlement

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his estimate of the number of households entitled to (i) supplementary benefit and (ii) housing benefit which failed to claim benefit in 1987-88 and how many were pensioner households.

Mr. Portillo: The latest take-up estimates for supplementary benefit are for 1983 and those for housing benefit are for 1984. A convenient summary is shown on pages 272 and 273 of the 1988 public expenditure White Paper (Cm. 288). More detailed technical reports are available in the Library.

Child Care

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to publish a Bill as outlined in the 1987 White Paper 'The Law on Childcare and Family Services' (Cm. 62).

Mr. Newton: I cannot at present add to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley) on 28 October 1987 at columns *307-8*.

Electro-convulsive Therapy

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list for each of the last three years for which figures are available *(a)* the number of cases where the Mental Health Commission has been asked to approve

the treatment with electro-convulsive therapy of a patient detained under section 2 of the Mental Health Act 1983 and *(b)* the number of such cases in which the Mental Health Commission has recommended against such treatment.

Mrs. Currie: I have asked the Mental Health Act Commission to provide the hon. Member with this information.

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services for each of the last three years for which figures are available, what was the number of patients treated with electro-convulsive therapy following a diagnosis of puerperal psychosis; and, in each case, what was the average number of treatments per patient.

Mrs. Currie: I am sorry I cannot give the hon. Member the figures she has requested. Records of diagnoses of patients receiving electro-convulsive therapy are not collected centrally.

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list, for each of the last three years for which figures are available, the number of patients in whose deaths electro-convulsive therapy was considered a contributory factor.

Mrs. Currie: The information is not available in exactly the form requested.

However, during 1985 and 1986, the number of deaths registered in England and Wales with "Failure in dosage in electroshock or insulin—shock therapy" (International Classification of Disease code E.873.4) mentioned as a cause of death on the death certificate was nil.

No "mentions" data for 1984 are available, but in that year no death was assigned an underlying cause of E873.4.

Lobotomies

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services for each of the last three years for which figures are available, what was the number of lobotomies performed in Britain.

Mrs. Currie: I am sorry I cannot give the hon. Member the information in the form she requested. The number of psychosurgical operations (including lobotomies—leucotomies) performed in neurosurgical units in England (including referrals from other parts of the British Isles) are as follows:

1984	*1985*	*1986*
10	21	15

Figures for Scotland and Wales are the responsibility of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Legionnaire's Disease

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how often tests are carried out on hospital water supplies to detect Legionnaire's disease; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: In the absence of a quick test to measure the pressure of legionnella in water, we consider that the maintenance of hospital hot and cold water systems to standards recommended in a code of practice issued by the Department offers the best means of protection against infection by legionnella. Routine sampling is not recommended unless a water supply is suspected as being the source of an infection, because technical and scientific resources can be more effectively employed on preventive maintenance.

Single Payments

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how much was paid out in single payments to social security applicants in Lambeth in the financial year ended 31 March; and how much has been allocated under the social fund for the current year.

Mr. Portillo: The London borough of Lambeth is served by 10 local social security offices. The boundaries of these offices are not conterminous with those of the borough. Figures for single payment expenditure for the period 8 April 1987 to 10 April 1988 are given in the table. The figures are provisional and subject to amendment.

Office	*Expenditure* £
Balham	238,476
Battersea	202,006
Brixton	253,353
Camberwell	130,768
Crystal Palace	228,931
Kennington Park	210,689
Oval	227,673
Peckham	168,065
Southwark	164,513
Streatham	486,924

Information on the social fund allocations to local offices for 1988-89 was contained in the reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Wells (Mr. Heathcoat-Amory) on 4 November 1987 at columns *774-81.*

Solvent Abuse

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many children under the age of 16 years died as a result of solvent abuse in the most recent years for which figures are available.

Mrs. Currie: The most complete data available come from a continuing study carried out by the department of clinical epidemiology and social medicine of St. George's hospital medical school, London.

This study—the national study of deaths associated with the abuse of volatile substances—collects data from a variety of sources, including death registrations and a survey of coroners' findings. It suggests that in 1985 there were 23, and in 1986 27 (provisional figure) such deaths of those aged under 16 in England and Wales.

Three Rivers (Electorate)

Mr. Robert B. Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will set out a table showing the 1988 electorate for each ward in the district of Three Rivers.

Mrs. Currie: The information requested is as follows:

District of Three Rivers

Ward name	*Parliamentary electorate on the 1988 register*
South West Hertfordshire parliamentary constituency	
Chorleywood	4,166
Chorleywood West	2,575
Croxley Green North	2,505
Croxley Green	3,327
Croxley Green South	2,817
Rickmansworth	3,537
Moor Park	3,273
Moneyhill	2,902
Mill End	2,364
Maple Cross and West Hyde	2,007
Bedmond	2,552
Langleybury	3,004
Barratt	2,102
Oxhey Hall	2,514
Hayling	3,268
Northwick	3,832
Ashridge	2,484
Carpenders Park	4,008
Watford parliamentary constituency	
Abbots Langley	3,612
Leavesden	3,264

Dacorum (Electorate)

Mr. Robert B. Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will set out a table showing the 1988 electorate for each ward in the borough of Dacorum.

Mrs. Currie: The information requested is as follows.

District of Dacorum

Ward name	*Parliamentary electorate on the 1988 register*
South West Hertfordshire parliamentary constituency	
Northchurch	2,122
Berkhamstead West	3,438
Berkhamstead Central	3,844
Berkhamstead East	4,836
Bovingdon and Flaunden	3,617
Chipperfield	1,396
Kings Langley	3,712
West Hertfordshire parliamentary constituency	
Central	3,999
Highfield	4,377
Adeyfield West	4,373
Adeyfield East	3,873
Crabtree	5,102
South	3,048
Boxmoor	5,015
Warners End	4,574
Gadebridge	3,583
Chaulden	2,039
Levistock Green	5,458
Cupid Green	4,924
Grovehill	5,845
Bennetts End	4,478
Nash Mills	1,732
Tring East	1,800
Tring Central	4,249
Tring West	3,747
Aldbury and Wigginton	1,873
Ashridge	2,818
Flamstead and Markyate	3,343

Regional Health Authorities

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what further plans he has to oblige regional health authorities to put out to competitive tender their solicitors, architects, quantity surveyors and engineers services.

Mrs. Currie: We have no new central initiative in mind, but we do encourage regional health authorities to test on a regular basis the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of all their services and to consider the use of private contractors for operational activities. Under existing arrangements all National Health Service construction work and at least 75 per cent. of design work is undertaken on the basis of external contracts based on fee competition.

In-patients (Teaching Hospitals)

Sir David Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list, for the latest convenient year, the percentage of in-patients treated in each English teaching hospital who came from outside the health district in which that teaching hospital was located.

Mr. Newton: The available information is given in the table.

Estimated percentage of non-maternity, non-psychiatric cases treated in National Health Service teaching districts in England who are normally resident outside the district: 1986

Teaching DHA	*Per cent.*
Newcastle	53·4
Leeds Western	33·6
Leeds Eastern	32·6
Leicestershire	4·4
Nottingham	21·9
Sheffield	25·5
Cambridge	39·7
Paddington and North Kensington	58·5
Riverside	52·1
Hampstead	69·3
Bloomsbury	84·6
City and Hackney	63·0
Tower Hamlets	46·8
West Lambeth	65·3
Camberwell	42·3
Lewisham and North Southwark	46·2
Wandsworth	55·6
Southampton and South-West Hampshire	23·4
Oxfordshire	21·8
Bristol and Weston	43·4
Central Birmingham	78·6
Liverpool	34·8
Central Manchester	69·4
South Manchester	65·6
Salford	27·1

North Sea Oil (Sub-contractors)

Mr. Eadie: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has on the extent of non-payment by sub-contractors on certain North sea oil platforms of national insurance contributions for weeks when employees are on leave.

Mr. Portillo: The Department does not hold central information on the extent of non-payment of national insurance contributions by individual employers on North sea oil platforms. However, if any employee is concerned about his position in national insurance, he can discuss this with his local social security office and the staff there will be pleased to advise or investigate.

Benefits

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the estimated number of claimants who lost entitlement to increases of *(a)* unemployment benefit, *(b)* sickness benefit, *(c)* invalidity pension and *(d)* retirement pension, respectively, when section 10 of the Social Security Act 1988 came into force; and how many of them were women.

Mr. Scott: It is estimated that the total number of claimants who lost entitlement when section 10 of the Social Security Act 1988 came into force was 2,500, of whom 50 were women. The great majority of those losing entitlement are retirement pensioners and invalidity pensioners. Losses for other claimants are negligible.

Community Care

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what impact the Government expect regulation 19(3) of the Income Support Regulations 1987 to have on its community care policy.

Mr. Portillo: Regulation 19(3) of the Income Support (General) Regulations 1987 provides definitions of establishments which are to be treated as residential care homes or nursing homes for income support purposes. These definitions do not substantively differ from those in force under supplementary benefit legislation and represent no change in the Government's policy on community care.

District Health Authorities

Mr. Favell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to his answer to the hon. member for Stockport of 11 May, *Official Report*, columns *183-84*, what steps he proposes to take to assess whether the factors he there sets out fully account for the disparities in administrative and clerical costs as between district health authorities; what steps he proposes to take to reduce such costs in all district health authorities to the levels achieved in those districts with the most efficient performance; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: There are many factors which influence the level of administrative and clerical staffing. Only detailed scrutiny of each individual district can establish whether differences are justified or not. This is the job of NHS management but we have sought to help in two specific respects.

As part of the performance indicator package, DHAs and RHAs have been asked to undertake analyses of the past four years' indicators. These analyses, combined with local information, will form a basis for commentary to be presented to authority members and to be made available to local MPs and community health council members. This commentary should highlight changes over time and identify those main areas requiring further investigation.

In addition, we will shortly publish a report of a review of administrative and clerical staff which commends to health authorities ways of monitoring the numbers of such staff and makes suggestions for potential improvements in performance.

Cancer Hot-spots (Hull)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will publish in the *Official Report* the figures upon which the discovery of two new child cancer hot-spots on the Bransholme and Greatfield estate in Hull are based.

Mrs. Currie: I am aware that the East Yorkshire health authority is preparing a report on childhood cancers from 1974 to 1986. I understand initial indications are that the rates in the Bransholme and Greatfield census wards are not significantly elevated. I would refer the hon. Member to the chairman of the East Yorkshire health authority for further information.

HIV and AIDS

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will publish the report of the working group on the monitoring and surveillance of HIV infection and AIDS; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: We have today published the working group's report, and copies have been placed in the Library. We are grateful to Dr. Smith and to the members of the group for the very thorough work they have done.

The group has made a number of recommendations to improve existing arrangements for the reporting of test results, for studies based upon them, and for further steps to improve information about the prevalence of HIV infection and its spread. In particular, it has recommended a programme of antenatal testing, based on three large samples drawn from different parts of the country, with participation being voluntary, and provision being made for unnamed testing if an individual wished.

The Government accept all the group's recommendations in principle, and will be consulting interested bodies about their implementation. In respect of the proposal for antenatal testing, consultation will build on the experience of work already undertaken towards establishing antenatal testing in parts of Scotland, which we would seek to incorporate into the wider programme recommended by the working group.

In the Government's view, implementation of the group's recommendations will significantly improve the information needed both for planning services and for the continued development of measures to minimise the spread of the disease.

However, the Government are aware of a substantial body of opinion which believes that there is a greater likelihood of achieving these objectives through studies based on the testing of unnamed samples without specific consent—usually described as "anonymised testing"; and note that the working group itself recognises the possibility that this might in future be required. In view of this, and of the difficult ethical and legal issues associated with such testing, we consider it right that the issue should be the subject of further and wider public debate. We would welcome views by the end of August 1988.

Birmingham Children's Hospital

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list the number of job forums in which jobs for intensive care nursing staff at Birmingham children's hospital have been advertised since 17 February 1988; what response there has been; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will list the number of advertisements for intensive care nursing staff at Birmingham children's

hospital carried *(a)* in the nursing press and *(b)* in the *Nursing Times* since 17 February; what response there has been; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 23 May 1988]:* Since 17 February one two-day job forum has been held aimed at attracting nursing staff to the Birmingham children's hospital as a whole. Following this forum a number of nurse trainees expressed a firm interest in working at the hospital on completion of their training this summer.

A recruitment advertisement for trained nurses appeared in the *Nursing Times* on 9 March but received no response. Since earlier advertisements in the nursing press also had minimal success in recruiting nurses trained in intensive care, recruitment efforts will in future concentrate on the hospital's innovative 52-week teaching and experience package, under which nurses work as supernumaries in the intensive therapy unit and which has already attracted nine recruits; on a course for training post-graduate nurses in paediatric intensive care, which will be the first such course outside London; on a possible course to convert enrolled nurses to registered sick children's nurses; on increasing the output of training schools in the region from 56 to 77 registered sick children's nurses a year; on local press and radio appeals to mature registered sick children's nurses who had left the profession to return to nursing; and on future job forums as opportunities arise.

Widows (Income Support)

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether a widow whose income exceeds her applicable amount for income support purposes might nevertheless live below income support level because the rate rebate taper makes no allowances for mortgage costs.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer 23 May 1988]:* Yes. This might happen in some cases where the income support assessment contains an amount for mortgage interest and where the person's income remains slightly above income support levels. All those actually on income support will receive a maximum rate rebate. The reason for this is that mortgage payments made by owner-occupiers are not an eligible housing cost for the purposes of housing benefit.

TRANSPORT

Military Explosives (Transport)

98. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he proposes to amend the Conveyance by Road of Military Explosives Regulations 1977.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I refer the hon. Member to my reply of 10 May at column *78*.

Carlisle-Settle Railway

Mr. Martlew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many times he has travelled on the Carlisle to Settle railway, since his appointment as Secretary of State.

Mr. David Mitchell: My right hon. Friend has not visited the line in his present capacity, but I have travelled on it on a number of occasions.

Historic Wrecks Advisory Committee

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library a copy of his Department's guidance to the historic wrecks advisory committee.

Mr. David Mitchell: I have placed in the Library a copy of the Department's booklet on historic wrecks, which contains a description of the committee's functions and how it fulfills them. No further guidance is supplied to the committee.

East London River Crossing

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take into account the future requirement of operating British Aerospace 146 planes in and out of London City airport, when coming to a decision with regard to the east London river crossing; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Channon: Late representations were received at the inquiries into the east London river crossing on the possible future use of the British Aerospace 146 at London City airport. These objections were referred by the inspector without comment to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment and myself. We shall take these representations into account in considering the inspector's report of the inquiry. The use of BA146 aircraft would require a variation in the planning consent for the airport.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he hopes to announce the decision of the inspector relating to the east London river crossing.

Mr. Channon: Soon.

Ferries (Stability)

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will list the roll-on/roll-off ferries which operate in Scottish waters, indicating which routes they operate on and whether they comply with the proposed new IMO stability criteria;

(2) how many of the ferries which operate in Scottish waters were included in the recent IMO survey of standards of residual damage stability for passenger ships; and how many met the new IMO criteria.

Mr. David Mitchell: A list of the 56 roll-on/roll-off ferries that normally operate in Scottish waters, and the areas in which they operate, will be placed in the Library. All these ferries comply with the present international safety standards. The study into the standards of residual stability of passenger ships sponsored by my Department compared the standards attained by a representative sample of existing ships with the standards proposed for new ships, which are not yet in force. There are as yet no new IMO criteria.

Garages (Prosecutions)

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has on the number of prosecutions, in each of the last three years, for giving a false description of work carried out by a motor garage.

Mr. Butcher: I have been asked to reply.

We have no information on the total number of prosecutions brought. However, the number of cases of successful prosecutions under section 14 of the Trade Descriptions Act 1968, relating to repairs or servicing of motor vehicles, as reported to the Office of Fair Trading by local trading standards departments, was as follows:

	Number
[1]1984-85	18
[1]1985-86	17
[1]1986-87	28

[1] In each case, the year covers the period October-September.

Breath Tests

Mr. Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will introduce legislation to resolve the difficulty which arises where police officers are able to stop drivers at random but are prohibited from requiring breath tests at random; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I have been asked to reply.

The courts have made it clear that the police may use their power to stop under section 159 of the Road Traffic Act 1972 to stop vehicles at random. They may then require a breath test under section 7 of the Act where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a driver has alcohol in his body, has committed a moving traffic offence, or has been involved in an accident. The Government have at present no plans to introduce further legislation in this area.

DEFENCE

Maritime Strategy

17. **Mr. Clay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proposals concerning maritime strategy he will be taking to the Eurogroup meeting of Defence Ministers in Brussels on 25 May.

61. **Mr. John Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proposals concerning maritime strategy he will be taking to the Eurogroup meeting of Defence Ministers in Brussels on 25 May.

Mr. Younger: I refer the hon. Members to the answer I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Wigan (Mr. Stott).

Trident

18. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received about the latest cost of Trident nuclear weapons.

Mr. Sainsbury: One representation, in the form of a letter from a member of the public, has been received since the Secretary of State announced the revised Trident estimate in January this year.

28. **Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made on a system of communication to and from Trident submarines, and on the development of a control centre subject to political decision making.

Mr. Sainsbury: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 23 May 1988, at column *38*.

Bramley Camp

19. **Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for defence in respect of how many acres of Bramley camp his Department intends to seek planning permission for housing development.

Mr. Freeman: There are three small areas of land, amounting to about 20 acres in all, for which we have no further use. These areas adjoin existing residential areas and discussions are taking place with the Basingstoke and Deane borough council planning officials to consider these sites in relation to the local plan. These discussions will also cover the possible release and future use of an area of railway sidings which are no longer used.

Defence Export Services Organisation

20. **Mr. Hind:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a further statement on the progress of the defence Export Services Organisation.

Mr. Sainsbury: As the defence White Paper makes clear, the Defence Export Services Organisation is a continuing success in its work of assisting defence manufacturers, large and small, in their drive for exports which contribute significantly to our national wealth and job opportunities.

NATO (nuclear Weapons)

21. **Ms. Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to meet his North Atlantic Treaty Organisation counterparts to discuss nuclear matters.

25. **Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he next expects to meet his North Atlantic Treaty Organisation counterparts to discuss nuclear matters.

79. **Mr. Wareing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he next expects to meet his North Atlantic Treaty Organisation counterparts to discuss nuclear matters.

92. **Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he next expects to meet his North Atlantic Treaty Organisation counterparts to discuss nuclear matters.

Mr. Younger: The next meeting of NATO's nuclear planning group will take place in the autumn. I also expect to meet my NATO colleagues at the Defence Planning Committee in Brussels on 26/27 May when we shall be discussing a range of defence and security matters affecting the Alliance.

29. **Mr. Allan Roberts:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with his North Atlantic Treaty Organisation counterparts about battlefield and short-range nuclear weapons.

53. **Mr. Dunnachie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with his North Atlantic Treaty Organisation counterparts about battlefield and short-range nuclear weapons.

66. **Mr. David Young:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with his North Atlantic Treaty Organisation counterparts about battlefield and short-range nuclear weapons.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang) on 23 February at column *165*.

Merchant Shipping (Wartime Use)

22. **Mr. Heffer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he last reviewed arrangements for the use of merchant shipping in time of war.

31. **Mr. Loyden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he last reviewed arrangements for the use of merchant shipping in time of war.

50. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he last reviewed arrangements for the use of merchant shipping in time of war.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I refer the hon. Members to the reply that I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Aberdeen, South (Mr. Doran).

Air Sea Rescue

23. **Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence at which Royal Air Force bases he intends to retain air sea-rescue facilities.

30. **Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to receive the results of the review of search and rescue operations.

67. **Mr. Buckley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he intends to replace the Royal Air Force Wessex air-sea rescue helicopters.

68. **Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will outline his plans for United Kingdom air-sea rescue coverage in the 1990s.

Mr. Freeman: I refer right hon. and hon. Members to the Adjournment debate on 23 May with my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker).

Ex-Government Employees (Outside Appointments)

24. **Mr. McTaggart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received about former civil servants and members of Her Majesty's forces accepting outside appointments with defence contractors.

32. **Mr. Parry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received about former civil servants and members of Her Majesty's forces accepting outside appointments with defence contractors.

90. **Miss Lestor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received about former civil servants and members of Her Majesty's forces accepting outside appointments with defence contractors.

Mr. Sainsbury: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Manchester, Central (Mr. Litherland).

UK-USSR (Confidence-Building Measures)

26. **Mr. Graham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proposals for confidence-building measures he intends to put to the Soviet inspection team visiting the chemical defence establishment, Porton Down.

27. **Mr. Boyes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proposals for confidence-building measures he intends to put to the Soviet inspection team visiting the chemical defence establishment, Porton Down.

86. **Mr. Cunliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proposals for confidence-building measures he intends to put to the Soviet inspection team visiting the chemical defence establishment, Porton Down.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proposals for confidence-building measures he intends to put to the Soviet inspection team visiting the chemical defence establishment, Porton Down.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The exchange of visits between the chemical defence establishment at Porton Down and the Soviet chemical warfare facility at Shikhany, first proposed by the United Kingdom in 1986, will itself make a valuable contribution to confidence building. During the Soviet visit to Porton Down the talks will cover the full range of CW-related issues. We hope this will provide the opportunity for the Soviet Union to demonstrate the much greater openness about its CW capabilities necessary to build confidence in the context of the negotiations for a global CW ban.

Strategic Defence Initiative

33. **Mr. Cartwright:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his latest estimate of the total value of contracts placed with United Kingdom firms or institutions in connection with the United States strategic defence initiative.

Mr. Sainsbury: US$61·5 million.

HM Forces (Equal Opportunities)

34. **Mr. Michael Welsh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proposals he has to extend monitoring of equal opportunties in Her Majesty's forces.

82. **Mr. Hood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proposals he has to extend monitoring of equal opportunities in Her Majesty's forces.

40. **Ms. Abbott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proposals he has to extend monitoring of equal opportunities in Her Majesty's forces.

Mr. Freeman: I refer the hon. Member to my answer to the hon. Member for Brent, South (Mr. Boateng) on 20 May 1988 at column *609*.

Nuclear-capable Aircraft

35. **Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what decisions concerning nuclear-capable aircraft were made at the last North Atlantic Treaty Organisation nuclear planning group meeting.

56. **Mr. Illsley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what decisions concerning nuclear-capable aircraft were made at the last North Atlantic Treaty Organisation nuclear planning group meeting.

65. **Mr. Frank Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what decisions concerning nuclear-capable aircraft were made at the last North Atlantic Treaty Organisation nuclear planning group meeting.

36. **Mr. Patchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what decisions concerning modernisation of nuclear weapons were made at the last North Atlantic Treaty Organisation nuclear planning group meeting.

44. **Mr. Strang:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what decisions concerning modernisation of nuclear weapons were made at the last North Atlantic Treaty Organisation nuclear planning group meeting.

93. **Ms. Primarolo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what decisions concerning modernisation of nuclear weapons were made at the last North Atlantic Treaty Organisation planning group meeting.

Mr. Younger: I refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave earlier today to the hon. Members for Burnley (Mr. Pike) and for Manchester, Withington (Mr. Bradley).

Merchant Fleet

37. **Mrs. Ray Michie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will commission a study into the defence implications of the contraction in the merchant fleet.

Mr. Ian Stewart: No. The number of merchant vessels available in the categories required for defence purposes in an emergency is already closely monitored and careful consideration is given to any defence implications.

Type 23 Frigates

38. **Mr. Galbraith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much money has been spent to date on the development of a computer system for the type 23 frigate.

43. **Mr. Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much money has been spent to date on the development of a computer system for the type 23 frigate.

74. **Mr. Galloway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much money has been spent to date on the development of a computer system for the type 23 frigate.

Mr. Sainsbury: Expenditure to date is of the order of £35 million comprising some £30 million net expenditure on CACS4, and £5 million spent on the new command system for the type 23 frigate.

70. **Mr. Beith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received concerning the ordering of type 23 frigates.

Mr. Sainsbury: Since tenders were invited for up to four type 23 frigates in October, meetings have been held with three groups of hon. Members, one of which included local trade union representatives, and to date we have received letters from 12 hon. Members and one letter from a regional council.

In addition, I have replied to 12 questions in this House and the matter was raised during the debate on the Royal Navy on 3 March, at column 1242.

Procurement Expenditure

39. **Mr. Wigley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of his Department's expenditure on procurement was spent in *(a)* England, *(b)* Scotland, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* Northern Ireland during the last year for which full figures are available.

Mr. Sainsbury: The Ministry's procurement expenditure in the United Kingdom on equipment in the financial year 1986-87 is estimated to have been distributed as follows:

	Per cent.
England	92
Scotland	5
Wales	2
Northern Ireland	1

Note: The above estimates are based on the location of final suppliers to the Ministry of Defence. They do not take account of the different location of subcontractors or of suppliers to the main contractors.

84. **Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on his Department's policy with regard to the regional distribution of procurement expenditure within the United Kingdom.

Mr. Sainsbury: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Moray (Mrs. Ewing) on 10 November 1987 at column *158*.

Sea King Helicopters

41. **Mr. Colvin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he last reviewed the armed forces' requirements for Sea King helicopters; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The armed forces' requirements for Sea King helicopters are kept constantly under review. In November 1987 orders were placed for seven Sea Kings for the Royal Navy to maintain front-line aircraft numbers.

Low-flying Aircraft

42. **Mr. Wray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether Her Majesty's Government or their North Atlantic Treaty Organisation allies are proposing measures (i) to protect the civilian population of the countries affected by low-flying exercises from accidents and damage and (ii) to compensate the victims of such accidents.

Mr. Freeman: There are well established procedures for compensating members of the public in cases where it is established that personal injury or damage to property has resulted from military aircraft activity. These arrangements are kept under review and are subject to revision where appropriate. All possible steps are taken to keep to a minimum the risks associated with this essential military training.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if military aircraft operating in the United Kingdom low-flying system, outside the three designated tactical training areas, are permitted to descend below 250 ft minimum separation distance in special circumstances such as the run-in to targets during simulated attack or interception manoeuvres; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: Only within range areas, which fall within the physical boundaries of the United Kingdom low-flying system, but which are not part of the system in that they are designated avoidance areas for low-flying training, are aircraft permitted to descend below 250 ft minimum separation distance during the final approaches to a target.

Chemical warfare

45. **Mr. Gareth Wardell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what scientific, technical and military information on chemical warfare related matters has been exchanged between the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union.

62. **Mrs. Clywd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what scientific, technical and military information on chemical warfare related matters has been exchanged between Britain and the USSR.

87. **Mr. Bill Michie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what scientific, technical and military information on chemical warfare related matters has been exchanged between the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union.

91. **Ms. Gordon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what scientific, technical and military information on chemical warfare related matters has been exchanged between Britain and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Mr. Ian Stewart: A wide variety of scientific, technical and military information on CW-related issues, relevant to the conclusion of a verifiable global CW ban, is exchanged on a multilateral basis at the conference on disarmament at Geneva, in which both the United Kingdom and the USSR are participants.

Ammunition Expenditure

46. **Mr. Henderson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much his Department intends to spend on medium and large calibre ammunition in the present financial year.

Mr. Sainsbury: Our anticipated expenditure in this area for the present financial year was some £125 million.

Royal Army Veterinary Corps, Melton Mowbray

47. **Mr. Latham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress is being made with the review of activities at the Royal Army Veterinary Corps, Melton Mowbray.

Mr. Freeman: The review to which my hon. Friend refers concerns the possible formation of a joint service dog school; there are currently two dog schools which are located at Melton Mowbray and RAF Newton. The review, which will also take account of the costs of the Army's equine functions at Melton Mowbray, should be completed in the summer.

Air Combat Facility (North Sea)

48. **Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his policy to make a commitment to British Aerospace's proposed air combat manoeuvring instrumentation facility in the North sea.

Mr. Sainsbury: I have nothing to add to my reply of 11 May at column *134*.

Donnington Central Ordnance Depot (Fire)

49. **Mr. Grocott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his latest estimate of the cost of the recent fire at Donnington central ordnance depot.

63. **Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his latest estimate of the cost of the recent fire at the Donnington central ordnance depot.

64. **Mr. Ashton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his latest estimate of the cost of the recent fire at the Donnington central ordnance depot.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his latest estimate of the cost of the recent fire at the Donnington central ordnance depot.

Mr. Freeman: The latest provisional estimate of the book value of the stock lost in the recent fire at COD Donnington is £147 million. The final estimate of the scale of the loss will depend on how much of the stock which survived proves to be salvageable.

Maritime Operations

51. **Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what changes are under consideration to the current concept of maritime operations.

54. **Mr. Martlew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what changes are under consideration to the current concept of maritime operations.

60. **Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what changes are under consideration to the current concept of maritime operations.

94. **Mr. McFall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what changes are under consideration to the current concept of maritime operations.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I refer the hon. Members to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) on 14 December 1987 at column *409*, to which I have nothing to add.

Low-flying Exercises

52. **Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent representations he has received concerning low-flying exercises in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: Between 1 March 1988 and 12 May 1988 the Ministry of Defence received 719 inquiries or complaints about low flying in the United Kingdom.

Soldiers' and Airmen's Scripture Readers Association (Centenary)

55. **Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to take part in the centenary celebrations of the Soldiers' and Airmen's Scripture Readers Association.

Mr. Freeman: My right hon. Friend was invited to attend the service to be held in the Guards chapel on 25 May to mark the 150th anniversary of the Soldiers' and Airmen's Scripture Readers Association but unfortunately had to decline as he will be out of the country on that day. However, a number of senior officers from the Army and RAF will attend.

Air Cadet Motor Gliders (Noise)

57. **Mr. Bill Walker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give details of recent complaints he has received about the engine noise of air cadet motor gliders at volunteer gliding schools.

Mr. Freeman: Within the last six months the MOD has received a total of four complaints about engine noise of air cadet motor gliders at volunteer gliding schools. The four complaints were about activities at the following stations: RAF Little Rissington, RAF Henlow and RAF Halton.

RAF Aircraft (Commercial Demonstrations)

58. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he plans to take to monitor the use of RAF aircraft on commercial demonstrations.

Mr. Freeman: None. Every effort is made to respond helpfully to requests from United Kingdom companies to provide RAF aircraft for demonstrations in support of sales ventures. Well established procedures are followed in such circumstances. I will write further to my hon. Friend shortly.

Glenmoriston Estates, Inverness-shire

59. **Mr. Kennedy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will assess the defence implications of the proposed sale of Glenmoriston estates, Inverness-shire; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The defence implications of this proposed sale are currently being assessed, but no decision has yet been taken and I am not, therefore, in a position to make a statement at present. I will write to the hon. Member when the situation has been clarified.

Military Supplies (Storage)

71. **Mr. Haynes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will further review safety procedures for the storage of military supplies.

75. **Ms. Quin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will further review safety procedures for the storage of military supplies.

88. **Mr. Meale:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will further review safety procedures for the storage of military supplies.

89. **Dr. Moonie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will further review safety procedures for the storage of military supplies.

Mr. Freeman: Safety procedures for the storage of military supplies are already subject to a process of continuous review.

Procurement

72. **Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received from defence industry representatives on the question of procurement over the last four weeks.

Mr. Sainsbury: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence receives many letters from the defence industry during the normal execution of his duties. He meets industrialists frequently, both formally and informally, and most recently chaired a meeting of the National Defence Industries Council on 17 May.

Nuclear-powered Submarines (Decommissioning)

76. **Mr. Douglas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a further statement on the decommissioning policy being adopted for nuclear-powered submarines.

Mr. Sainsbury: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) on 9 May at column *2*.

Cruise Missiles

77. **Mr. Terry Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with the United States Defence Secretary about sea-launched cruise missiles.

96. **Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with the United States Defence Secretary about sea-launched cruise missiles.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with the United States Defence Secretary about sea-launched cruise missiles.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I refer the hon. Members to the reply given earlier today by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to the hon. Member for Cumbernauld and Kilsyth (Mr. Hogg).

Army Equipment (European Collaboration)

80. **Mr. Morley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what percentage of Army equipment is currently produced through European collaboration.

Mr. Sainsbury: Provision made in the Supply Estimates for 1988-89 for Army equipment being procured through collaborative projects involving our European allies amounts to 7 per cent. of the Army equipment budget.

Procurement (Collaborative Projects)

81. **Mr. McAvoy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what percentage of the United Kingdom defence procurement is presently spent on collaborative projects.

Mr. Sainsbury: About 15 per cent.

USSR (Nuclear Forces)

85. **Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has on steps being taken by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to modernise its nuclear forces following the intermediate nuclear forces treaty banning land-based medium range weapons.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The Soviet Union is continuing to modernise its whole array of nuclear-capable forces.

For details of the Soviet modernisation programmes I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Basingstoke (Mr. Hunter) on 22 March at column *101* and to the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1988".

Arms Levels

95. **Mr. Ernie Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with his North Atlantic Treaty Organisation counterparts about conventional arms levels.

Mr. Younger: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett).

Tornado

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Tornado F3 aircraft are currently held in storage at Royal Air Force, St. Athan; how many further aircraft of this type it is planned to place in storage; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: In order to facilitate an orderly build-up of the Tornado F3 force, a number of aircraft are held in storage at RAF St. Athan before being assigned to squadrons. This number fluctuates continuously; currently there are eight.

Royal Navy

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Royal Navy has a nuclear capability for shore bombardment.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I have nothing to add to the information contained in paragraph 302 of volume 1 of the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1988".

Nuclear Weapons (Accidents)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list all agreements, memoranda of understanding and other formal arrangements which relate to special arrangements between the United Kingdom and the United States of America covering accidents involving United States nuclear weapons on British soil.

Mr. Ian Stewart: There is a formal arrangement between the British and United States Governments which sets out the roles and responsibilities of the respective authorities in the highly unlikely event of an accident on United Kingdom territory involving a United States nuclear weapon.

NATO (Nuclear Planning Group)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the date and location of each meeting of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's nuclear planning group since January 1980.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The dates and locations of NPG meetings since January 1980 are as follows:

	Location
3-4 June 1980	Bodo, Norway
13-14 November 1980	NATO Headquarters, Brussels
7-8 April 1981	Bonn, Federal Republic of Germany
20-21 October 1981	Gleneagles, Scotland
20-24 March 1982	Colorado Springs, United States of America
30 November 1982	NATO Headquarters, Brussels
22-23 March 1983	Vilamoura, Portugal
27-28 October 1983	Montebello, Canada
3-4 April 1984	Cesme, Turkey
11-12 October 1984	Stresa, Italy
26-27 March 1985	Luxembourg
29-30 October 1985	NATO Headquarters, Brussels
20-21 March 1986	Wurzburg, Federal Republic of Germany
21-22 October 1986	Gleneagles, Scotland
14-15 May 1987	Stavanger, Norway
3-4 November 1987	Monterey, United States of America
27-28 April 1988	NATO Headquarters, Brussels

NATO Defence Ministers (Meetings)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what meetings of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Defence Ministers he plans to attend in the current year.

Mr. Ian Stewart: My right hon. Friend will attend the ministerial meetings of the Eurogroup and the defence planning committee in Brussels from 25 to 27 May. He expects to attend further meetings of the Eurogroup, the defence planning committee and the nuclear planning group this autumn.

NATO

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the Royal Navy's conventional warfare role within the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I refer the hon. Member to paragraph 302 of volume 1 of the "Statement of the Defence Estimates 1988".

Rating Reform

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what instructions he has issued to members of the armed forces about registration under the community charge legislation.

Mr. Freeman: Members of the armed forces in Scotland who receive community charge inquiry forms have been instructed that they should fill them in and return them to registration officers in the normal way. No instructions have yet been issued in respect of England and Wales.

Defence Spending

Mr. Churchill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his estimate of the percentage of gross domestic product allocated to defence in each of the years 1987-88, 1988-89 and 1989-90.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The information requested is as follows:

	Per cent.
1987-88	4·4
1988-89	4·2
1989-90	4·1

The reducing percentage largely reflects forecast growth in GDP.

Gibraltar (Incident)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many bomb disposal units or military personnel with expertise in this field were present in Gibraltar on Sunday 6 March; how many bomb disposal

and other personnel this involved; how many of these were sent to Gibraltar in expectation of a possible Provisional IRA bomb attack; and on what dates these units or personnel arrived in Gibraltar.

Mr. Ian Stewart: It is not the policy to comment on operational matters.

Bomb Disposal Units (Gibraltar)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many bomb disposal units are normally stationed in Gibraltar at any one time; and how many personnel this involves.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Personnel providing a military bomb disposal capability are permanently based in Gibraltar. For reasons of security it is not our practice to give details of establishments of military personnel.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 25 May 1988

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Universities

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table, covering the years 1979-80 to 1990-91, which provides a summarised revenue account for universities in Great Britain, distinguishing *(a)* gross expenditure and *(b)* income, differentiating student fees paid by the United Kingdom Government, students' fees paid directly by United Kingdom students, overseas students' fees, research and contract income from other United Kingdom Government sources, research and contract income from charitable foundations, research and contract income from the United Kingdom private sector, other research and contract income, public donations, trading profit, or miscellaneous sales income declared gross and other miscellaneous income and *(c)* net expenditure on a definition consistent with the entries for current expenditure in universities in table 12·1 of Cm 288-II.

Mr. Jackson: Universities' income and expenditure in years up to the academic year 1985-86, the latest for which the information is available, is set out in successive annual editions of "University Statistics: Volume Three, Finance". Copies are in the Library. The Government make no forecast of these figures.

Free School Meals

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many pupils in *(a)* Durham city and *(b)* the county of Durham lost their entitlement to free school meals in the last month.

Mr. Dunn: Information for Durham city is not separately available. In October 1987 about 8,660 pupils in the county of Durham received free school meals because their families were in receipt of family income supplement, or through the operation of LEA discretion. From 11 April the families of those in the former category will receive a cash benefit of £2·55 per week throughout the year under the new family credit scheme, which will also cover many in the latter category. Children from families in receipt of, or who are themselves in receipt of, income support (the successor to supplementary benefit) continue to be eligible for free school meals. Nationally it is estaimated that about 100,000 more school age children will benefit under the family credit scheme compared with those who currently receive free school meals under family income supplement and LEA discretionary schemes combined.

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what estimate he has of how many children within the Leicestershire education authority area have lost entitlement to free school meals as a result of the benefit changes which came into effect in April.

Mr. Dunn: In October 1987 about 4,840 pupils in Leicestershire received free school meals because their families were in receipt of family income supplement, or through the operation of LEA discretion. From 11 April this year the families of those in the former category receive a cash benefit of £2·55 per week throughout the year under the new family credit scheme, which will also cover many in the latter category. Children from families in receipt of, or who are themselves in receipt of, income support (the successor to supplementary benefit) continue to be eligible for free school meals. Nationally it is estimated that about 100,000 more school age children will benefit under the family credit scheme compared with those who currently receive free school meals under family income supplement and LEA discretionary schemes combined.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Legislation (Amendments)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Lord President of the Council how many non-government amendments have been carried at the Committee stage of Government-sponsored public Bills for each year since 1979.

Mr. Wakeham: This information is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

PRIME MINISTER

Top Salaries Review Body

Mr. Watts: To ask the Prime Minister if she will make a statement about the chairmanship of the Top Salaries Review Body.

The Prime Minister: Lord Plowden has advised me that he will wish to retire as chairman of the Top Salaries Review Body after it has completed its next report in 1989. I shall accept his resignation with great regret and I wish to place on record the Government's gratitude for his outstanding service as a member of the Top Salaries Review Body since 1977, and as chairman for the last seven years.

I am glad to be able to announce that Sir David Nickson has agreed to take over the chairmanship from Lord Plowden and to serve as a member of the review body for its 1988-89 review.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Under-Age Drinking (Prosecutions)

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what has been the number of prosecutions in each of the last five years for under-age drinking against publicans and juveniles.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information available to me, which may be incomplete, relates to prosecutions under

sections 169(1) and 169(2) of the Licensing Act 1964, and is given in the following table. Data for 1987 are not yet available.

Persons proceeded against for offences under sections 169(1) and 169(2) of the Licensing Act 1964

England and Wales					*Number of persons*
	1982	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Prosecutions under:					
Section 169(1)	323	307	314	274	296
Section 169(2)	1,931	1,627	1,171	790	949

Prison Officers (Wandsworth)

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent discussions he has had with the Prison Officers Association to seek to resolve the action by prison officers at Wandsworth prison; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Meetings have taken place recently between officials and the Prison Officers' Association aimed at the resolution of the current dispute. A further meeting has been arranged for today.

Guernsey (Employment Law)

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley on Thursday 5 May, whether the state of Jersey has passed a protection of employment opportunities law; if it has been seen by his Department; when the state of Guernsey plans to discuss similar legislation which would involve restrictions on United Kingdom citizens; what action he proposes to take to protect their interests; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Protection of Employment Opportunities (Jersey) Law 1988 was examined by the Home Office before my right hon. Friend advised Her Majesty The Queen in Council on the matter of Royal Assent which was given on 17 February 1988. The law enables the island authorities to make regulations, should the need arise, to protect employment opportunities in prescribed categories of employment for those having a connection with the Bailiwick. At present, no such regulations have been made and I understand none is planned in the foreseeable future. The freedom of movement of British citizens between the United Kingdom and the island is not curtailed by the Law.

I understand that the states of Guernsey intend to debate legislation, which might include matters relating to employment controls, in the near future. As with Jersey, should any such measures be proposed, they will be examined by the Home Office in the light of the need to ensure that those with close links with the island have adequate opportunities for employment.

Civil Defence

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the progress of installation of the new message switch system in local authority emergency centres.

Mr. John Patten: A limited scale of equipment has been installed in one county in each of the home defence regions, except London, and additional installations have taken place in regions 4, 7 and 10.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement of the performance of Chernikeef Telecommunications in the provision of message switch equipment for local authority emergency centres.

Mr. John Patten: It is not the practice to comment on matters which are commercially confidential.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether his Department will meet grant-aid requirements incurred by the installation of the new message switch system in local authority emergency centres;

(2) why expenditure relating to the installation of the new message switch system in local authority emergency centres is eligible for 100 per cent. grant-aid at county level installations but only 75 per cent. grant-aid at district level installations.

Mr. John Patten: Subject to prior approval, adaption work necessary for the installation of civil defence communications equipment at local authority emergency centres is eligible for grant aid at the relevant rate. Differential rates of grant were determined at a time when shire district centres contained little or no Home Office communications equipment, and it was decided that available funds should be concentrated elsewhere. The policy is under review.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he expects any additional costs to be incurred as a result of problems encountered during the installation and commissioning of the new message switch system in local authority emergency centres; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: No, although some additional costs may arise in connection with the provision of extra features in the equipment specification.

Satellite Television

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has concerning the likely schemes or proposals for satellite television services capable of being received in the United Kingdom which are the responsibility of *(a)* companies or organisations subject to United Kingdom legislation, *(b)* not in *(a)* above, but subject to legislation of the European Economic Community, and *(c)* not susceptible to either *(a)* or *(b)* above; and if he will make a statement concerning any activities or initiatives by Her Majesty's Government concerning international agreements concerning the standards of broadcast material in respect of *(c)* above.

Mr. Renton: There is a distinction between services transmitted by satellite for reception and distribution via cable systems, and services for direct reception in the home. Services of the former type are subject to regulation by the Cable Authority under the Cable and Broadcasting Act 1984 in the same way as other cable services. Since May 1985 it has, however, been open to anyone to obtain

a licence for the direct reception of any satellite programme service, whether primarily intended for cable distribution or not.

Services broadcast direct to the home by satellite and not distributed on cable are not subject to Cable Authority regulation. I am aware of two current schemes for such services. British Satellite Broadcasting Ltd.(BSB) has been awarded the contract by the Independent Broadcasting Authority to provide a three-channel direct broadcasting by satellite service for the United Kingdom as part of its television broadcasting services under the Cable and Broadcasting Act 1984 and the Broadcasting Act 1981. BSB plans to launch its service in autumn 1989.

The Luxembourg-based company, Societe Europeenne des Satellites, plans to launch the Astra medium-powered satellite to provide a 16-channel service to Northern Europe, including the United Kingdom. Up to 11 channels are likely to be in English. I understand that Astra hopes to start its service towards the end of 1988 or early in 1989.

In addition, I understand that the European Telecommunications Satellite Organisation (EUTELSAT) has undertaken a feasibility study, in collaboration with the European Space Agency, into the possible implementation of a European satellite for direct broadcasting. EUTELSAT has yet to make a decision as to whether to proceed.

The Government are continuing to play an active part in the Council of Europe in negotiations on a draft convention on transfrontier broadcasting. The purpose of the convention will be to facilitate the transfrontier transmission and retransmission of television programme services that comply with prescribed minimum standards. The Government are seeking to ensure that the code of standards is compatible with the United Kingdom's national standards on taste and decency. It is hoped that the convention can be agreed in time for it to be open for signature and ratification at the Stockholm conference of European broadcasting Ministers in November.

Intoxicating Substances (Supply) Act (Prosecutions)

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many prosecutions have been brought under the Intoxicating Substances (Supply) Act in the most recent years for which figures are available;

(2) how many convictions have been recorded under the Intoxicating Substances (Supply) Act in the most recent years for which figures are available.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information available to me, which may be incomplete, shows no prosecutions under the Intoxicating Substances (Supply) Act 1985 in 1985 and six prosecutions in 1986, two of which resulted in convictions.

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to seek to increase the sentences available to the courts under the Intoxicating Substances (Supply) Act; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: No. We consider the existing maximum penalties—six months' imprisonment or a fine of £2,000, or both—to be adequate.

Departmental Employees (Registered Disabled)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of employees of his Department is registered disabled.

Mr. Hurd: One hundred and fifty three members of staff are registered disabled. They represent 0·4 per cent. of all staff, including the prison service in England and Wales.

Police Air Support Units

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the total cost to the public funds of the Home Office sponsored experiment carried out by the West Midlands police air support unit in February over a stretch of the M42.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Home Office share of the cost of the three patrol flights over the M42 in February was £1,064. There were no additional police costs incurred.

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has any plans for further sponsored experiments by his Department involving police air support units being used for road traffic purposes.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: No, but we shall be considering this matter again when we have received the report on the recently completed experiment.

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to his answer of 18 May, when he intends to reach a conclusion on the outcome of the experiment of using police air support units for road traffic purposes; and if he will make it his policy to make an oral statement to the House when he has reached a decision.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: A report on the experiment, which formed a minor part of an evaluation of the cost-effectiveness of the midlands police air operation, is being prepared. I shall write to my hon. Friend when it is available.

Lonrho plc, Blarg and Contargo

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police for the City of London as to whether inquiries into the Liechtenstein subsidiaries of Lonhro plc, Blarg and Contargo have now been completed; and whether the papers have been referred to the Crown Prosecution Service.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand that the papers have now been referred to the Crown Prosecution Service.

Police Officers' Notebooks

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the answer of 18 May, *Official Report*, column 462, if, in the light of the acquittal of eight defendants at Knightsbridge Crown court on 20 May, following the sending of the log books of police officers involved for forensic examination after irregularities were found, he will now reconsider his refusal to adopt the proposal to time-stamp police officers' notebooks where it is intended that the contents of these notebooks are to be used as evidence in court proceedings; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The circumstances which led to the acquittal are being investigated by the metropolitan police under the supervision of the Police Complaints Authority.

It would be wrong to make any comment or decision on any matter which may be covered by that investigation until it has been completed.

Bail Information Schemes

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has received a report on the pilot bail information schemes set up in 1987.

Mr. Hurd: The Vera Institute of Justice has today published its report on eight pilot bail information schemes which were established during 1987 under the auspices of the Association of Chief Officers of Probation. The object of these schemes is to provide the Crown Prosecution Service with verified information about defendants, for example, on accommodation or community ties, which is relevant to the decision on whether to oppose bail.

The report shows that the schemes enabled the Crown Prosecution Service to take better informed decisions on whether to oppose bail or not. This in turn enabled the courts in the pilot areas to make more use of bail, without any increase in the failure rate of those on bail.

I am now urgently considering how best we can build on the experience of these schemes in co-operation with the courts, the Crown Prosecution Service, the police and probation service.

Copies of the report have been placed in the Library.

Prisons (Opticians)

Mrs. Wise: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department why Liverpool prison has been without the services of an optician for eight months; and why it was four months before the vacancy was advertised.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The visiting optician to Liverpool prison resigned without notice last October. Local medical management sought to arrange a temporary appointment but experienced difficulty in identifying a suitable optician. In the meantime, the matter was referred to prison service headquarters for local advertising to be arranged. Regrettably, the advertisements were considerably delayed by staff sickness and work pressures in the personnel division concerned.

Throughout the period in which the prison was without the service of a visiting optician, optical referrals were made as appropriate to the visiting consultant ophthalmologist.

A visiting optician has now been appointed and commenced work on 23 May.

Mrs. Wise: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what procedure is used to ensure that prisoners can have eye examinations.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: A prisoner who requests optical treatment will be examined by the medical officer who will refer him to the optician if he considers that to be medically appropriate.

Mrs. Wise: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisons are currently without the services of an optician.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Department is not aware that any establishment is without such a service.

Police Interviews (Tape Recording)

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has as to when tape recording facilities will be installed for police interviews in the Isle of Wight.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand that a phased programme to install tape recording facilities at police stations throughout the whole area served by the Hampshire constabulary is well under way. Work to equip interview rooms at police stations in Newport and Shanklin on the Isle of Wight has already begun, and work will start shortly at Ryde and Cowes.

Community Radio

Mr. Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to announce further details on the community radio stations licence procedures; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: The position remains as set out in my replies to various questions on 27 January from the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher) at columns *251-54*.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Serious Fraud Office

Mr. Hind: To ask the Attorney-General whether any changes will be made to the serious fraud office's cash limit and running cost limit for 1988-89.

The Attorney-General: Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplementary Estimate, the cash limit on class XI, vote 12, will be increased by £606,000 from £5,480,000 to £6,086,000 and the running costs limit by £606,000 from £4,174,000 to £4,780,000. It was originally hoped that the serious fraud office, in line with other departments, would be able to restrict its expenditure to the provision agreed during the 1987 public expenditure survey. It is not clear that this will not be possible, the PES provision having necessarily been agreed at a stage in the office's development when precise information about its costs—particularly those relating to accommodation—was not available. No net increase to public expenditure results from this change as the cash limit increase will be charged to the 1988-89 reserve.

ENERGY

Energy Efficiency (Scotland)

55. **Mr. Jack:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the promotion of energy efficiency in Scotland.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The Government have achieved considerable success in encouraging the efficient use of energy in all sectors in Scotland. There are now over 1,000 energy managers in Scotland. Grants of about £0·7 million have been given for energy surveys which have identified potential estimated savings of almost £20 million per year. In addition, through the energy efficiency demonstration scheme, £2·1 million has been provided to test new

energy-saving technologies. In the domestic sector, 412,000 grants totalling just under £9·25 million have been provided through the homes insulation scheme. On 11 May I opened a successful conference in Glasgow on energy efficiency in commercial properties in Glasgow.

Nirex

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what are the Government's intentions for ownership and management of Nirex following privatisation of the electricity supply industry.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Present expectations are that the Central Electricity Generating Board's shareholding in UK Nirex Ltd. will pass to the successor operator of CEGB nuclear power stations. The management of the company is a matter for the company and its shareholders.

TRANSPORT

A49 (Bartington Crossroads)

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects the traffic lights scheme at the Bartington crossroads on the A49 to be completed.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: During this financial year. Work will start as soon as design and land entry details are finalised.

Ferries Safety Steering Committee

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will publish in the *Official Report* the payments made to *(a)* Captain Tony Barrett, director and general manager of P and O European Transport Services Ltd., and *(b)* other members of the steering committee investigating safety measures for British roll-on/roll-off ferries.

Mr. David Mitchell: No payments are made to members of the steering committee other than expenses for travelling and subsistence.

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will remove Captain Tony Barrett from the steering committee investigating safety measures for British roll-on/roll-off ferries.

Mr. David Mitchell: No.

Tolls

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of road, bridge and tunnel facilities in each of the four countries of the United Kingdom for which tolls are levied, with a note for each entry of the name and address of the responsible authority; whether it produces published accounts for that specific facility; which Minister is responsible for authorising changes in such tolls and on which (i) public expenditure programme and (ii) class, vote and subhead, the toll revenue and associated expenditure is to be found.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I can answer for tolled facilities in England.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport is responsible for the Severn bridge. Toll revenue and associated expenditure there is part of the roads public expenditure programme and appears in class VIII, vote 1, under subheads A1.7—new construction and renewals; A1.8—toll and operating equipment; B1.5—toll collection and breakdown service; and B2.1—toll revenue.

Toll revenue and associated expenditure at other crossings does not appear in the roads public expenditure programme. The Secretary of State is responsible for authorising changes in the tolls on a number of other bridges, floating bridges and roads. Details of ownership and accounting arrangements are not readily available for all minor crossings and roads. The major estuarial crossings in England, for which accounts are published annually and the authorities responsible for those crossings, are as follows:

Dartford tunnels
Dartford Tunnel Joint Committee
Tunnel offices
South orbital way
Dartford
DA1 5PR

Humber bridge
Humber Bridge Board
Guildhall
Kingston upon Hull
HU1 2AA

Itchen bridge
Hampshire county council
The Castle
Winchester
SO23 8UJ

Mersey tunnels
Merseyside Passenger Transport Authority
PO Box 87
Tithebarn House
Liverpool
L69 2LU

Tamar bridge
Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Joint Committee
The Manager
Torport Ferry Office
Torpoint
Cornwall
PL11 2AX

Tyne tunnel
Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Authority
Civic Centre
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE99 2BN

A40 (Improvement)

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what was the cost figure used for the acquisition of publicly owned land in the metropolitan green belt for the purpose of enabling the A40 improvement scheme to be undertaken at the junction with Long Lane, Hillingdon.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: At the 1987 public inquiry the total cost of all the land, including Hillingdon station, needed for this scheme was estimated at £3·375 million. No separate estimate was made for metropolitan green belt land. The actual purchase price will be a matter for negotiation with the landowners concerned.

Cars and Motor Cycles (Statistics)

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many cars and how many motor cycles

were registered and used on the roads of the United Kingdom in each of the last five years; and how many were involved in road accidents with *(a)* other vehicles, *(b)* no other vehicles involved and *(c)* pedestrians in each of the last five years.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The information requested for the last five years for which complete road accident data are available, is given in the table:

Cars and motor cycles: Great Britain: 1982 to 1986

	New registrations	*Currently licensed vehicles*	*Total involved in single vehicle accidents*	*Total involved in multiple vehicle accidents*	*Total colliding with a pedestrian*
1982					
Cars	1,584,300	15,453,000	65,603	203,154	44,543
Motor cycles	231,600	1,370,000	19,571	53,462	6,907
1983					
Cars	1,806,100	15,854,000	62,622	192,864	46,138
Motor cycles	174,500	1,290,000	16,831	49,131	5,938
1984					
Cars	1,759,300	16,529,000	66,105	207,324	48,020
Motor cycles	145,200	1,225,000	16,593	48,747	5,658
1985					
Cars	1,842,100	16,829,000	65,228	207,037	46,860
Motor cycles	125,800	1,148,000	14,261	43,561	4,719
1986					
Cars	1,883,200	17,389,000	65,978	218,003	46,908
Motor cycles	106,400	1,065,000	12,831	40,731	4,305

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Single Market (Competition Rules)

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if, in the light of his Department's promotion of the European single market, he will bring forward proposals for revising competition rules so as to be based on the European Community rather than the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement on the timescale for such reforms.

Mr. Alan Clark: Proposals for reform of restrictive trade practices legislation were published in my Department's Green Paper of March 1988, Cm. 331. These envisage a system which will be broadly consistent with the equivalent Community rules. The Government are participating fully in working party discussions of the draft EC proposals for a merger control regulation. It is expected that progress will be reviewed by the Council in June.

Trade Statistics

Mr. Hood: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what, for each year since 1975, was the percentage change in the balance of trade in manufacturing goods of Belgium, Denmark, France, Holland, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, West Germany and Japan.

Mr. Alan Clark: As the sign of the balance can vary from year to year, it is not appropriate to measure changes in the balance of trade in percentage terms. The balances in US dollars are in the table:

Crude balance of trade in manufactures[1] *(US$ Billion)*

	Belgium/ Luxem-bourg	*Denmark*	*France*	*Nether-lands*	*United Kingdom*	*United States of America*	*Federal Republic of Germany*	*Japan*
1975	+3·4	−2·0	+9·4	−1·2	+7·7	+17·3	+38·7	+41·6
1976	+3·4	−3·3	+5·4	−0·8	+7·3	+9·8	+42·1	+51·2
1977	+3·0	−3·0	+9·0	−3·1	+9·0	+0·3	+46·9	+63·0
1978	+3·5	−3·3	+9·9	−4·8	+7·0	−14·7	+53·6	+74·8
1979	+3·5	−3·7	+11·5	−4·7	+2·6	−3·3	+59·1	+72·6
1980	+3·9	−2·2	+7·3	−3·9	+8·4	10·8	+63·2	+95·1
1981	+4·4	−1·1	+8·8	−0·5	+5·1	+3·1	+61·7	+116·4
1982	+3·8	−1·6	+3·4	−0·1	+0·3	−14·1	+67·5	+104·6
1983	+4·8	−1·1	+6·3	−0·1	−7·5	−41·0	+58·7	+110·9
1984	+4·1	−1·7	+8·9	−0·5	−8·6	−90·8	+59·5	+128·5
1985	+5·1	−2·4	+7·3	−2·1	−7·6	−115·3	+67·5	+134·7
1986	+4·7	−4·5	+1·3	−4·7	−12·1	−147·1	+89·4	+160·2
1987	[2]+1½	[2]−3½	[2]−2½	[2]−7½	−16·3	[2]−154	[2]+105	[2]+164

[1] Standard International Trade Classification Sections 5 to 8.
[2] Estimate.
Sources: OECD National Sources.

Regional Development Grants

Mr. Blair: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what was the level of regional development grant allocated, by region, for each financial year from 1979-80 to 1987-88, what these figures are as a percentage of the total budget; and what they were in cash terms.

Mr. Atkins: Expenditure on regional development grant by English region, and as a percentage of the RDG total for England, in the financial years 1979-80 to 1987-88 is as follows:

£ million (percentage of England total in brackets)

	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88[2]
East Midlands	2·4 (1·1)	3·2 (1·2)	7·2 (2·0)	8·8 (3·1)	8·2 (3·7)	3·8 (1·8)	4·4 (2·6)	8·4 (3·3)	7·1 (5·1)
North East	107·0(51·0)	101·1(36·9)	109·7(31·2)	91·4(32·6)	68·8(30·7)	61·6(29·5)	46·4(27·9)	89·8(35·3)	57·6(41·4)
North West	74·1(35·3)	122·2(44·6)	177·5(50·5)	133·1(47·4)	115·5(51·6)	107·4(51·4)	83·0(49·8)	113·7(44·7)	49·7(35·7)
South West	5·0 (2·4)	8·5 (3·1)	10·3 (2·9)	11·0 (3·9)	7·8 (3·5)	9·5 (4·5)	8·6 (5·2)	15·3 (6·0)	7·0 (5·0)
West Midlands	[1]—	0·1 (0·04)	[1]—	[1]—	—	—	—	—	—
Yorkshire and Humberside	21·5(10·2)	38·7(14·1)	47·1(13·4)	36·4(13·0)	23·5(10·5)	26·8(12·8)	24·2(14·5)	27·1(10·7)	17·8(12·8)
Total RDG expenditure in England	210·0	273·8	351·8	280·7	223·8	209·1	166·6	254·3	139·2

[1] Negligible (that is, less than £50,000).
[2] Provisional.

Mr. Blair: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what was the level of regional development grant allocated to each of the counties of Cleveland, Cumbria, Durham, Northumberland and Tyne and Wear, for each financial year from 1979-80 to 1987-88, in cash terms.

Mr. Atkins: Expenditure on regional development grant in the areas and financial years requested was as follows:

£ million

	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88
Cleveland	61·6	43·7	43·7	22·8	22·6	20·6	10·6	30·0	15·5
Cumbria	15·4	16·5	34·1	35·8	32·5	25·5	19·7	10·8	3·7
Durham	7·3	7·3	9·4	8·3	4·6	7·1	5·2	11·3	9·5
Northumberland	2·5	4·3	5·9	5·4	2·2	3·1	0·9	2·1	3·4
Tyne and Wear	8·2	12·6	18·0	23·4	16·5	13·1	13·6	27·8	22·3

Note:
1987-88 data are provisional.

Chemical Weapon Detection Kits

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will lift the restrictions on the sales and export of chemical weapon detection kits to enable humanitarian aid to be given to victims and potential victims of chemical attack; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: No. Equipment specially designed for detection of chemical weapons is controlled under the Export of Goods (Control) Order 1987. There is no absolute ban on export. Applications for licences to export such goods are carefully considered on their merits depending upon the destination and the potential end user.

Joint Ventures (Soviet Union)

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, what assessment he has made of the implications for British industry of the clauses relating to joint ventures between Soviet and Western enterprises in the Soviet law on state enterprises which came into effect on 1 January.

Mr. Alan Clark: Soviet legislation permitting joint ventures with Western companies was introduced in January 1987 and amended in October 1987 to take account of some concerns expressed by potential Western participants. My Department and the British embassy in Moscow both constantly monitor the available information and provide advice to United Kingdom companies considering the possibility of joint ventures with a Soviet partner. It is for individual companies themselves to decide whether joint ventures are in their best commercial interests, and to negotiate terms which are acceptable to both partners. So far, two United Kingdom companies have signed such contracts, and several more are under active discussion.

Enterprise Zones (Soviet Union)

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he has received any proposals from the Soviet Government for British investment and involvement in the establishment of enterprise zones in that country; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: No proposals for British investment or involvement in the establishment of enterprise zones in the USSR have been received from the Soviet Government. If any are received in the future, we shall study them with interest.

Anglo-Soviet Trade

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will give the figures for the amount of official credit to finance Anglo-Soviet trade for each year between 1975 and 1987; and what information he has about any additional credit provided to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Mr. Alan Clark: It is not the practice of this or previous Governments to reveal the amount of official credit guaranteed by ECGD to individual countries. Figures for business insured and exports insured by area are published in ECGD's Summary of Audited Trading Results 1986-87. For information on other credit provided to the USSR one would need to approach those financial institutions involved.

Guinness plc

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether the report of the inspectors appointed to investigate the affairs of Guinness plc will be delayed until completion of the associated criminal prosecutions.

Mr. Maude: Yes.

House of Fraser (Holdings) plc

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he now expects the inspectors appointed to investigate the affairs of House of Fraser (Holdings) plc to report.

Mr. Maude: The investigation continues, but I am unable to say when a report will be received.

Furniture (Fire Safety)

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he has received any representations from officials or Ministers of European Community member states concerning the new furniture fire safety regulations.

Mr. Butcher: The only official approach to the Government on this subject of which I am aware has been from the Italian embassy in London. As a result a discussion of the implications of the draft regulations for Italian suppliers of furnishing fabrics took place on 9 May.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) what steps he has taken to discover the extent to which the pattern book industry has the capacity to replace the pattern books of furnishing fabric suppliers within the proposed time scale for the introduction of new furniture fire safety legislation;

(2) what assessment he has made of the cost to the suppliers of soft furnishing fabric of replacing pattern books when the new furniture fire safety regulations are implemented;

(3) what assessment he has made of the amount of time that small suppliers of soft furnishing fabric will require in order to replace their pattern books prior to the introduction of new furniture fire safety regulations.

Mr. Butcher: I have received representations on these subjects and I am taking them into account in my consideration of possible changes to the draft regulations.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what technological assistance will be provided by his Department in order to help suppliers of soft furnishing fabric to conform with the requirements of the new furniture fire safety regulations.

Mr. Butcher: Detailed technological assistance is available in industry from many furniture manufacturers, from the research associations for the furniture industry and textile suppliers, from fire retardant processing companies, from independent consultants and from test houses. Many of these bodies have done a great deal of work in the past in readiness for the announcement of a date when match resistance will be required and are ready to assist fabric suppliers in meeting the requirement.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) in how many domestic fires in each of the last five years furniture has been judged to be the point of ignition;

(2) in how many domestic fires in which the ignition point was judged to be furniture death has resulted from *(a)* burns and *(b)* fumes from furniture foam, in each of the last five years;

(3) how many people have died in domestic fires in each of the last five years; and how many of those deaths were judged to have been caused by *(a)* burns and *(b)* fumes from furniture foam.

Mr. Butcher: The last five full years' statistics give the following figures for fires where the material first ignited was upholstered furniture or covers:

Year	*Number*
1982	3,554
1983	3,325
1984	3,571
1985	3,551
1986	3,660

The numbers of deaths resulting from fires in which upholstered furniture was judged to be the item first ignited for the last available five years' statistics are as follows:

Year	*Number*
1982	145
1983	133
1984	148
1985	146
1986	156

I am not able at this point to provide specific data concerning cause of death for these, but there seems no reason to suppose that there is any disparity in the breakdown in the causes of death between these furniture fires and the general fire figures which are as follows:

Total Fires in Occupied Buildings

	1982	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Death due to					
Burns, number	258	249	262	281	300
as a percentage	33	31	32	30	33
Gas or Smoke asphyxiation, number	520	553	553	655	615
as a percentage	67	69	68	70	67

Accordingly the estimated answer to question (3) is as follows:

Fires in upholstered furniture

	1982	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Death due to					
Burns	48	41	47	44	51
Gas or smoke	97	92	101	102	105

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many representations he has so far received concerning furniture fire safety regulations.

Mr. Butcher: I have received about 260 representations about the draft regulations circulated on 1 March.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what funding will be provided by his Department in order to assist the suppliers of soft furnishing fabric to conform to new furniture fire safety regulations.

Mr. Butcher: All worthwhile proposals for financial assistance towards the development of products which make a contribution to consumer safety, such as chemical treatments which make textiles more resistant to fire, receive sympathetic consideration provided that such proposals meet the criteria for R and D policy set out in the White Paper.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what assessment his Department has made of the effect that the new furniture fire safety regulations will have on European Community trade after 1992.

Mr. Butcher: All suppliers of furniture, components, and furnishings to the British market will compete on an equal basis. It is possible that some continental suppliers will find the British market less attractive than they do at present, since our legal requirements for fire resistance of furniture will be so far ahead of those in the rest of Europe. But differences already exist and do not inhibit trade within the Community. I am satisfied that our new regulations will not have the effect of erecting new barriers to trade, in contravention of the treaty of Rome.

As for any effect on British exports, the regulations will not apply to goods destined for export. Some exporters of furnishing textiles have claimed that the effect of the draft regulations would be to require them to offer separate ranges of fabrics for the home and export trades and that this would involve unacceptable extra costs, so that their export business would in practice be adversely affected. I am taking this possibility into account in my consideration of possible changes to the draft regulations.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what assessment he has made of the overall cost for soft furnishing suppliers of meeting the new furniture fire safety regulations.

Mr. Butcher: All proposals for new regulations are subject to compliance cost assessment, a formal procedure carried out by professional economists within the DTI and designed to establish whether the compliance costs to industry, and to consumers, are proportionate to the benefits which the regulations will bring.

A correct assessment of costs will depend on the final detail of the regulations to be determined in the near future.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) what steps he has taken to discover the extent to which the capacity and the proven technology exist for the full variety of furnishing fabrics to conform to the new furniture fire safety regulations;

(2) what assessment his Department has made of the effects of present fire retardant treatments on high quality textiles.

Mr. Butcher: The objective of the draft regulations is to reduce the risk of fire associated with upholstered furniture and bedding. There is therefore no question of tailoring them to enable the full variety of furnishing fabrics now commercially available to conform. On the contrary, it will be necessary for suppliers of furnishing fabrics to modify the range of products which they offer. The majority of furnishing fabrics now in use can be effectively treated to make them match-resistant and still viable in other respects such as appearance and durability. I accept that some high quality textiles may be adversely affected, for example, in appearance. I am considering the ways in which the regulations may be modified in order to take account of consumer preferences for fabrics which present problems in this respect. But the industry should recognise that a reduction in consumer choice is part of the price to be paid for increased safety.

DEFENCE

Falkland Islands

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the military projects undertaken by the Government in the Falkland Islands and the cost of each to date both in current and 1988 prices.

Mr. Ian Stewart *[holding answer 20 May 1988]:* The two major military works projects were the construction of the airfield at Mount Pleasant, and the works undertaken to concentrate the garrison at Mount Pleasant, for which the cash costs were about £300 million and £110 million respectively. The costs at September 1987 prices were about £370 million and £130 million respectively.

SCOTLAND

Electricity Industry

18. **Mr. Millan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps he is taking to ensure that the Scottish electricity industry, if privatised, will not fall under foreign control.

Mr. Rifkind: The Government are considering whether any special share arrangements are required for the privatised electricity industry. Our decision will be announced in due course.

42. **Mr. Maclennan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he intends to make a definitive statement on the Government's strategic priorities for the electricity supply industry, as foreshadowed in his White Paper, Cm. 327.

Mr. Rifkind: Discussions with the Scottish electricity boards on the future structure of the privatised industry and a range of other related issues are continuing. I will announce the outcome of these deliberations in due course.

47. **Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what further consultations he has undertaken on the privatisation of the electricity industry.

Mr. Lang: Detailed discussions with the Scottish electricity boards on a wide range of issues relating to privatisation are continuing on a regular basis. Representatives of customers and employees are also being consulted about matters of concern to them.

Job Creation

19. **Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement about the level of job creation in Scotland over the past five years.

Mr. Lang: Comprehensive figures on the level of job creation in Scotland are not available. However, in the

period April 1983 to March 1988, offers of regional selective assistance (RSA) were associated with the creation of 48,000 new jobs, and the safeguarding of a further 32,000 jobs.

Housing Benefit

20. **Mr. Buchan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received from Scottish local authorities about the impact of changes in the housing benefit system on the application of the Government's housing policies in Scotland.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Seven letters from individual local authorities, and one from the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities have included reference to the impact of housing benefit changes along with other comments on the Government's housing proposals.

24. **Mr. David Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the impact of recent changes in the housing benefit system on the objectives set out in his White Paper "Housing in Scotland" (Cm. 242).

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The changes made recently to the housing benefit system ensure that housing benefit is better targeted to those who need it. This will help them to take advantage of the new opportunities for renting being provided by the Housing (Scotland) Bill.

31. **Mr. Ernie Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received concerning the effects on local government in Scotland of the recent alterations to the system of housing benefit payments.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Representations on the reformed housing benefit system, including the most recent changes, have been received from local authorities and members of the public. In addition, my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State and my hon. Friend the Minister of State have had discussions over the last year with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities about the new system as part of our regular round of meetings on local government finance.

54. **Mr. Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what changes will occur in the level of rate support grant paid to local authorities by his Department as a result of the alterations in the system of housing benefit payments.

Mr. Lang: The costs of preparing for the new system of housing benefit payments were met through a 100 per cent. specific grant. There was therefore no direct effect on rate support grant.

Devolution

21. **Mr. McAllion:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his policy on devolving political decision-making on exclusively Scottish matters from Westminster to Scotland.

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Member must know that the Scottish Office already has responsibility for a very wide range of Government functions in Scotland.

South of Scotland Electricity Board

22. **Mr. Eadie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he proposes to meet the chairman of the South of Scotland Electricity Board to discuss electricity generation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend meets the chairman of the South of Scotland Electricity Board from time to time to discuss a wide range of issues affecting the industry, although he has no immediate plans for a meeting.

Hospital Catering and Cleaning Services

23. **Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what progress has been made with the privatisation of hospital catering and cleaning services; and if he proposes to seek further powers in this connection.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Health boards are making good progress with the current phase of competitive tendering and are now seeking tenders for domestic and catering contracts. No additional powers are required in this area.

Rating Reform

25. **Mr. Kennedy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received from the clergy over the impact of the poll tax; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend has received 81 representations from the clergy and church organisations since the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Bill was enacted in May last year. These representations covered a range of issues related to the introduction of the community charge including the effects of rating reform on church buildings, and the effects of the community charge on members of religious communities and on ministers of religion and their families.

27. **Mr. Strang:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will place in the Library copies of all written guidance he has issued to community charge registration officers.

Mr. Lang: The procedural requirements for the community charge registration system are fully set out in the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987 and the regulations which have been made under it. Copies of the departmental circulars drawing the attention of local authorities to the Act and the regulations have been placed in the Library.

29. **Mr. Douglas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has on the latest numbers registering for exemption from the poll tax on the basis of returns to community charge registration officers.

Mr. Lang: This information is not available centrally.

30. **Sir Russell Johnston:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has as to what level of community charge registration has been reached in the Highland region.

Mr. Lang: Detailed information on the progress of community charge registration is not available centrally.

41. **Mr. Galloway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many letters concerning poll tax registration his Department has received from members of the public since 1 April.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend has received 144 such letters since 1 April.

48. **Mr. Worthington:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions have taken place between his Department and community charge registration officials concerning the process of registration for poll tax purposes since 1 April.

51. **Mr. Canavan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he has had any communications with poll tax registration officers to ascertain what progress is being made in the registration process.

Mr. Lang: There have been no formal discussions. Informal contacts with registration officers indicate that the registration process is going smoothly.

Nationalised Industries

26. **Mr. Fallon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people are employed by nationalised industries in Scotland.

Mr. Lang: The estimate of the latest employment in nationalised industries in Scotland is about 70,000. This estimate has been compiled from figures based on somewhat different dates and methods of compilation.

Electricity Boards

28. **Dr. Reid:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board and the South of Scotland Electricity Board concerning the geographical divisions between the two boards following privatisation.

Mr. Lang: None.

Schools (Opting Out)

32. **Mr. McFall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with education authorities on the opting out of Scottish schools; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: None.

36. **Mr. McAvoy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received concerning the opting out of schools from local authority management; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: We have published no proposals on this subject and have received few representations specifically concerned with it; but I am aware that a recent independent opinion poll indicated that 31 per cent. of parents supported the proposition that parents should be allowed to take their school out of education authority control if a majority wished to do so.

38. **Mr. McKelvey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to announce his plans for the opting out of Scottish schools; what arrangements will be made for consultation with interested parties; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: No decisions have been taken about the introduction of legislation on this subject.

Health Boards

33. **Dr. Moonie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what rate of inflation was used when he calculated the level of resources allocated to Scottish health boards for 1988-89.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: 4·5 per cent.

Co-Star Ltd.

34. **Mr. Lambie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a further statement on the affairs of Co-Star Ltd.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The affairs of this company are still the subject of investigation by the liquidator who will report any evidence of criminality to the police or procurator fiscal.

Scottish Development Agency

35. **Mr. Allen Adams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will arrange to meet representatives of the Scottish Development Agency and Renfrew district council to consider future industrial development plans for the Renfrew area.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend has no such plans at present. I understand, however, that the Renfrew Development Company, comprising representatives of the private sector, the Scottish Development Agency and the regional and district councils now meets on a monthly basis and discusses, among other things, the development of the local economy.

National Farmers Union

37. **Mrs. Margaret Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met members of the Scottish National Farmers Union; and what issues were discussed.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: My right hon. and learned Friend last met members of the union at their annual dinner in Glasgow on 10 March, where a wide range of matters of mutual concern was discussed.

Overseas Development Agency (East Kilbride)

39. **Mr. Ingram:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he proposes to publish the report commissioned by his Department on the relocation of Civil Service posts to the Overseas Development Agency establishment in East Kilbride.

Mr. Lang: I anticipate that the report, which was commissioned by the Industry Department for Scotland, will be published in the second half of June this year. A summary article will also appear in the next issue of the *Scottish Economic Bulletin* which is due to be published around the end of June.

Maternity Services (Rural Areas)

40. **Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received about the future of maternity services provision in rural areas.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: My right hon. and learned Friend and I have received a considerable number of representations about the future of maternity services provision in Grampian. These will be fully taken into account when we come to consider the board's formal closure submissions.

Local Government

43. **Mr. Steel:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans there are to reform the structure of local government in Scotland.

Mr. Rifkind: I have no specific plans at present, but shall be taking views on whether and how the present structure could be improved.

Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive

44. **Mr. Salmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent meetings he has had with the United Kingdom Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive; and what subjects were discussed.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. and learned Friend has had no recent meetings with the executive.

Crime Prevention Panels

45. **Mr. Bill Walker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans to introduce guidelines to chief constables in the matter of appointments to crime prevention panels; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: No.

Seals

46. **Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the latest evidence available to him of the trend in the population of seals around the coast of Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Rifkind: The most recent advice obtained from the National Environment Research Council on grey seals estimated the population around the coast of Scotland to be approximately 87,000 in 1986 and 92,500 in 1987. Comparable figures for common seals are not available. The most recent surveys by the council estimated the minimum size of this population to be approximately 18,000 in 1986. Further surveys are planned for 1989 and 1990.

Ayrshire and Arran Health Board

49. **Mr. Foulkes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met the chairman of the Ayrshire and Arran health board to discuss the development of National Health Service facilities in Ayrshire.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I have not met the chairman of Ayrshire and Arran health board to discuss development of National Health Service facilities in Ayrshire. On behalf of my right hon. and learned Friend I meet health board chairmen three times a year to discuss a range of matters. The last in this series of meetings was on 18 March.

COSLA

50. **Mr. Andrew Welsh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met representatives of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend last met representatives of COSLA on Friday 29 April to discuss local government finance.

Class Actions

52. **Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations the Lord Advocate has received about the introduction of class actions into Scottish legal procedure; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Representations have been received recently from the Consumers' Association. My noble and learned Friend, the Lord Advocate, and my right hon. and learned Friend, the Secretary of State for Scotland, are considering steps to improve the availability in Scotland of an effective judicial remedy for a number of individuals with similar complaints against a common defender.

Labour Statistics

53. **Mr. Tom Clarke:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the current level of unemployment in Scotland; and what it was in 1979.

Mr. Lang: On 14 April 1988 (the latest date for which information is available) the number of unemployed claimants in Scotland was 309,084 (12·6 per cent.). The corresponding figure for April 1979 was 164,432 (6·7 per cent.). The figures are not directly comparable due to changes in the compilation of the statistics.

Private Medical Clinics

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the total number of beds in private medical clinics in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: In terms of the Nursing Homes Registration (Scotland) Act 1938 as amended, 5,063 beds were available in private nursing homes and hospitals as at 31 March 1987.

Ruchill Hospital, Glasgow

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has on the proposed closure of the pathology department at Ruchill hospital, Glasgow; what effect the closure will have on the treatment of AIDS; and what consultations have taken place with staff.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I understand that the Greater Glasgow health board is conducting a review of the laboratory services in its area, including the pathology units. No decision will be taken concerning the future of any of the pathology departments, including that at Ruchill, until the outcome of the review is known later this year. The board intends that there will be full consultation with the staff associations.

Patients (Transport Costs)

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what were the costs, both in absolute and percentage terms, spent on transportation of patients to and from medical establishments in the latest year for which figures are available in *(a)* the Western Isles, *(b)* the Highlands and *(c)* the Borders.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The transportation of patients in Scotland is the prime responsibility of the Scottish ambulance service. In financial year 1986-87, costs incurred in the two Scottish ambulance service areas which include the Western Isles, the Highlands and the Borders were as follows:

£,000 1986-87

Scottish ambulance service	*Highlands and Western Isles* £	*Fife, Lothian and Borders* £	*Scotland* £
Total costs	2,048	5,861	26,994
Percentage of Scotland total	7·6	21·7	100

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what percentage of the health budget accounts for travel costs in each of the following health boards *(a)* the Western Isles *(b)* the Highlands and *(c)* the Borders in the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I assume the question relates to reimbursement of patients' travel costs. The patients' travelling expenses schemes are centrally funded and do not affect the annual allocation to each health board. Expenditure on the schemes in 1986-87 in the respective health board areas is set out in the table.

	Expenditure on patients travelling expenses schemes 1986-87 £'000s	*Equivalent percentage of health board allocation for 1986-87 Percentage*
Western Isles Health Board area	256	3·3
Highland Health Board area	361	0·6
Borders Health Board area	1	0·004

Chief Medical Officer

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whom outside Her Majesty's Government he is consulting about the appointment of the new chief medical officer; and when he expects to make an appointment.

Mr. Rifkind: The appointment of a chief medical officer, Scottish Home and Health Department, is being made under Civil Service Commission arrangements. A public advertisement has invited suitably qualified persons to apply for the post. The selection board interviews will be held in June with a view to appointing a successful candidate who will be expected to take up post on the retirement of the present chief medical officer.

Audit

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the British Medical Association and the Medical Practitioners Union concerning audit.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: None.

Hospitals (Quality of Care)

Mr Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list since 1979 the projects with their costs approved by the Scottish Home and Health Department designed to examine quality of care in Scottish hospitals.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible and will arrange for a copy of the letter to be placed in the Library.

Farmers

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many farmers there are in each region of Scotland at the latest convenient date.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information required is shown in the table. The data is from the June agricultural census 1987.

Region	*Number of farmers*
Islands	2,061
Highlands	2,629
Grampian	4,431
Tayside	1,952
Fife	681
Lothian	706
Borders	1,190
Central	731
Strathclyde	4,078
Dumfries and Galloway	2,240
Scotland	20,699

Farm Workers

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many farm workers are employed in each region of Scotland at the latest convenient date.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information required is shown in the table. The data is from the June agricultural census 1987:

Region	*Total employed*
Islands	968
Highlands	2,020
Grampian	5,603
Tayside	3,892
Fife	1,777
Lothian	1,892
Borders	2,724
Central	1,068
Strathclyde	5,724
Dumfries and Galloway	4,173

Region	Total employed
Scotland	29,841

Hospital Waiting Lists

Mr. Dunnachie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many patients are currently on waiting lists for in-patient treatment at National Health Service hospitals in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The provisional figure for 30 September 1987 is 77,772. The industrial action in 1982 led to an increase of over 29,000 in the waiting lists between March 1981 and March 1983, and the recent industrial action has resulted in nearly 3,500 operations being cancelled between January and April this year.

Prisons (Reports)

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will place in the Library copies of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland's reports on Aberdeen, Inverness and Dungavel prisons.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Copies of the reports of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland on Aberdeen, Inverness and Dungavel prisons, with my response, are being placed in the Library today. I have also sent copies of the relevant reports to the Members in whose constituencies the prisons are located and to the chairman of the Scottish all-party penal affairs group, and to other interested bodies. Further copies may also be purchased from the Department.

Legal Aid

Sir Hector Monro: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he has considered making legal aid available for multi-party actions as is now provided for, as respects England and Wales, by the Legal Aid Bill.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I consider that my regulation-making powers under the Legal Aid (Scotland) Act 1986 are sufficiently wide to allow legal aid for multi-party actions without the need for primary legislation.

New Towns

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing, for each of the five Scottish new towns for the years 1974-75 to 1989-90, inclusive, the actual or estimated *(a)* hectares and population within the designated area, *(b)* hectares and population of the host district councils, *(c)* numbers of employed persons within the designated area and *(d)* numbers of employed persons within the area of the district council.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 28 April 1988]:* The information requested is as follows:

A. Hectares and population within the designated area.

Table 1 shows population for each of the towns as at 31 March each year and is based on figures supplied to the Industry Department for Scotland by the development corporations. Table 2 details the designated areas as at 31 March for 1974, 1975, 1986 and 1987; no detailed information is available for the years 1976-85 inclusive, or for 1988-90.

B. Hectares and population of the "host" district councils.

Table 1 gives the Registrar General's mid-year estimates of population for the "host" district councils. Table 2 details the area in hectares of the host district councils for the years shown; information for other years between 1974 and 1988 is not available.

Table 1
"Host" district populations

Mid year	Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	East Kilbride	Kirkcaldy	Cunninghame	West Lothian
1974	51,868	79,458	148,234	130,356	122,906
1975	53,534	81,861	148,353	132,265	123,708
1976	55,557	84,083	149,006	134,322	127,338
1977	56,873	85,556	149,448	136,179	131,475
1978	60,969	84,403	150,036	136,174	134,273
1979	62,463	84,096	149,508	137,042	136,670
1980	63,103	83,757	149,933	137,556	137,875
1981	62,245	83,204	149,527	137,304	139,314
1982	62,802	82,951	149,488	137,207	140,244
1983	62,794	82,524	149,491	137,683	140,700
1984	63,040	82,441	149,423	137,291	141,532
1985	62,970	81,952	148,894	137,094	141,944
1986	62,503	81,837	148,193	137,147	140,545
1987	62,547	81,718	147,963	137,265	141,684

Source: General Register Office (Scotland).

Table 2
Area (in hectares) of "Host" district councils for Scottish new towns

Town	"Host" district	[1]1975	1980	1985	1988
Cumbernauld	Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	7,918	9,481	10,298	10,298
East Kilbride	East Kilbride	34,312	28,490	28,490	28,490
Glenrothes	Kirkcaldy	23,754	24,835	24,820	24,835

Town	"Host" district	[1]1975	1980	1985	1988
Irvine	Cunninghame	63,345	87,859	87,859	87,859
Livingston	West Lothian	42,230	42,305	42,305	42,305

Source: Municipal Year Book

[1] 1975 was the year in which the reforms embodied in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 were implemented.

C. Numbers of employed persons within the designated area.

Up to 1981 the Census of Employment was based on the Department of Employment's Local Employment Office Areas (LEOA's). These correspond quite closely to the designated areas of the New Towns but are not precisely comparable. Irvine New Town covers 2 LEOA's, namely Irvine and Kilwinning. The 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978 and 1981 Census of Employment data is shown in Table 1; no Census was conducted in 1979, 1980, 1982 or 1983. The Livingston LEOA includes Mid Calder in 1981. The 1984 and 1987 Census of Employment data is based on travel to work areas, which do not correspond to New Town designated areas [eg East Kilbride lies within the Glasgow travel to work area]. No Census of Employment took place in 1985 or 1986 and none is planned for 1988. The results from the 1987 Census of Employment are not yet available; there are no forecasts of employment for the years 1989-90.

The New Town Development Corporations conduct regular surveys of employment within their areas. These surveys employ different definitions and methods of data collection as between Towns and the resultant figures are not necessarily consistent with official sources. These figures were collated and replicated as Appendix 2 in the National Audit Office Report no. 276, "Industry Department for Scotland: Review of Scottish new Towns", published on 22 January 1988; copies of that Report are available in the Library.

Table 1
Numbers of employed persons within new town designated areas

Local employment office area	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1981
Cumbernauld	11,873	12,167	12,088	11,244	11,458	11,579
East Kilbride	29,246	29,137	30,904	29,790	28,728	26,094
Glenrothes	19,189	16,725	18,999	18,881	19,946	18,858
Irvine	22,192	22,013	23,086	23,356	22,258	18,715
Livingston	8,546	8,771	9,722	9,641	11.551	13,145
Total	91,046	88,813	94,799	92,912	93,941	88,391

Note: The figures relate to persons in employment and do not distinguish between full and part time employment.

D. Numbers of employed persons within the area of the district council.

Census of Employment data for local government districts is only readily available for 1981 and 1984 and is reproduced below.

New town	District council	1981	1984
Cumbernauld	Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	14,180	14,603
East Kilbride	East Kilbride	28,303	29,772
Glenrothes	Kirkcaldy	58,059	56,019
Irvine	Cunninghame	36,949	37,042
Livingston	West Lothian	42,186	43,607

Note: The figures relate to numbers of employed persons and do not distinguish between full and part-time employees.

Table 1
Scottish new towns' population 1974-87

	Cumbernauld	East Kilbride	Glenrothes	Irvine	Livingston
1974	36,800	69,540	31,500	47,600	20,938
1975	39,810	71,830	31,100	48,700	22,459
1976	43,418	74,800	32,500	50,700	25,117
1977	44,709	76,250	33,900	53,800	30,600
1978	47,111	76,100	35,100	58,000	33,864
1979	49,406	75,850	35,650	59,000	35,294
1980	50,433	75,800	37,000	58,700	37,064
1981	50,748	76,100	37,000	58,900	38,677
1982	50,812	71,000	37,500	57,300	37,295
1983	49,216	70,600	36,500	56,300	38,828
1984	49,469	70,500	37,500	57,150	39,300
1985	49,739	70,200	38,000	57,500	39,550
1986	50,308	70,000	38,000	58,000	40,380
1987	48,839	69,700	38,400	58,600	40,500

Table 2
Scottish new towns' designated areas 1974-1987 (hectares)

	1974	1975	1986	1987
Cumbernauld	3,115·2	3,115·2	3,154	3,154
East Kilbride	4,100	4,100	4,151	4,151
Glenrothes	2,292	2,292	2,321	2,321
Irvine	4,976	4,976	5,038	5,038
Livingston	2,676	2,676	2,780	2,780

Forestry Grant-aid

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland why, pursuant to his answer of 11 May, *Official Report*, column *107*, information concerning the payment of forestry grant-aid in Sutherland and Caithness is not kept on a readily available basis; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 23 May 1988]:* The information is readily available on a case-by-case basis. Since however, these records are not computerised, it would have been necessary to examine hundreds of individual files in order to provide the comprehensive information requested by the hon. Member.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Nuclear Weapons

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is Her Majesty's Government's response to the proposals of the Warsaw treaty countries for a comprehensive ban on nuclear weapons testing; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: We have not responded to the proposal of the Warsaw treaty countries, nor do we intend to do so.

Human Rights

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the Government's commitment to human rights in their conduct of foreign policy.

Mr. Mellor: We are firmly committed to the promotion and protection of human rights and seek universal observance of the standards which have been agreed internationally for that purpose. We are concerned about violations of human rights wherever they occur and regularly raise such problems in our bilateral contacts with other Governments and in international forums such as the United Nations. Our position was set out clearly in the statement issued by Foreign Ministers of the Twelve on 21 July 1986. Copies of that statement and of the speech given by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State to the United Nations Commission on human rights on 18 February have been placed in the Library.

Federated European State

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is Her Majesty's Government's policy with regard to progression towards a federated European state.

Mrs. Chalker: Our policy within the Community is based on commitments we entered into under the EC treaties. Nowhere do these treaties refer to progression towards a federated European state.

Chemical Disarmament

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what further initiatives Her Majesty's Government have planned in the field of chemical disarmament; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: Information about the exchange of visits between the United Kingdom chemical defence establishment at Porton Down and the Soviet chemical warfare facility at Shikhany was given to the House by my hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Armed Forces on 5 May. The Soviet team is visiting Porton Down this week and as part of the programme will have talks in the FCO on 27 May about the continuing negotiations in Geneva for a comprehensive and global ban on chemical weapons. I expect to visit Geneva in July to address the conference on disarmament. A substantial part of my speech will deal with the subject of chemical weapons, particularly some of the remaining problem areas in the negotiations for a global ban.

Grenada

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Grenada concerning the plight of political prisoners and the operation of the judicial system there; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: No such representations have been made to the Government of Grenada. We are unaware of any political prisoners there. As an independent Commonwealth country, it is for Grenada alone to determine the judicial system it wishes to operate.

Fiji

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to ensure that there is a commitment to equal rights in Fiji before continuing with any aid.

Mr. Mellor: Our policy on the allocation of bilateral aid to developing countries is based on a set of criteria published in 1987 in Cm. 225 "Bilateral Aid: Country Programmes Observations by the Government." We will continue to be guided by these criteria when considering appropriate levels of aid.

North Korea

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if there are any plans to recognise the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: We have no plans to recognise North Korea.

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on current relations with North Korea.

Mr. Mellor: We do not recognise North Korea as a state and have no diplomatic relations with any authorities there.

Syria

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on relations with the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Mellor: We broke diplomatic relations with Syria in 1986 following evidence of Syrian Government complicity in the attempt by Nizar Hindawi to plant a bomb in an El Al airliner.

We do not propose to resume relations until the Syrians abandon their support for international terrorism.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Regional Selective Assistance

Mr. Gwilym Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the corporation tax yield from regional selective assistance in 1987-88; and what is the estimated yield for 1988-89.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The information required to provide an estimate is not available and could not be collected without disproportionate expense.

Debt Provision

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total tax relief made available to United Kingdom banks for debt provision to less developed countries in each financial year from 1973-74 in constant 1987 pound sterling.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The reductions in tax receipts as a result of losses incurred by banks on irrecoverable overseas loans are estimated to be as follows:

	£ million
1985-86	20
1986-87	30
1987-88	270

The effects on receipts for earlier years are zero or negligible.

Currency Fluctuations

Mr. Hood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what, for each year since 1975, was the percentage fluctuation in the value of the national currencies of Belgium, Denmark, France, Holland, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, West Germany and Japan.

Mr. Lilley: The following table shows, for each of the eight countries in question, percentage changes in effective exchange rates, as computed by the International Monetary Fund, for the years 1975 to 1987.

Effective exchange rates: percentage changes in annual averages

	Belgium	*Denmark*	*France*	*Netherlands*	*United Kingdom*	*United States*	*Germany*	*Japan*
1975	−2·6	0·7	8·1	−4·2	−7·7	−2·5	1·3	−1·9
1976	1·5	1·4	−4·4	2·3	−14·3	5·1	4·9	4·2
1977	5·6	0·5	−4·5	6·8	−5·2	−0·5	7·8	10·6
1978	3·7	2·0	0·0	4·7	0·4	−8·6	6·3	23·0
1979	2·4	1·3	2·2	3·4	7·1	−2·2	6·1	−7·2
1980	0·2	−7·0	1·0	1·1	10·0	0·1	1·0	−3·8
1981	−6·8	−10·0	−10·6	−6·8	−1·1	12·7	−7·3	13·1
1982	−9·8	−5·5	−9·2	4·0	−4·7	11·7	4·2	−5·7
1983	−4·0	−2·0	−8·7	0·9	−8·0	5·8	2·3	10·1
1984	−3·2	−5·0	−6·0	−3·1	−5·6	7·9	−2·7	5·7
1985	0·7	1·4	0·9	0·4	−0·5	4·5	−0·2	2·4
1986	6·2	10·4	6·1	11·0	−6·9	−18·4	10·9	26·7
1987	4·7	6·6	2·4	7·2	−0·4	−11·9	7·6	8·2

Source: IMF International Financial Statistics.

Incomes

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many tax units will be on incomes, including unearned income, in excess of £30,000 in 1988-89.

Mr. Norman Lamont: About one million. This estimate is based on a projection of the 1985-86 survey of personal incomes and is therefore provisional.

Child Benefit

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what consideration has been given to the taxation of child benefit; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister gave the hon. Member for Woolwich (Mr. Cartwright) on 17 May.

Vehicle Excise Duty

Mr. French: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he is taking to ensure that in 1988-89 less revenue is lost from vehicle excise duty evasion in the United Kingdom than during the 1987-88 financial year.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I have been asked to reply.

In 1988-89 we shall, with the support of the police, pursue VED evadors more vigorously. A record number of enforcement campaigns is planned, covering almost half the vehicle population in England, Scotland and Wales.

Campaigns induce motorists to tax their vehicles voluntarily through local publicity and lead to the automatic prosecution of those who ignore the warnings given. During the year, the last of the vehicle registration offices will get computer terminals linked to the DVLC vehicles register.

The number of evadors brought to book through prosecutions or out of court settlements has increased every year since 1981-82 and a further increase is planned in 1988-89.

Income Tax

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the estimated annual cost of abolishing the income limits for the various age allowances against income tax; and how many taxpayers would benefit respectively.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 16 May 1988]:* The full year cost of abolishing the aged income limit in 1988-89 would be about £190 million and about 750,000

single people and married couples would benefit. The estimates are based on a projection of the 1985-86 survey of personal incomes and are therefore provisional.

Exchange Rate

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from the Scottish Confederation of British Industry for a stable exchange rate; and what response he has sent.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 23 May 1988]:* My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has received no representations from the Scottish CBI about the exchange rate this year.

WALES

Water Rates

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the average annual cost of water rates in Wales; what is the environmental services component; and if he will give this information in real and cash terms for the current year and 1987.

Mr. Grist: The information requested is as follows:

Welsh water authority: Average household bills

Pounds

	1987-88 (Estimated outturn)	*1988-89 (Budget estimate)*	*1988-89 (1987-88 prices)*
Average household bill	122·61	134·57	128·78
Environmental service charge component	2·15	2·32	2·22

Riverways and Freshwater Lakes

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the estimated total length of riverways and total surface area of freshwater lakes in Wales.

Mr. Grist: The information is not available in the form requested. Estimates made for the Welsh Water Authority's "A strategic plan for water-space recreation and amenity" showed that the surface area of inland waters in Wales was 30,700 acres. The surface area of freshwater lakes in the ownership of the water authorities in Wales is some 13,400 acres. The estimated total length of "main" rivers in Wales is 3,600 miles.

Notes:

Inland waters are:

(a) rivers, streams, other watercourses, whether or not natural, artificial or tidal;

(b) lakes, ponds, reservoirs, docks;

(c) channels, creeks, bays, estuaries and arms of the sea.

Main rivers are:

A watercourse for which a water authority accepts responsibility for its land drainage functions.

Welsh Water Authority

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much was spent by the Welsh water authority on *(a)* water quality regulation, *(b)* water resources, *(c)* water supply, *(d)* land drainage and flood protection, *(e)* recreation, amenities, fisheries and navigation, and *(f)* sewage collection treatment and disposal in 1987-88.

Mr. Grist: The information requested will not be available until the Welsh water authority publishes its annual accounts for 1987-88.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many staff were employed by the Welsh water authority at the latest available date.

Mr. Grist: At 31 March 1988, the Welsh water authority employed 4,618 people (full-time equivalents).

Ofwat

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what proposals his Department is currently making with regard to the prospective powers of Ofwat; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment on Friday 20 May 1988.

Health Authorities (Expenditure)

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the main areas of spending in Welsh regional health authorities.

Mr. Grist: There are no regional health authorities in Wales. However, the main areas of health authorities' spending in Wales in 1986-87, the latest financial year for which information is available, were as follows:

	£ thousands
Hospital services	542,762
Community health service	67,270
Other services[1]	33,737
Headquarters administration	26,931
Total revenue expenditure	670,700
Capital expenditure	60,716
Total expenditure	731,416

Source: Health Authorities Annual Accounts.

[1] Includes ambulance services, blood transfusion services, emergency bed services, contractual hospitals and, homes, community health councils and other expenditure.

Handicapped Pupils

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give the number of local education authority areas in which there is a physiotherapy service available in schools, including special schools, to answer the needs of handicapped pupils.

Mr. Grist: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what steps are being taken to ensure that all the technical, polytechnical and further education colleges in Wales are fully accessible for students in wheelchairs.

Mr. Grist: It is the responsibility of education authorities and others providing educational buildings to make provision for disabled students. For new buildings, education authorities must observe the minimum requirements of the Department of Education and Science

design note No. 18 (1984) "Access for disabled people to Educational Buildings" which cover the question of wheelchair access.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many handicapped pupils were registered in January 1987 with local education authorities in Wales as having a need for special education and have that need satisfied at special schools outside Wales.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: In January 1987 local authorities in Wales recorded 13,163 pupils for whom they were or will be maintaining a statement of special educational needs. Information is not available on the number of statemented pupils receiving special education at special schools outside Wales, but in January 1987 a total of 458 statemented pupils were receiving special education in a Welsh or English local authority other than their own.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much his Department has spent or provided in the last financial year on improving access to educational buildings in Wales for disabled students.

Mr. Grist: Improved access for disabled students is incorporated into the design of new and improved educational buildings. The costs of such provision are not normally separately distinguished.

Welsh Language

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the circulars which have been issued by his Department over the past 20 years to local education authorities in Wales dealing with the teaching of the Welsh language or the provision of education through the medium of the Welsh language.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The information is as follows:

Date of Issue	*Reference*	*Title*
29 November 1977	WO 185/77	Local education authority arrangements for the school curriculum 1
12 December 1978	WO 153/78	Co-ordination of services for children under five
15 August 1980	WO 31/80	Grants for Welsh language education 1980-81
5 January 1981	WO 3/81	Grants for Welsh language education 1981-82
10 August 1981	WO 38/81	Grants for Welsh language education 1982-83
1 October 1981	WO 44/81	"The School Curriculum" and "Welsh in Schools"
29 June 1982	WO 28/82	Grants for Welsh language education 1983-84
24 June 1983	WO 37/83	Grants for Welsh language education 1984-85
8 December 1983	WO 59/83	"The School Curriculum" and "Welsh in Schools" 2
12 June 1984	WO 31/84	Education Act 1980: Section 21 Grants for Welsh language education 1985-86
4 June 1985	WO 30/85	Education Act 1980: Section 21 Grants for Welsh language education 1986-87
18 June 1986	WO 29/86	Education Act 1980: Section 21 Grants for Welsh language education 1987-88
24 June 1987	WO 34/87	Education Act 1980: Section 21 Grants for Welsh language education 1988-89

Notes

1. Responses to Section G (Welsh language) of this circular are summarised in "Local Authority arrangements for the school curriculum" (Welsh Office, 1979)
2. Responses to this circular are summarised in "Local Authority reviews of the school curriculum in Wales" (Welsh Office, June 1986).

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales in how many secondary schools in Wales it is now possible for pupils to undertake most or all of their education through the medium of the Welsh language; and how many pupils currently receive all or a large part of their secondary education through the medium of the Welsh language.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The latest available information for maintained secondary schools relates to September 1987 and is given in the table:

Number of subjects taught through the medium of Welsh	*Number of schools*	*Number of pupils on roll*
16 or more subjects	25	17,634
11 to 15 subjects	13	7,628
6 to 10 subjects	2	1,563
1 to 5 subjects	13	10,043

Welsh Development Agency

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the present employment level in Welsh Development Agency factories; and what were the comparable figures for 1979.

Mr. Peter Walker: Information in the form requested is not available. I have asked the Welsh Development Agency to undertake the necessary analysis and when this is complete I will write to the hon. Gentleman and place a copy of my reply in the Library of the House.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) how many people have been employed by the Welsh Development Agency in each year from 1979 to 1987;

(2) what was the last budget of the Welsh Development Agency in each year since 1979; what was the increase in real terms in the budget from 1979 to 1981-82, 1982-83, 1983-84, 1984-85, 1985-86 and 1986-87; and what was the increase in staff from 1979 to the present time.

Mr. Peter Walker: The information is as follows:

Gross mainstream latest budgets (£ million)

	Cash	*1988-89 prices*[1]	*Increase on 1979-80*	*Average number of staff in post*
1979-80	34·5	63·2	—	472
1980-81	70·6	109·1	45·9	497
1981-82	72·5	101·9	38·7	502
1982-83	71·4	93·7	30·5	506
1983-84	59·1	74·1	10·9	499
1984-85	72·0	86·5	23·3	441
1985-86	63·3	71·7	8·5	436
1986-87	73·0	80·1	16·9	470
1987-88	[2]86·0	89·9	26·7	493
1988-89	[3]113·0	[3] 113·0	49·8	n/a

[1] Adjusted using GDP deflator.
[2] Excluding the £11·25 million one off cost of acquiring the residual industrial assets of Cwmbran Development Corporation.
[3] Initial Budget.

In addition to the mainstream budgets shown above the Agency was provided with special resources to help mitigate the effects of the steel closures in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The resources involved are as follows:

£ million

	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84
Cash	27·5	22·3	33·2	13·8	5·6
1988-89 prices [1]	50·4	34·5	46·7	18·1	7·0

[1] Adjusted using GDP deflator.

Teachers

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many full-time peripatetic teachers were working for each local authority in Wales in January; how many were shared with other authorities; and how many were part-time peripatetic technical teachers.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Information in respect of peripatetic teachers is not yet available for January 1988. However the numbers in January 1987 are given in the table. Information is not available on the number of peripatetic teachers shared between authorities, or on the number of part-time peripatetic technical teachers employed.

Number of peripatetic teachers employed by local authorities[1] at January 1987

	Full-time	Part-time
Clwyd	57	64
Dyfed	113	7
Gwent	29	–
Gwynedd	56	38
Mid Glamorgan	270	79
Powys	46	5
South Glamorgan	50	27
West Glamorgan	60	21

[1] Teachers released or seconded for service in schools outside each authority's area should be included in the count of the authorities maintaining the schools to which the teachers are released and excluded from the count for the releasing authority. Teachers shared equally between authorities may be double-counted.

Mentally Handicapped Children

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what guidelines he has issued to local education authorities in Wales to ensure that educational facilities for mentally handicapped children give due regard to the home language of such children.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The policy statement "Welsh in Schools" issued in July 1981 gave advice to local education authorities in respect of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, on the place of Welsh in the school curriculum. Welsh Office circulars 59/81 and 5/83 make the point that linguistic factors are not to be construed as a learning difficulty within the definition of the Education Act 1981, but that, in assessing a child's special educational needs, care should be taken to use a language with which the child and his parents are familiar.

Welsh Development Agency

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what percentage of the Welsh Development Agency budget was spent in each Welsh district during the last 12 months.

Mr. Peter Walker: Information in the form requested is not available.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what has been the total expenditure of the Welsh Development Agency since its inception.

Mr. Peter Walker: The Welsh Development Agency's gross expenditure to the end of 1987-88 amounts to £791 million, inclusive of the special resources allocated to mitigate the effects of the steel closures in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

School Leavers

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many persons left school at the end of the last summer term; and, of these, how many are *(a)* in full-time permanent employment, *(b)* in full-time education, *(c)* in youth training or temporary employment schemes and *(d)* unemployed; and what are the corresponding figures for each year since 1979.

Mr. Peter Walker: Information on the number of persons who left school at the end of the last summer term is not yet available. Detailed information on the first destination of school leavers is not available in the form required. Information on those who left school, by term, for each year since 1979 and their intended destination is available in the table:

Term of Leaving[1]	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86
Autumn	940	930	1,420	1,310	1,190	870	—
Spring	5,510	4,170	4,070	3,950	3,500	3,605	4,160
Summer	38,675	38,795	39,745	40,065	39,350	39,955	39,025
All leavers	45,125	43,895	45,235	45,325	44,040	44,430	43,185
Intended Destination[1]							
Labour Market[2]	34,270	32,040	32,195	31,410	30,950	30,610	29,840
Of which still unemployed next March[3]	2,464	5,039	7,053	6,536	5,157	5,173	3,799
Full-time Education	10,855	11,855	13,040	13,915	13,090	13,820	13,345
All leavers	45,125	43,895	45,235	45,325	44,040	44,430	43,185

Notes:

[1] School Leavers 10 per cent. Sample Survey. Data is therefore subject to some sampling error.

[2] Includes leavers who have been accepted under the Youth Training Scheme or temporary employment schemes, and those known to be looking for employment as well as those in full-time employment.
[3] Department of Employment. Shows the number of school leavers under 18 at March each year who had yet to find their first job after leaving school the previous summer.

EMPLOYMENT

Labour Statistics

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Stretford of Wednesday 20 April, *Official Report*, columns *472-73*, if he will give for each standard region, from March to March, for each of the last 10 years *(a)* the total number of employees in employment, and the annual change in employees in employment expressed numerically and as a percentage of the available work force, *(b)* the number of people in receipt of unemployment benefit, together with the percentage annual change, *(c)* the average number of hours worked per employee, *(d)* the total number of hours worked and *(e)* the annual change in hours worked, in numerical and percentage terms.

Mr. Lee: The available information is as follows:

Employees in Employment
Thousands

March of each year	*Total employees in employment*	*Change since previous year*	*Annual change as a percentage of the working population for June of each year*
1979			
South East	7,405	n/a	n/a
East Anglia	687	n/a	n/a
South West	1,557	n/a	n/a
West Midlands	2,232	n/a	n/a
East Midlands	1,543	n/a	n/a
Yorkshire and Humberside	1,990	n/a	n/a
North West	2,666	n/a	n/a
North	1,234	n/a	n/a
Wales	1,015	n/a	n/a
Scotland	2,064	n/a	n/a
1980			
South East	7,475	70	0·83
East Anglia	695	8	0·98
South West	1,570	13	0·70
West Midlands	2,230	−2	−0·08
East Midlands	1,542	−1	−0·06
Yorkshire and Humberside	1,982	−8	−0·35
North West	2,640	−26	−0·84
North	1,218	−16	−1·10
Wales	1,012	−3	−0·24
Scotland	2,074	10	0·41
1981			
South East	7,278	−197	−2·30
East Anglia	678	−17	−2·03
South West	1,520	−50	−2·63
West Midlands	2,069	−161	−6·35
East Midlands	1,473	−69	−3·87
Yorkshire and Humberside	1,871	−111	−4·84
North West	2,496	−144	−4·61
North	1,142	−76	−5·27
Wales	942	−70	−5·69
Scotland	1,998	−76	−3·08
1982			
South East	7,121	−157	−1·83
East Anglia	670	−8	−0·96
South West	1,499	−21	−1·09
West Midlands	1,991	−78	−3·08
East Midlands	1,452	−21	−1·18
Yorkshire and Humberside	1,807	−64	−2·82
North West	2,392	−104	−3·40
North	1,101	−41	−2·92
Wales	914	−28	−2·32
Scotland	1,933	−65	−2·65
1983			
South East	7,038	−83	−0·97
East Anglia	668	−2	−0·24
South West	1,470	−29	−1·50
West Midlands	1,928	−63	−2·51
East Midlands	1,405	−47	−2·62
Yorkshire and Humberside	1,772	−35	−1·55
North West	2,301	−91	−3·01

March of each year	Total employees in employment	Change since previous year	Annual change as a percentage of the working population for June of each year
North	1,061	−40	−2·85
Wales	879	−35	−2·92
Scotland	1,879	−54	−2·21
1984			
South East	7,143	105	1·22
East Anglia	688	20	2·31
South West	1,507	37	1·92
West Midlands	1,956	28	1·12
East Midlands	1,430	25	1·40
Yorkshire and Humberside	1,765	−7	−0·31
North West	2,280	−21	−0·70
North	1,056	−5	−0·36
Wales	873	−6	−0·50
Scotland	1,880	1	0·04
1985			
South East	7,239	96	1·08
East Anglia	721	33	3·68
South West	1,527	20	1·01
West Midlands	1,984	28	1·11
East Midlands	1,472	42	2·31
Yorkshire and Humberside	1,769	4	0·18
North West	2,277	−3	−0·10
North	1,070	14	1·01
Wales	873	—	—
Scotland	1,892	12	0·49
1986			
South East	7,312	73	0·81
East Anglia	748	27	2·88
South West	1,536	9	0·44
West Midlands	2,011	27	1·06
East Midlands	1,495	23	1·22
Yorkshire and Humberside	1,774	5	0·21
North West	2,260	−17	−0·56
North	1,073	3	0·21
Wales	855	−18	−1·49
Scotland	1,875	−17	−0·69
1987			
South East	7,377	65	0·71
East Anglia	780	32	3·33
South West	1,555	19	0·93
West Midlands	2,039	28	1,09
East Midlands	1,505	10	0·52
Yorkshire and Humberside	1,778	4	0·17
North West	2,259	−1	−0·03
North	1,077	4	0·28
Wales	852	−3	−0·25
Scotland	1,862	−13	−0·53

. . — Not available.

The working population is the sum of employees in employment, the self-employed, members of HM forces and the unemployed.

The table shows seasonally adjusted adult unemployment together with the percentage annual change for each of the standard regions for each March from 1979 to 1988.

Thousands

	1978	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*
South East											
Number of unemployed claimants	275·9	243·0	230·1	442·5	578·3	653·7	698·8	745·4	777·8	716·1	557·1
Percentage change on year		−11·9	−5·3	92·3	30·7	13·0	6·9	6·7	4·3	−7·9	−22·2
Greater London											
Number of unemployed claimants	134·1	120·4	115·4	211·8	281·5	323·3	354·9	381·1	399·2	377·5	315·8
Percentage change on year		−10·2	−4·2	83·5	32·9	14·8	9·8	7·4	4·7	−5·4	−16·3
East Anglia											
Number of unemployed claimants	30·9	28·8	27·2	51·9	62·6	71·6	73·5	76·4	82·4	77·0	57·0
Percentage change on year		−6·8	−5·6	90·8	20·6	14·4	2·7	3·9	7·9	−6·6	−26·0
South West											
Number of unemployed claimants	92·7	81·5	76·9	128·7	152·2	169·6	181·1	194·5	203·0	188·1	149·1

	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
Percentage change on year		−12·0	−5·6	67·4	19·3	11·4	6·8	7·4	4·4	−7·3	−20·7
West Midlands											
Number of unemployed claimants	107·3	106·9	115·4	242·0	296·4	327·2	327·3	334·3	337·8	316·1	254·8
Percentage change on year		−0·5	8·1	109·7	22·5	10·4	0·0	2·1	1·0	−6·4	−19·4
East Midlands											
Number of unemployed claimants	68·5	65·2	66·1	130·4	150·2	171·8	183·5	193·6	198·0	189·5	156·1
Percentage change on year		−4·8	1·4	97·3	15·2	14·4	5·8	5·5	2·3	−4·3	−17·6
Yorkshire and Humberside											
Number of unemployed claimants	104·7	105·0	109·1	198·8	232·5	260·9	270·9	286·0	302·1	293·5	243·4
Percentage change on year		·3	3·9	82·2	17·0	12·2	3·8	5·6	5·6	−2·8	−17·1
North West											
Number of unemployed claimants	176·2	169·5	183·4	301·2	360·0	401·9	422·8	429·2	435·0	413·0	347·8
Percentage change on year		−3·8	8·2	64·2	19·5	11·6	5·2	1·5	1·4	−5·1	−15·8
Northern											
Number of unemployed claimants	102·0	102·4	108·2	162·9	184·3	202·7	215·6	223·6	231·0	216·2	187·0
Percentage change on year		·4	5·7	50·6	13·1	10·0	6·4	3·7	3·3	−6·4	−13·5
Wales											
Number of unemployed claimants	75·6	74·9	73·5	124·2	143·8	156·4	162·3	170·7	176·4	159·3	135·9
Percentage change on year		−·9	−1·9	69·0	15·8	8·8	3·8	5·2	3·3	−9·7	−14·7
Scotland											
Number of unemployed claimants	159·8	152·9	163·5	239·4	278·3	303·0	317·5	327·2	338·5	343·3	300·1
Percentage change on year		−4·3	6·9	46·4	16·2	8·9	4·8	3·1	3·5	1·4	−12·6
Northern Ireland											
Number of unemployed claimants	54·9	55·2	57·9	86·3	95·1	105·8	112·9	113·5	122·8	125·4	116·4
Percentage change on year		·5	4·9	49·1	10·2	11·3	6·7	·5	8·2	2·1	−7·2

The Labour Force Survey provides information on a different basis from which can be calculated the person hours usually worked by employees and average total usual hours given in the tables:

Great Britain Labour Force Survey—Spring each year
Employees in employment total usual person hours worked per week

Thousands

	1983	1984	1985	1986	[1]1987
All persons					
South East	253,688	258,117	261,797	262,985	263,139
East Anglia	26,762	26,889	27,889	28,927	29,151
South West	58,404	57,973	60,657	60,028	62,092
West Midlands	69,915	70,366	71,319	74,229	72,850
East Midlands	55,562	56,474	56,004	57,755	56,917
Yorkshire and Humberside	66,153	65,964	66,123	65,729	66,061
North West	83,702	82,183	85,521	84,343	86,225
Northern	40,433	39,341	38,569	39,863	40,694
Wales	32,886	32,773	33,722	34,118	34,169
Scotland	72,014	70,600	71,328	69,964	69,448

[1] 1987 LFS data are provisional.

	1984	1985	1986	1987
	Change to year ending: thousands			
All persons				
South East	4,429	3,680	1,1[illegible]	154
East Anglia	128	999	1,038	223
South West	−430	2,684	−629	2,064
West Midlands	450	954	2,910	−1,379
East Midlands	911	−469	1,751	−838
Yorkshire and Humberside	−189	159	−394	332
North West	−1,518	3,338	−1,178	1,882
Northern	−1,092	−772	1,295	830
Wales	−113	949	396	51
Scotland	−1,414	728	−1,364	−516
	Change to year ending: per cent.			
All persons				
South East	1·7	1·4	0·5	0·1
East Anglia	0·5	3·7	3·7	0·8
South West	−0·7	4·6	−1·0	3·4
West Midlands	0·6	1·4	4·1	−1·9

	1984	1985	1986	1987
East Midlands	1·6	−0·8	3·1	−1·5
Yorkshire and Humberside	−0·3	0·2	−0·6	0·5
North West	−1·8	4·1	−1·4	2·2
Northern	−2·7	−2·0	3·4	2·1
Wales	−0·3	2·9	1·2	0·1
Scotland	−2·0	1·0	−1·9	−0·7

Great Britain labour force survey spring of each year

Employees—Average total usual hours

	1983	1984	1985	1986	[1] 1987
All persons					
South East	37·87	37·54	37·87	38·20	38·13
East Anglia	37·10	36·73	38·05	38·07	38·23
South West	37·10	36·77	36·65	36·90	36·76
West Midlands	37·28	37·61	37·55	37·69	37·36
East Midlands	37·57	37·24	37·41	37·42	37·90
Yorkshire and Humberside	36·74	36·49	37·07	36·70	36·70
North West	36·74	36·57	37·02	36·87	37·28
Northern	37·06	36·47	36·67	36·64	36·61
Wales	37·14	36·34	37·03	37·20	37·58
Scotland	37·96	38·02	37·92	37·86	37·81

[1] 1987 LFS data are provisional.

Mines and Quarries Act 1954

Mr. Illsley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will specify the associated legislation which is to be replaced along with the Mines and Quarries Act 1954.

Mr. Nicholls: In addition to the Mines and Quarries Act 1954 the new legislation will replace the Mines Management Act 1971, approximately 50 sets of national regulations and many local regulations made under the 1954 Act. A small number of regulations made under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, before the start of the legislative renewal programme, will also be replaced.

Dock Labour Scheme

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what were the national weekly average gross earnings and gross hours of work, excluding underemployment hours, for registered dock workers in all dock labour scheme ports for the calendar year 1987.

Mr. Nicholls: The national weekly average gross earnings for registered dock workers in all dock labour scheme ports in the calendar year 1987, excluding underemployment hours, was £298·56; and the national weekly average gross hours of work, excluding underemployment hours, for registered dock workers in all dock labour scheme ports for the calendar year 1987 was 41.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Electro-convulsive Therapy

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list for each of the last three years for which figures are available *(a)* the total number of patients detained under section 2 of the Mental Health Act 1983, *(b)* the number of such patients treated with electro-convulsive therapy and *(c)* the number of such cases where emergency powers were used to permit treatment with electro-convulsive therapy.

Mrs. Currie: The total number of admissions of patients detained under section 2 of the Mental Health Act 1983 is as follows:

Mental illness and mental handicap hospitals and units, and Special Hospitals, England

	1984	1985	1986
Number of admissions under s.2 Mental Health Act 1983	6,855	7,758	8,260

Figures relate to admissions and not individual patients since an individual may be admitted more than once during the year.

Details relating to the number of patients detained under section 2 of the Mental Health Act 1983 who are treated with electro-convulsive therapy, and the number of such cases where emergency powers were used to permit treatment with electro-convulsive therapy, are not collected centrally.

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what regulations are currently in force regarding the treatment of patients detained under section 2 of the Mental Health Act 1983.

Mrs. Currie: Regulations governing the use of treatment for mental disorder for all patients detained under the powers of the Mental Health Act 1983 are contained in part IV of the Act and also in Statutory Instrument 1983, No. 893 (The Mental Health (Hospital, Guardianship and Consent to Treatment) Regulations 1983).

Agency Staff

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how much was spent on agency staff in the National Health Service in the latest period for which figures are available.

Mr. Newton: Following is information derived from annual accounts submitted to the Department for 1986-87 (the latest year available):

Expenditure on Non-national Health Service (Agency, etc) Staff

	£000
Regional and district health authorities and the special health authorities for the London postgraduate teaching hospitals	150,092
Family practitioner committees	296
England total	150,388

Note:
The figures exclude expenditure by special health authorities and other bodies providing central services to the National Health Service. Their annual accounts do not separately identify such expenditure but, given the level of their total expenditure, that on agency staff is not thought to be significant.

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the expenditure in each regional health authority on agency staff employed on administrative, secretarial and clerical work in each year since 1978-79.

Mr. Newton: The table shows the information that is available for total expenditure incurred on agency staff employed on administrative, secretarial and clerical work by each health region in England from 1978-79 to 1986-87 (the latest year available):

Expenditure on non-National Health Service (agency, etc.)—Administrative and Clerical staff

£'000

Regions	*1978-79*	*1979-80*	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
Northern	35	54	38	20	30	37	47	78	96
Yorkshire	86	68	73	74	93	192	295	590	670
Trent	239	258	139	227	402	562	694	705	993
East Anglian	92	140	122	106	169	238	376	520	954
North-West Thames	1,874	3,065	2,819	1,927	1,707	2,084	2,672	3,710	5,407
North-East Thames	1,464	2,079	1,699	1,239	1,466	2,282	3,109	3,735	5,961
South-East Thames	1,171	1,591	1,197	952	980	1,170	1,853	2,548	3,783
South-West Thames	852	1,552	1,374	887	1,000	1,238	1,992	3,407	6,563
Wessex	176	246	180	227	384	420	566	725	1,089
Oxford	177	303	94	82	86	156	251	444	663
South Western	106	178	125	126	289	207	531	708	791
West Midlands	300	480	496	427	409	623	900	1,254	1,718
Mersey	51	33	12	13	43	43	86	126	144
North Western	176	153	243	255	270	335	490	391	384
Regions total	6,799	10,199	8,611	6,562	7,328	9,587	13,862	18,941	29,216
Special Health Authorities[1]	932	1,232	1,138	775	648	723	1,079	1,541	1,962
Total	7,731	11,431	9,749	7,337	7,976	10,310	14,941	20,482	31,178

[1] Special Health Authorities for the London postgraduate teaching hospitals.
Source:
Annual accounts of regional and district health authorities and those of the special health authorities for the London postgraduate teaching hospitals. (Predecessor authorities for the years prior to 1982-83).
Note:
The total expenditure figures for 1985-86 and 1986-87 exclude expenditure incurred by family practitioner committees (£146,000 and £240,000, respectively). Prior to 1 April 1985 family practitioner committees (FPCs) were associated with district (formerly area) health authorities and their relevant expenditure was included in the annual accounts of those health authorities and is not separately identifiable.

Flood Damage

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make additional resources available in the Ealing district under the social fund to enable payments to be made in respect of recent severe flood damage to people's furniture and fittings; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: Additional allocations from the contingency reserve will be considered following an unforeseen and unforeseeable demand which could not be met from a local office's budget. There is no indication that circumstances in Ealing warrant an additional allocation.

Private Medical Clinics

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the total number of beds in private medical clinics in England.

Mrs. Currie: On 31 December 1986, the latest date for which information is available centrally, there were 62,112 beds in private hospitals, homes and clinics registered under section 23 of the Registered Homes Act 1984. Details from Form SBH 212 are published annually and are available in the Library.

Benefit Claims (Lambeth)

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many applications for single payments, additional requirement claims and supplementary benefit claims, made before 11 April are outstanding at his Department's offices serving the London borough of Lambeth.

Mr. Portillo: Information on outstanding additional requirement claims is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. The number of outstanding single payments and supplementary benefit claims in each of the 10 local offices serving the London borough of Lambeth is given in the table. The boundaries of these offices are not conterminous with those of the borough.

Single payment and supplementary benefit claims outstanding at 29 April 1988

Office	*Single payments claims*	*Supplementary benefits claims*
Balham	544	83
Battersea	99	141
Brixton	497	266
Camberwell	303	161
Crystal Palace	507	491
Kennington Park	814	119

Office	Single payments claims	Supplementary benefits claims
Oval	3,835	220
Peckham	173	203
Southwark	168	166
Streatham	236	421

Mr. J. Wall (Application)

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services why no decision has yet been made on an application to his Department's offices at 6 Camberwell new road, London SE5, by Mr. Julian Wall, of 13 Carlton mansions, Coldharbour lane, London SW9, which was made to that office in October 1987.

Mr. Portillo: I will write to the hon. Member.

Leicester Royal Infirmary

Sir John Farr: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will take immediate steps to remedy the shortage of skilled staff which has brought about the closure of the recently opened bone marrow transplant unit at the Leicester Royal infirmary.

Mrs. Currie: Responsibility for the management of local health services lies with the district health authority concerned. However, I understand that the bone marrow unit referred to which closed because of staff shortages on 16 May will reopen on 30 May. Nationally the recent pay awards and the clinical grading review should help to overcome difficulties associated with recruitment of specialised nursing staff. We are also encouraging district health authorities to broaden their recruitment methods. My hon. Friend may wish to contact the chairman of Leicestershire district health authority for more detailed information.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Hardy: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will take steps to ensure that the enterprise allowance is not regarded as income in the determination of housing benefit.

Mr. Portillo: No. An enterprise allowance is a business receipt which counts as gross income of that business. The determination of a claim for housing benefit is made by reference to net business profit and any other income or capital held by the claimant. In some cases, maximum housing benefit would be payable even where an enterprise allowance was in payment.

Pensions

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his estimate of the cost of giving all pensioners aged over 80 years an extra £2 a week.

Mr. Scott: The estimated annual cost of increasing retirement pensions for those over 80 by £2 a week would be about £200 million if the rates of income support and housing benefit were increased by corresponding amounts.

Age Allowance

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services for how long the 25p age addition has been paid to pensioners; and what is its value in real terms now in relation to its inaugural value.

Mr. Scott: At 1971 prices, the 25p age addition is currently worth 5p.

Women's Pensions

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has as to what percentage of pension schemes allow women to pass on their rights to their husbands.

Mr. Scott: The Department does not collect information centrally or keep records of occupational pension schemes provisions. However, schemes which contract-out of the state earnings related pension scheme are required to make provision for both widows' and widowers' benefits.

Women's Refuges

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate the number of places per 10,000 women at women's refuges for each year since 1979.

Mrs. Currie: Information in this form is not available for each year since 1979. Currently, however, the national voluntary organisation, Women's Aid Federation (England), estimates that there are 1,282 places at women's refuges in England and Wales. This represents 0·64 of a place for every 10,000 women aged 18 and over, or one place per 15,600 women.

Social Security Expenditure

Mr. Blair: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what has been the financial saving to the Exchequer of removing the link between the average earnings index in November 1980 and social security benefits, with figures to be shown for each individual benefit effect for each financial year up to and including 1988-89.

Mr. Scott: The information requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Cash Limits

Mr. Allason: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether any changes will be made to cash limits for his Department in 1988-89.

Mr. Newton: Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplementary Estimates, the following changes will be made:

The cash limit for class XIV, vote 1, (Hospital and community health and other services, England) will be increased by £538,303,000 (from £10,653,687,000 to £11,191,990,000). This increase follows the decision to implement, from 1 April 1988, the recommendations of the review bodies in respect of doctors, dentists, nurses, midwives and professions allied to medicine, as announced by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 21 April 1988.

The cash limit for class XIV, vote 3 (Miscellaneous health services and personal social services, England) will be increased by £400,000 (from £417,746,000 to £418,146,000), reflecting the transfer, from the non-cash limited class XIV, vote 2, of provision to meet the cost of location incentives to dentists.

The public expenditure costs of these changes have been charged to the Reserve and do not add to the public expenditure planning total.

Hospital Waiting Lists

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) which of the Korner recommendations suggested the abolition of the distinction between urgent and non-urgent cases;

(2) which professional organisations were consulted about the abolition of the distinction between urgent and non-urgent cases; and if any representations have been received from them;

(3) what change he will now make to principle 14·3 contained in his booklet "Management of Private Practice in Health Service Hospitals in England and Wales" after the abolition of the distincion between urgent and non-urgent cases.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 5 May 1988]:* In paragraph 11.20 of its first report to the Secretary of State, the Korner steering group listed the minimum data which it recommended should be collected on the demand for hospital treatment. The steering group purposely did not include a distinction between urgent and non-urgent cases. Paragraph 11.21 makes clear that the recording of such a distinction should be left to local choice.

Comments on the report were received from the Joint Consultants Committee, the General Medical Services Committee, the Royal College of Nursing and the Royal College of Radiologists. None of these commented specifically on the recommendations in paragraphs 11.20 and 11.21.

The discontinuation of the distinction between urgent and non-urgent cases in central statistical returns does not affect the operation of common waiting lists for private and national health service patients which will continue to be based on clinical priority.

Mr. Jacques Arnold: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what specific steps are being taken to reduce waiting lists for orthopaedic surgery in Dartford and Gravesham district health authority.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 5 May 1988]:* There is a variety of local developments going on in orthopaedics in Dartford and Gravesham. If my hon. Friend cares to write to the chairman of the health authority, I am sure he will be pleased to provide the information required.

Social Security Reform

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the cost of retraining staff to enable them to administer the new social security system following the implementation of the Social Security Act 1986.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer 16 May 1988]:* £21 million.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Sheep Movements (Cumbria)

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food why he refused to designate the area of Cumbria immediately adjacent to the Solway Firth from Maryport eastwards as a restricted area for sheep movement on 20 June 1986.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The determination of the boundaries of the restricted area was based on all information available at the time. This included sheep, milk and crop monitoring results and an extensive deposition survey carried out by the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology.

Livestock (Genetic Improvement)

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he next intends meeting representatives of animal welfare groups to discuss the genetic improvement of livestock; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I have no plans at present for such a meeting, but I and my officials meet the animal welfare societies from time to time to discuss matters of current interest.

Food Act 1984

Mr. McAvoy: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what progress has been made in the review of the Food Act 1984; and when he expects consultations to be concluded.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Following my announcement in October last year officials have held informal discussions with organisations affected by our proposals to review the food Acts on the outstanding issues that need to be decided in the detail of the revisions.

The consultations are continuing but are expected to be completed by late summer.

Milk

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how much milk is currently being produced in herds subject to BST testing.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The animal test certificates under which the trials are authorised permit the treatment of a maximum of 1,130 cows. However, the number of cows treated at any one time is likely to be less than this. Information on the volume of milk produced in herds involved in the trial is not available.

Council of Ministers

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement concerning the outcome of the last meeting of the European Community Agriculture Council.

Mr. MacGregor: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Walthamstow (Mr. Summerson) on 18 May at columns *473-74*.

Animal Disease Research

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the recommendations contained in the Wildy report on the future of animal disease research in Britain with particular reference to proposals for decentralisation and a new animal disease co-ordinating board.

Mr. Donald Thompson *[holding answer 23 May 1988]:* The Wildy report to Agriculture Ministers and the chairman of the Agricultural and Food Research Council on research and development in farm animal diseases was published on 4 March 1988. The report's recommendations, including those for the establishment of an animal disease co-ordinating board and on the restructuring of establishments, are under consideration and no conclusions have yet been reached.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Inward Investment

Mr. Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the level of new inward investment into Northern Ireland in the last year.

Mr. Viggers: During the year 1987-88 12 new projects which are expected to create 867 jobs were finalised. This represents a considerable improvement upon the results for 1986-87. The aggregate investment associated with the 12 new projects is £21·5 million against which IDB has offered selective financial assistance totalling £6·2 million.

Social Security

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what resources his Department is devoting to monitoring the effects of the recent social security changes on the Province.

Mr. Needham: The effects of the social security reforms are being monitored in the main using the wide range of data derived from the Department's management, expenditure and statistical returns. This involves a substantial staff effort, but it is not possible to provide a reliable estimate of the cost.

Member's Questions

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, pursuant to the written answer of 19 May, *Official Report*, column *565*, to the hon. Member for Brent, East, what are the reasons for the delay in providing substantive replies to the remaining questions put down for answer on 26 and 28 April.

Mr. Stanley: Replies to the hon. Member's remaining questions have now been given.

Fair Employment

Mr. Charles Wardle: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he intends to publish his White Paper on fair employment in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Tom King: A White Paper entitled "Fair Employment in Northern Ireland" was published today. Copies have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses and are also available in the Vote Office.

I outlined the main features of our proposals for new fair employment legislation in my written answer of 2 March to my hon. Friend the Member for Crawley (Mr. Soames), and they were published in the form of a brochure, copies of which were placed in the Library. Today's White Paper explains the policy more fully and sets out in some detail the key elements of the proposed legislation. The Government intend to introduce a Bill into Parliament at the earliest opportunity.

The Government's proposals for new legislation are designed to strengthen existing fair employment law in Northern Ireland. They clearly demonstrate our continuing commitment to eradicate job discrimination and to promote genuine equality of opportunity in employment. the proposed measures will improve the institutional structure within which the policy will operate and will lead to better equal opportunity practice in both the public and private sectors.

These proposals represent an effective and constructive response from the Government to a serious economic and social problem in Northern Ireland. Despite the progress which has been made, and the sound work of the Fair Employment Agency since 1976, it is clear that a broader approach to the problems of disadvantage and discrimination is necessary, and that this must also deal with the problems of indirect and unintentional discrimination. The elimination of all discrimination in the workplace is one of the Government's major priorities.

The proposals set out in the White Paper are far reaching. They impose important new responsibilities on employers, and entail serious penalties for breach of duty. But the emphasis throughout our proposals is on fairness. We do not want to transfer hardship from one section of the community to another. we do not wish to impose an intolerable administrative burden on employers. We intend to give support to anyone who is genuinely trying to create employment and prosperity in Northern Ireland. The problems which the Government are addressing in this White Paper are of long standing and will require time and determination to resolve. The proposals published today represent a major step in the right direction.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will name each employer for which the Fair Employment Agency has completed or initiated formal investigations under section 12 and section 24 of the Fair Employment Act (NI) 1976, stating the nature of the finding in each case;

(2) how many complaints under section 24 of the Fair Employment Act (NI) 1976 have been made against *(a)* public bodies and *(b)* private employers; and what has been the outcome in each case.

Mr. Viggers: It is not the practice to release the names of employers who are the subject of an investigation by the Fair Employment Agency under section 12 of the 1976 Act, unless it is considered appropriate on completion of an investigation, nor to identify the parties in a formal investigation under section 24 of the Act. Agency reports on section 12 investigations, where published, are available in the Library as are copies of agency's annual reports which contain an account of investigations under section 24 of the Act. A breakdown of agency investigations under each section, together with the names of employers published by the agency, is given in the tables.

Table I
Section 12 (to end April 1988)

*Employers identified but no report published**
Department of Health and Social Services, local office, Enniskillen
British Broadcasting Corporation
Northern Ireland Polytechnic
Bass Charrington
Cantrell and Cochrane
Ormeau Bakery

Employer identified but final report not published
Cookstown District Council

Employers identified and reports published
Northern Ireland Electricity Service
British Broadcasting Corporation (2nd phase)
Northern Ireland Civil Service
Fire Authority for Northern Ireland
Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Northern Ireland Ambulance Service
Southern Health and Social Services Board
Ulster Museum
Derry City Council
Northern Ireland Railways
Belfast Telegraph
Unipork
Report of an investigation into the nine building societies in Northern Ireland
(Halifax Building Society, Woolwich Building Society, Abbey National Building Society, Gateway Building Society, Nationwide Building Society, Leicester Building Society, Leeds Permanent Building Society, Anglia Building Society, Progressive Building Society)
Report on investigations into the principal banks in Northern Ireland
(TSB, Northern Bank, Allied Irish Bank, Ulster Bank, Bank of Ireland)
Report of investigation into eight insurance companies
(Prudential Insurance Company, Pearl Insurance Company, Commercial Insurance Company, General Accident Assurance Company, Britannic Insurance Company, Refuge Assurance, United Friendly Society, Royal Insurance)

Employers not identified but general report published
Employment patterns in the Belfast area with particular reference to engineering.
Employment patterns in the Londonderry area.

Investigations completed and reports in course of preparation
25.

Investigations currently under way
30.

* When first established agency policy was not to publish reports of section 12 investigations.

Table II
Section 24 (to end April 1988)

	Private sector	*Public sector*	*Trade unions*
Total number of complaints	320	389	3
Unlawful discrimination	23	29	1
No discrimination	165	198	2
Section 42	1	20	—
Withdrawn or not pursued	82	89	—
Outstanding	49	53	—

Bombs (Detonation)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the maximum distance between bomb and person detonating it over which a remote-controlled bomb has been known to have detonated in Northern Ireland in the following circumstances: *(a)* in open countryside, *(b)* in an urban area and *(c)* where there was a high concrete obstruction between the bomb and the person detonating it.

Mr. Ian Stewart *[holding answer 23 May 1988]:* I have been asked to reply.

The circumstances in which a bomb can be remotely detonated by means of a command wire or by radio control are extremely variable. It is not possible to provide the information requested.

Firearms and Explosives

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on how many occasions from 1972 to the current date members of the security forces supplied *(a)* firearms, *(b)* ammunition and *(c)* explosives to civilians in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Stanley *[holding answer 26 April 1988]:* I am aware of only one such incident. This came to light following an RUC investigation into the murder of Mr. William Strathearn in April 1977. It was established that two serving police officers had taken part in the murder and that the murder weapon had been provided by one of them. In June 1980 both men were found guilty of murder and firearms offences and were sentenced to life imprisonment. If the hon. Member has evidence of possible further offences he will no doubt bring them to the attention of the police.

Security Forces (Attacks)

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on how many occasions from 1972 to the current date, members of the security forces have asked civilians *(a)* to fire on and *(b)* to attack other members of the security forces or their property.

Mr. Stanley *[holding answer 26 April 1988]:* I am not aware of any such occasions. If the hon. Member has evidence of possible offences he will no doubt bring them to the attention of the police.

Ministerial Duties

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many meetings with the Friends of the Earth the Minister for Sport, the hon. Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan), has attended in the course of his official duties in the last year; and if he will list them.

Mr. Moynihan: I have had no official meetings with the Friends of the Earth during the past year although I have met individual members of that organisation from time to time.

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how many meetings concerning historic buildings the Minister for Sport, the hon. Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan), has attended in the course of his official duties in the last year; and if he will list them;

(2) how many meetings concerning ancient monuments the Minister for Sport, the hon. Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan), has attended in the course of his official duties in the last year; and if he will list them.

Mr. Moynihan: I attended meetings concerning historic buildings and ancient monuments on 22 June 1987, 28 June 1987, 30 July 1987, 24 September 1987, 28 September 1987, 20 January 1988, 27 January 1988, 9 February 1988 and 24 February 1988.

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many meetings concerning royal parks the Minister for Sport, the hon. Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan), has attended in the course of his official duties in the last year; and if he will list them.

Mr. Moynihan: I attended meetings on 30 July 1987 and 3 November 1987 and I visited the royal parks on 30 October 1987.

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many meetings with trade unions involved in the water industry the Minister of Sport, the hon. Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan), has attended in the course of his official duties in the last year; and if he will list them.

Mr. Moynihan: Since taking office I have had no meetings with the trades unions involved in the water industry.

On 18 April officials of the Department met representatives of NALGO to discuss the proposed establishment of the National Rivers Authority and the privatisation of the water authorities' utility functions. The water authorities will themselves consult the trades unions on the schemes of reorganisation which they have been asked to prepare.

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many meetings with regional water authorities the Minister for Sport, the hon. Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan), has attended in the course of his official duties in the last year; and if he will list them.

Mr. Moynihan: Since taking office I have met representatives of the regional water authorities on 16 occasions as listed:

Authority	*Number of meetings*
Anglian	2
Northumbrian	2
North West	1
Severn-Trent	1
Southern	2
South West	1
Thames	3
Wessex	1
Yorkshire	3

I have visited all the water authorities in England.

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many meetings with the Countryside Commission the Minister for Sport, the hon. Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan), has attended in the course of his official duties in the last year; and if he will list them.

Mr. Moynihan: Two. I met the chairman of the Countryside Commission, Sir Derek Barber, on 27 January when we discussed, among other things, appointments to the national park authorities. On 8 October 1987 I attended the international symposium on protected landscapes in Grange-over-Sands which was organised by the commission.

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many meetings with the Nature Conservancy Council the Minister for Sport, the hon. Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan), has attended in the course of his official duties in the last year; and if he will list them.

Mr. Moynihan: I have not needed to attend any meetings with the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC) since my appointment last year. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment and other ministerial colleagues who are more closely involved in the council's affairs have met members of the NCC on several occasions during the last year.

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many meetings concerning the Ordnance Survey the Minister for Sport, the hon. Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan), has attended in the course of his official duties in the last year; and if he will list them.

Mr. Moynihan: I have attended meetings concerning Ordnance Survey on 11 occasions since June 1987.

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many meetings with the British Waterways Board the Minister for Sport, the hon. Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan), has attended in the course of his official duties in the last year; and if he will list them.

Mr. Moynihan: I met the British Waterways Board (BWB) chairman on 19 November 1987, and on 15 January, 5 February, 21 March and 19 May this year. In addition, I visited the BWB Birmingham area on 11 March and opened the Milton Keynes marina on 30 April.

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many meetings with the League Against Cruel Sports the Minister for Sport, the hon. Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan), has attended in the course of his official duties in the last year; and if he will list them.

Mr. Moynihan: None.

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many meetings with the Ramblers Association the Minister for Sport, the hon. Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan), has attended in the course of his official duties in the last year and if he will list them.

Mr. Moynihan: None. But representatives of the Ramblers Association met my right hon. Friend, Lord Belstead, when he was Minister for Environment, Countryside and Water, on 27 October 1987 and I have had informal discussions in the course of my official duties.

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many meetings with the Long Distance Walkers Association the Minister for Sport, the hon. Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan), has attended in the course of his official duties in the last year; and if he will list them.

Mr. Moynihan: None.

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many meetings with the Water Authorities Association the Minister for Sport, the hon. Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan), has attended in the course of his official duties in the last year; and if he will list them.

Mr. Moynihan: Since taking office I have met the Water Authorities Association on four occasions.

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many meetings with English Heritage the Minister for Sport, the hon. Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan), has attended in the course of his official duties in the last year; and if he will list them.

Mr. Moynihan: I attended a meeting with English Heritage on 15 July 1987.

Surrey Docks

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the current sale price of land in the Surrey docks area of the London Docklands development corporation.

Mr. Trippier: Between £1 million and £4 million per acre for housing and commercial development.

Schools (Newham)

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what land the London Docklands development corporation is making available for new schools in the Newham area of the London Docklands development corporation.

Mr. Trippier: Sites for three primary schools. The corporation is discussing with the local education authority how it might further assist in the royal docks area.

Docklands

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give a breakdown of the 36,000 new jobs referred to on 12 May, *Official Report*, column *466*, in Docklands; if they are new; how many are relocations; and if the figures are net.

Mr. Trippier: The figure of 36,000 is for the total number of jobs now in docklands. Analysis of the net changes is being undertaken by the corporation. I will write to the hon. Member when details are available.

Housing Revenue Accounts

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report* a summarised housing revenue account, consistent with table 9.1 of Cm. 288-II, for each of the years 1982-83 to 1990-91 for (i) English local authorities, (ii) new town development corporations in England and (iii) Housing Corporation-financed housing in England.

Mrs. Roe: I will write to the hon. Member as soon as the information has been collected.

Construction Products Directive

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what information he has concerning the progress of the draft construction products directive; when it will be finalised; and when it is expected to become operative;

(2) if he will consider the desirability of rationalising the three sets of building regulations in operation in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: The draft construction products directive is being considered by the Internal Market Council working party on economic questions, and is to be referred to the Permanent Representatives Committee (COREPER) very shortly. A number of issues are outstanding, but it may be possible to reach agreement in the Council of Ministers before the end of the German presidency. It is intended that the directive should come into effect 12 months after adoption by the Council.

One of the objectives of the current review of the building regulations is to bring the technical requirements in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland closer together. My officials are working closely with officials in Scotland and Northern Ireland on the principle that technical requirements ought to be the same, unless differences can be specifically justified.

Water Regulations

Mr. Clifford Forsythe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he intends to introduce water regulations throughout the United Kingdom; what is the time scale for introducing such regulations; and how such regulations will be enforced.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 23 May 1988]:* My right hon. Friends the Secretary of State and the Secretary of State for Wales intend to table a number of regulations before the summer recess to do with water metering under sections of the Public Utility Transfers and Water Charges Act 1988. These regulations will apply only in England and Wales and will come into force this year.

Local Government Expenditure

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the estimated number of schemes which will now have to be vetted by his Department as a result of the Local Government (Prescribed Expenditure) (Amendment) Regulations.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 19 May 1988]:* The regulations referred to in the question do not in themselves require any schemes to be submitted to my right hon. Friend for approval. It is too soon to say how many applications for additional capital allocations will be submitted as a result of the concessions announced by my right hon. Friend on 25 April at columns 103-104. The great majority of those so far received do not relate to schemes affected by the regulations.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if short-term leases of private properties taken by local authorities in order to provide temporary homes for the homeless will be exempt from the Local Government (Prescribed Expenditure) (Amendment) Regulations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 19 May 1988]:* The Local Government (Prescribed Expenditure) (Amendment) Regulations 1988 provide, inter alia, that, with certain

exceptions, expenditure by a local authority on the acquisition of a leasehold interest in land, including buildings, for a term not exceeding three years is not prescribed expenditure and thus is not subject to the limits on capital expenditure laid down in part VIII of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980.

Rating Reform

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will estimate the number of pensioner households and pensioner tax units, both single persons and married couples, who would be eligible for a community charge rebate under a taper of *(a)* 20 per cent. and *(b)* 15 per cent. in calculating rebate entitlement.

Mr. Howard *[holding answer 23 May 1988]:* The information requested is as set out. The estimates assume that the community charge is fully in place.

England, thousands

	20 per cent. taper	*15 per cent. taper*
1. Pensioner households	2,260	2,400
2. Pensioner tax units	2,920	3,080

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will recalculate the number of pensioner households and pensioner tax units, both single persons and married couples, who *(a)* gain and *(b)* lose under the community charge on the basis of a taper of 15 per cent. for calculating entitlement to rebate.

Mr. Howard *[holding answer 23 May 1988]:* The information requested is as set out:

England, thousands

		Number
1. Pensioner households	Gaining	3,120
	Losing	1,150
2. Pensioner tax units	Gaining	3,470
	Losing	1,960

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 26 May 1988

PRIME MINISTER

Canary Wharf

Q20. **Ms. Gordon:** To ask the Prime Minister why the hon. Member for Bow and Poplar was not informed *(a)* by her Office of her visit to Bow and Poplar on 11 May and *(b)* by the Department of Trade and Industry of Lord Young's visit on 4 November 1987, in connection with the Canary Wharf development; and if she will ensure that in future Ministers visiting Canary Wharf inform the hon. Member for Bow and Poplar in advance.

The Prime Minister: As my Office explained to the hon. Lady on 11 May, I regret that she was not informed in advance of my visit. My usual practice in such matters is set out in my reply to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) on 11 May 1988 at column 121. I have drawn the hon. Lady's concern to my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

Rogerstone, Newport

Q98. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Prime Minister, if she has any plans to visit Rogerstone, Newport, Gwent.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Community Care

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Prime Minister if she will consider the appointment of a Minister for community care, in the light of the recommendations in the recent report by Sir Roy Griffiths.

The Prime Minister: We are considering carefully all Sir Roy Griffiths' recommendations for community care, and shall bring forward proposals in due course.

Sheepmeat Regime

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Prime Minister whether she will appoint the Secretary of State for Wales to represent the United Kingdom in the European Community Council of Agriculture Ministers' discussions on the sheepmeat regime; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friend works in close collaboration with the Minister of Agriculture on all matters of importance to agriculture, including the sheepmeat regime.

Engagements

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 26 May.

Mr. Stern: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 26 May.

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 26 May.

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 26 May.

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 26 May.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 26 May.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 26 May.

The Prime Minister: This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House I shall be having further meetings later today.

ENERGY

Energy Prices

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how many representations he has received from manufacturing industries in the last 12 months regarding *(a)* electricity price increases, and *(b)* gas prices; what industrial categories such representations have been received from; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Parkinson: I have received a large number of representations about industrial electricity prices, covering most sectors of manufacturing industry: such prices are primarily a matter for the electricity supply industry to decide within the financial framework agreed with Government. Industrial gas prices are a matter for British Gas plc and the Office of Fair Trading.

Electricity Industry

Mr. Blair: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table, covering the period 1979-80 to 1988-89, showing the aggregate external financing limit for the electricity supply industry in England and Wales; the ex ante composition of this aggregate between the Central Electricity Generating Board, individiual area boards and the Electricity Council itself; and a comparable ex post composition.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The aggregate external financing limit (EFL) for the electricity supply industry in England and Wales is published in the annual public expenditure White Paper. The table shows (i) the initial forecast of the EFL taking no account of agreed revisions during the year and (ii) the outturn. The EFL is set for the industry as a whole; and the required contribution by individual boards is a matter for the industry. The actual contributions by boards are stated in their annual reports and accounts.

Financial year	*Initial EFL forecast £ million*	*Outturn EFL £ million*
1979-80	−10	+189
1980-81	+187	+140
1981-82	−165	−221
1982-83	−232	−154
1983-84	−312	−485
1984-85	−740	+523

Financial year	Initial EFL forecast £ million	Outturn EFL £ million
1985-86	−1,128	−468
1986-87	−1,416	−1,325
1987-88	−1,305	[1] −1,261
1988-89	−1,040	—

[1] Estimated.

Ceramic Industry

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what representations he has received from *(a)* firms in the ceramic industry and *(b)* firms from north Staffordshire with regard to the privatisation of electricity; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I have received representations on privatisation from many sectors of industry, and from many parts of the country.

Energy Consumption

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how much energy was consumed in the United Kingdom for non-transport purposes during 1987; and what is his assessment of the effect the energy efficiency office had on this figure.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Provisional figures for 1987 suggest that 41,636 million therms of energy were consumed for non-transport purposes. It is estimated that the activities of the Energy Efficiency Office contributed to the reduction of some 4 per cent. in (non-transport) energy consumption per unit of GDP compared to the previous year.

British Coal

Mr. Favell: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what deficit grant to British Coal was accrued in the corporation's accounts in each financial year since 1979; when it was paid; and what further deficit grant the Government intend to pay.

Mr. Parkinson: Deficit grant to the British Coal Corporation was accrued and paid as shown in the table.

Phasing of deficit grant payments

£ million

Accrued in respect of	Total	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88
1979-80	159	150	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1980-81	149	—	134	15	—	—	—	—	—	—
1981-82	428	—	—	210	218	—	—	—	—	—
1982-83	374	—	—	—	357	17	—	—	—	—
1983-84	875	—	—	—	—	581	294	—	—	—
1984-85	2,225	—	—	—	—	—	1,108	695	422	—
1985-86	50	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	50	—
1986-87	288	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	74	214
1987-88	200	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	200
Total	4,748	150	143	225	575	598	1,402	695	546	414

The Coal Industry Act 1987 provided that up to £200 million might be paid in respect of deficits arising in 1987-88 and 1988-89. The full £200 million was paid in 1987-88 to defray that year's deficit. The Government have no plans to seek to increase or extend the statutory powers to pay deficit grant.

Mr. Kenneth Hind: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what financial support the Government expect to give British Coal in 1988-89.

Mr. Parkinson: British Coal's external financing limit for 1988-89 has been set at £670 million. As announced to the House on 28 March, at column 295, planned financing was made up as follows:

	£ million
Restructuring Grant	116·0
Other non-deficit grants	273·5
Net Borrowing	280·5
	670·0

The requirement for restructuring grant in 1988-89 is being reviewed following the substantially increased number of redundancies in the closing days of 1987-88, which has resulted in higher than expected expenditure on redundancy lump sums early in 1988-89. A summer Supplementary Estimate will be submitted to seek approval for the additional grant. I am also considering the implications for the corporation's external finance limit. I will make an announcement to the House in due course.

The Government have agreed that, subject to Parliament's approving any necessary provisions, adequate funds will continue to be made available to enable the corporation to meet its financial obligations as they fall due during the corporation's financial year ending 25 March 1989. The Government have also renewed their guarantee in respect of limited overdraft facilities at United Kingdom clearing banks for 1988-89.

The House was told on 8 March that the loss for 1987-88 (after net restructuring charges) was likely to be higher than originally expected. Following the extra redundancies late in the year referred to above; the loss will be still greater.

As the House was told on 2 March, at column 1075, British Coal has for some months been precluded from access to longer-term funds from the national loans fund (NLF). The corporation's current financial position and uncertain business prospects make it inappropriate for the NLF to continue to make new loans of any duration to it. It is therefore proposed, subject to approval of the necessary Supply Estimate, to refinance from loans on vote under section 2 of the Coal Industry Act 1980, the whole of the short-term and overnight NLF debt expected to be outstanding at the time of approval of the Estimate,

together with longer-term debt maturing in, and net new borrowing requirement for, the remainder of 1988-89. A *Supplementary Estimate for a sum expected to be of the* order of £1·8 billion will accordingly be submitted in due course. Of this, only the projected £280·5 million mentioned above represents net new borrowing in 1988-89; the remainder is to refinance existing NFL debt. The £280·5 million is already within the current EFL, and therefore the new arrangements do not represent an increase in public expenditure.

The Coal Industry Act 1980 provides that the Secretary of State, with the approval of the Treasury, may issue directions as to the rates of interest payable on loans on vote; and that the interest may be deferred. It is intended that the rate of interest, at least initially, shall be at the same rate, and paid at the same time, as would be due on equivalent NLF loans. This will be kept under review in the light of British Coal's developing financial position. I would inform the House of any decision to soften the terms of future loans or defer the payment of interest.

The corporation remains committed to the objective of achieving breakeven for 1988-89 after full interest charges and net restructuring costs; achieving an increasing surplus on revenue account in following years; and contributing increasingly to self-financing. These represent challenging targets, but are attainable provided the industry continues its drive towards greater flexibility and competitiveness and avoids damaging industrial action.

Radioactive Waste (Disposal)

Mr. Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement about the disposal of the radioactive wastes prepared for sea disposal in 1983.

Mr. Parkinson: The Government have decided not to resume sea dumping of drummed radioactive wastes. Instead, these will be prepared for eventual disposal in the deep facility for low and intermediate-level wastes which Nirex has been asked to develop.

The Government nevertheless remain in no doubt that sea disposal makes good sense for some categories of waste, and intend to keep open this option for large items arising from decommissioning operations.

Cash Limits

Mr. Andy Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether any changes will be made to his Department's cash limits for 1988-89.

Mr. Parkinson: Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplementary Estimate, the cash limit for class VI, vote 7, will be increased by £3,500,000 to £6 million. This increase reflects a revision of the amount of work to be undertaken in 1988-89 in connection with the privatisation of the electricity supply industry in England and Wales now that a number of decisions have been taken and published in the White Paper "Privatising Electricity" (Cm 322).

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Multinational Companies (Third World)

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what proposals his Department has to increase the role of multinational companies in fostering economic development in the Third *world.*

Mr. Chris Patten: The bilateral and multilateral aid programmes provide substantial opportunities for British-based multinational companies to assist with approved projects in the Third world. Now that the aid programme is growing in real terms the scope for such assistance will increase. Through our support for structural adjustment we are also seeking to promote a better policy environment within developing countries, and one that is more conducive to direct foreign investment. The Commonwealth Development Corporation often invests in projects overseas in partnership with British private investors.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Teachers (Pay and Conditions)

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has now considered the views expressed by the local authority employers and the teacher unions on his proposals following the report of the interim advisory committee on school teachers' pay and conditions.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: After careful consideration of the representations I have received, following the publication of the report from the interim advisory committee on school teachers' pay and conditions, I have decided to accept the committee's recommendations on pay rates. Drafts of amendments to the "School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document 1987," an order which will give effect to the 1988 document, and a circular to local education authorities, are being sent today to the relevant local authority associations, teacher unions and bodies representing the interests of the governors of voluntary schools inviting any comments by Wednesday 8 June.

Equal Opportunities

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what action he has taken to remedy past inequalities in employment practices in his Department, in compliance with the codes of the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission, respectively.

Mrs. Rumbold: The Department has reviewed the range of employment practices over the last few years in the light of Civil Service policy on equal opportunities. This has led to such developments as the introduction of "keeping in touch" arrangements for those who resign for domestic reasons, and the provision of women-only development training courses. Guidance on equal opportunity policies is included in the training provided for those involved in staff appraisal, recruitment and promotion interviewing. Ethnic monitoring is being used in sample recruitment surveys to measure the number of white and ethnic minority applicants and to identify significant variations in their success rates throughout the competition.

Free School Milk and Meals

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) how many schoolchildren in the county of

Leicestershire received discretionary free milk in 1987; how many such children now receive discretionary free milk; and how many and what percentage of such children were or are, respectively, in schools for children with special needs;

(2) how many children in the county of Leicestershire received discretionary free milk at school under supplementary benefit or family income supplement rules but are no longer receiving the same under the new income support rules;

(3) how many schoolchildren in Leicestershire in 1987 received free school meals and milk; how many now receive the same; and what percentage have lost such entitlement;

(4) how many special schools in the city of Leicester have been affected by the removal of discretionary free school milk; which schools are so affected; and how many and what percentage of children attending each of those schools have lost that entitlement;

(5) how many and what percentage of children in special schools in the city of Leicester and in the county of Leicestershire, respectively, received school meals before the recent changes in entitlement to free school meals; and how many such pupils no longer receive school meals.

Mr. Dunn: In October 1987, the latest date for which data are available, about 18,751 pupils (or 16 per cent.) in Leicestershire received free school meals, of whom 330 pupils (or 0·3 per cent.) attended special schools. Information in respect of the city of Leicester is not separately available. For further information on school meals I refer the hon. and learned Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Vaz) on 25 May.

Information on the take-up of discretionary free school milk is not collected centrally. Children whose families are in receipt of income support continue to be eligible to receive free milk at midday.

Palterton Primary School

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will take steps to allocate additional funds to Palterton primary school, Palterton, near Chesterfield for the construction of an extension for teaching accommodation.

Mr. Dunn: Capital allocations are made annually to local education authorities on the basis of plans submitted by the authority. The project at Palterton county primary school was not included in Derbyshire LEA's plans for 1988-89. Allocations in respect of prescribed expenditure are unhypothecated; it is accordingly for the authority to determine how to deploy its resources.

Zoological Society of London

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what addition he proposes to make to the Universities Funding Council budget in respect of the switch of responsibility for the research role of the Zoological Society of London from the Department of the Environment.

Mr. Jackson: The transfer of responsibility for the funding of the Institute of Zoology will be accompanied by an increase in the public funding of the universities by a sum equivalent to the institute's core funding requirement.

"Shouldn't You Become a School Governor?"

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science why the leaflet entitled "Shouldn't You Become a School Governor?" is being circulated in Scotland by his Department and by the Central Office of Information; and if he will indicate the cost of providing copies of this leaflet in Scotland.

Mr. Dunn: The Department has made no arrangements for the distribution of this leaflet in Scotland, since the provisions to which it relates apply only to England and Wales.

City Technology College, Lincoln

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) on what basis his Department has held any discussions with members or officials of Lincolnshire county council education committee about the possible use of *(a)* South Park school, Lincoln and *(b)* any other local education authority school in Lincoln as a city technology college; and if he will make a statement;

(2) whether his Department has held any discussions about the possibility of establishing a city technology college in Lincoln; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: My Department has had no discussions with members or officials of the Lincolnshire LEA concerning the use of any specific LEA school as a city technology college. Discussions have taken place, on three occasions in the period between November 1986 and February 1988, to give the local authority and the business community general information on the establishment of CTCs.

Primary School Teachers

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information is available to his Department regarding the number and distribution of primary school teachers in the maintained sector with formal qualifications or training in *(a)* mathematics and *(b)* science, beyond GCE O-level; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: In March 1987, there were an estimated 17,500 full-time and 2,200 part-time teachers in maintained nursery and primary schools in England, who had a post-A-level qualification in which mathematics was a main or second subject, or who had in the previous five years attended an in-service course in mathematics of at least one term's full-time equivalent duration. In addition, a further 4,300 full-time and 900 part-time teachers had A-level mathematics or equivalent.

The corresponding figures for science were 22,700 full-time and 3,500 part-time with a post-A-level qualification, and a further 8,900 full-time and 2,000 part-time teachers with a science A-level or equivalent.

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will estimate the number and proportion of primary schools in the maintained sector that have a member of the teaching staff with identifiable knowledge or experience in *(a)* mathematics and *(b)* science; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: In March 1987 an estimated 11,400 primary schools in England—57 per cent.—had at least

one teacher with a post-A-level qualification that had mathematics as the main or second subject or who had attended, in the previous five years, an in-service course in mathematics of at least one term's full-time duration or equivalent. The corresponding figure for science was 13,800—69 per cent.

All primary schools teach mathematics and almost all teach science and must therefore have at least one teacher with experience of teaching those subjects.

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information is available to his Department as to the numbers or approximate numbers of primary school teachers in the maintained sector who have undertaken in-service training wholly or largely in *(a)* mathematics and *(b)* science, in recent years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: Estimates based on a 1987 survey sample of full-time and part-time teachers in maintained nursery and primary schools in England, who identified themselves as having attended courses, are as follows:

	Mathematics	*Science*
Teachers who attended a course of at least 20 days full-time equivalent duration in the years 1982-1986.	5,200	2,900
Teachers who had had attended a course of less than 20 days full-time equivalent duration in the months September-December 1986.	17,200	11,600
Teachers in either or both of the above categories.	21,400	14,100

Primary Schools (Mathematics and Science)

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information is available to Her Majesty's inspectors as to the provision of advisory services, support and in-service training in each local education authority for *(a)* mathematics in primary schools and *(b)* science in primary schools; whether such provision is earmarked or specifically identifiable; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The information available to the inspectorate indicates that the provision of all these services varies widely in extent and quality. The vast majority of LEAs have advisers both for primary schools and for mathematics and science. Some have funds at their disposal and a small but growing number have the support of advisory teachers.

The practice of earmarking funds for the support of mathematics and science in primary schools also varies. It is for each LEA to decide how best to utilise the resources at its disposal, and to determine whether the provision is of appropriate quality.

Her Majesty's inspectorate is monitoring the operation of the LEA training grant scheme, and will report in due course upon specific aspects, including the extent to which it serves the needs of the national curriculum and makes reference to mathematics and science provision for primary schools.

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what specific grant provision has been made in each recent year to support provision or training related to *(a)* mathematics in primary schools and *(b)* science in primary schools; and if he will publish a table showing the amount of such grants and the local education authorities involved in each year.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: Specific grant has been available to support local education authorities' expenditure on the in-service training of teachers of mathematics since 1983, and of science since 1984. Total amounts of grant, which cover the training of teachers in primary and secondary schools, are as follows:

	Mathematics teachers £ million	*Science teachers £ million*	*DES circular*
1983-84	2·1	—	3/83
1984-85	1·98	1·98	4/84
1985-86	1·98	1·98	3/85
1986-87	1·763	1·763	1/86
1987-88	3·85	3·85	6/86
[1]1988-89	4·4	4·4	9/87

[1] Estimated.

Since the introduction of the LEA training grants scheme in 1987-88, LEAs have had discretion to supplement these amounts with grant from their allocations for local priorities. Allocations to individual authorities and details of the types of training attracting grant are included in the Department's circulars referred to above, copies of which are in the Library.

Universities Funding Council

Mr. Lester: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects to announce the appointment of the chairman and chief executive of the proposed Universities Funding Council.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I am pleased to announce appointments to both posts: Lord Chilver FRS FEng, currently vice-chancellor of Cranfield Institute of Technology, and soon to return to private industry, will be the first chairman; and Sir Peter Swinnerton-Dyer KBE FRS, currently chairman of the University Grants Committee, the first chief executive. The Universities Funding Council and the universities will be well served by this formidable team.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Lebanon

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what further representations have been made regarding United Kingdom citizens kidnapped in Lebanon.

Mr. Mellor: We continue to call on those Governments or organisations with influence over the hostage takers to use their influence to secure the unconditional release of those concerned.

In the gathering of information about our hostages, every lead is being followed up. Her Majesty's Embassy in Beirut is doing all it can, in very difficult circumstances. We also remain in touch with middle eastern and other Governments.

Equal Opportunities

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he has taken to

remedy past inequalities in employment practices in his Department, in compliance with the codes of the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission, respectively.

Mrs. Chalker: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is an equal opportunity employer and is pursuing the 1984 programme of action for equal opportunities for women in the Civil Service. Equal opportunity officers were appoined in the diplomatic and aid wings in 1984.

The diplomatic wing has adopted a number of measures to allow officers to combine career interests with domestic responsibilities. Flexible working hours were formally introduced in 1987. Provision has been made for part-time work, and job sharing. A more flexible approach has been adopted to requests for special unpaid leave for domestic reasons. Subject to operational requirements joint postings are arranged whenever possible where both partners in a marriage are members of the diplomatic service. Further details of these arrangements are given in the booklet "How to Cope with Changes in Domestic Responsibility . . . and still have a job", a copy of which is being placed in the Library of the House.

We are updating our programme of voluntary ethnic monitoring of staff in post. We also monitor recruitment and training. We recruit nationally and from all sectors of society. We advertise in the ethnic minority press in addition to the national and regional press and in inner-city jobcentres in London. Our recruitment literature stresses that we are an equal opportunity employer. We work with the national and regional press on articles about the work of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. We issue guidance to officers on aspects of equal opportunities (eg sexual harassment). Special courses on equal opportunities are arranged for officers dealing with personal management. Equal opportunities is included in all management courses.

Similar arrangements have been made in the aid wing, which in addition promotes attendance on internal and external women-only courses, and trains members of promotion boards on equal opportunities.

Japan

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met the Foreign Minister of Japan; and what subjects were discussed.

Mr. Mellor: My right hon. and learned Friend last met Mr. Uno in the margins of the OECD ministerial council meeting in Paris on 18 May. They discussed political and economic subjects of mutual interest.

Cuba

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next intends to visit Cuba.

Mr. Mellor: My right hon. and learned Friend has no present plans to do so.

Foreign Affairs Council

Mr. William Powell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish in the *Official Report* a statement on the outcome of the Foreign Affairs Council held on 24-25 May.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary and I attended the Foreign Affairs Council on 24 May. There was a useful discussion of outstanding points on detailed follow-up to the European Council. Some were resolved: others were referred for further discussion and resolution at the June Foreign Affairs Council.

The Council agreed to establish a 15 million ecu programme to support Community-wide exchanges involving young people between the ages of 15 and 25. The programme will run for three years from 1 January 1989: the Commission also has authority to spend up to 3·55 mecu this year on such exchanges.

The Council endorsed the text of the EC/CMEA joint declaration which, when signed later this month, will open the way for improved co-operation in various fields between the Community and CMEA member states.

The Council discussed dates for the 1989 European Parliament elections, and the Foreign Ministers, meeting as a Committee of Representatives of the Member States, discussed nominations to the European Court of Justice; they will return to both topics.

The sixth EC/Israel Co-operation Council, held in the margins of the FAC, reviewed the working of the EC/Israel co-operation agreement, and considered outstanding trade and tax difficulties. The Community also stressed its concern that agreed measures giving preferential access to EC markets to Palestinian producers in the occupied territories should be implemented without further delay. Prospects for the middle east peace process were discussed separately.

Council of Ministers

Mr. Lester: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish in the *Official Report* a statement of forthcoming business in the European Community Council of Ministers.

Mrs. Chalker: The usual forecast was deposited in the House earlier today. At present, 14 meetings of the Council of Ministers are planned for June.

The Economic and Finance Council will meet on 6 June to discuss the Commission's proposals on the liberalisation of capital movements.

Agriculture Ministers will meet informally on 6-7 June for bilateral discussions on the 1988-89 price-fixing proposals and income aids. These discussions will continue at a formal Council on 13-14 June whose agenda also includes veterinary inspection fees; quick frozen foodstuffs; materials and articles in contact with food; control of food additives; extraction solvents; and health problems affecting intra-Community trade in meat products.

The Internal Market Councils on 7 and 22 June will discuss a number of measures relevant to the completion of the single market.

The Social Affairs Council which meets on 9 June is expected to adopt the directive proscribing four specified carcinogens and will consider common positions, under the cooperation procedure, on the draft directives on benzene and exposure limits. The Council will also discuss the draft directives on carcinogens (framework); health and safety at the workplace; minimum workplace requirements; and equal treatment in social security.

The Energy Council will meet on 9 June and will consider the Commission's analysis of potential obstacles

to the creation of an internal market in energy; a paper on co-operation between major electricity utilities and private generators based on renewable energy sources, waste energy, and combined heat and power; and a report on the implementation by member states of Council recommendations on encouragement of investment in solid fuels in the industrial, public building and district heating sectors.

There will also be discussion of possible acceleration of discrete energy efficiency investments by means of third party financing, and of the Commission's review of member states' energy policies in the context of the Community's energy objectives agreed to 1995.

The Foreign Affairs Council meets on 13/14 June. The Council will discuss the implementation of the European Council Conclusions on financing the Community. It will also discuss a Commission paper setting out possible broad guidelines for the approach to the forthcoming renegotiation of the Lomé convention, and will have a further meeting with the European Parliament on the extension of the Food Aid Framework Regulation. Discussions are also expected to cover progress made in negotiations with Hungary on a trade and co-operation agreement; relations between the Community and the United States; and the dates of the 1989 European Parliament elections.

The Environment Council meets on 16 June to discuss Commission proposals on large combustion plants; the protection of the ozone layer; major accident hazards; vehicle emissions (small cars); the reduction of wastes from the production of titanium oxide; and the five year programme illustrating the favourable impact of environmental projects on employment.

The Transport Council will meet on 20/21 June to discuss a number of important outstanding transport issues, including road haulage market access, vehicle weights and dimensions, vehicle taxation, transport infrastructure, shipping, through-transit problems, drivers' hours and combined transport. Other subjects that may also be added to the agenda for this meeting are; access to road haulage profession; vehicle testing and relations with IACO (aviation).

The Fisheries Council is expected to meet on 1 June to discuss the tuna market regime; control-reporting of Member States; technical conservation in the Baltic sea; additional catch quotas for Greenland; change in migration of western mackerel stock; and relations with third countries.

The Industry Council meets on 24 June to consider the future of ECSC steel production quotas, and rules on providing state aid for the Community steel industry.

The European Council to be held in Hanover on 27/28 June is expected to concentrate on the progress being made towards the completion of the single market and setting guidelines for future priorities.

The Research Council will meet on 29 June. The provisional agenda anticipates the formal adoption of the Drive, Delta, Bureau of Community Reference and science programmes and an extension of the biotechnology programme. The Council will discuss the fusion programme and the extension to the JET statutes and will consider a common position and common orientations for the 1988-91 programme of work of the joint research centre.

It may also be possible for the Council to adopt common positions on the AIM programme and the ECLAIR programme. There will be discussion of the relationship between EC and EUREKA programmes, of the relationship of Community research activity to technical norms and standards, and of bioethical issues on the basis of communications from the Commission. Some discussion is also possible of the Japanese ideas for a human frontier science programme.

The Telecommunications Council on 30 June is likely to discuss the Commission's Green Paper on the development of the Common Market for telecommunications services and equipment; a proposed Council directive which the Commission is expected to submit shortly on the opening up of public purchasing in telecommunications; and a possible agreement on a common European emergency number. It may also discuss satellite high definition television standards.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Swiss Companies

Mr. Gregory: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what information he has to how many acquisitions by United Kingdom companies of Swiss companies of a significant size were made in 1987; how many of these were contested bids; and how many were agreed.

Mr. Maude: United Kingdom companies are not required to register overseas acquisitions of companies. However, transactions identified from published sources involving United Kingdom companies acquiring Swiss companies during 1987 are as follows. There is no available information on whether any of these acquisitions were contested, or whether there were other bids which were contested and failed.

Acquiring company	*Swiss company acquired*
John Crowther	Wollimex AG
Queen's Moat Houses	Hotel Admiral

This list does not include purchase of minority stakes or assets in Swiss companies.

Switzerland (Departmental Discussions)

Mr. Gregory: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what discussions have been held by his Department with the Swiss authorities since 1982; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Alan Clark: My Department holds regular discussions with the Swiss authorities at both ministerial and official level. A wide range of matters of mutual interest are discussed including international trade policy, European trade and industrial issues and bilateral trade relations.

Single European Market

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster which five business schools have been asked to meet Ministers to discuss the need for extra courses tailored for the single market in 1992; and what additional resources will be offered for these courses.

Mr. Maude: My right hon. and noble friend has written to: Ashridge management college; Cranfield school of

management; Henley management college; Manchester business school; London business school and City university. The purpose of the meeting is to consider what preparations they are making for 1992. The question of additional resources does not arise at this stage.

South Africa

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what has been the level of British disinvestment from South Africa since January 1983.

Mr. Alan Clark: The latest available information in complete detail, on United Kingdom net direct investment in South Africa since 1983, is as follows. There is no information on United Kingdom portfolio investment abroad, by country.

United Kingdom investment in South Africa (1983-86) by component

£ million

	1983[1]	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Unremitted profits	362	180	174	73
Acquisition of overseas companies share and loan capital	11	6	22	16
Disposal of overseas companies share and loan capital	91	42	8	47
Net change in inter-company and branch/head office accounts	15	−24	12	43
Net direct investment	296	120	199	86

Source: Overseas Transactions Inquiry.
[1] Excludes oil companies.
Note: Components may not sum to the total because of rounding.

Ceramic Industry

Ms. Walley: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he last met representatives from the ceramic industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: I last met representatives of the ceramic industry at a reception for the British Ceramic Confederation on 28 October 1987 at the House of Commons.

As the hon. Member knows, my Department is concerned only with the domestic pottery section of the ceramic industry. The remaining sectors are the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment.

Intermediaries (Commission)

Mr. McCrindle: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what progress has been made in requiring company representatives and tied agents to disclose remuneration following his decision to require LAUTRO to require full disclosure of commission by intermediaries.

Mr. Maude: It is for the Securities and Investments Board and the self-regulating organisations to draw up rules on investment business under the Financial Services Act, but I am confident that, in the period before automatic full disclosure of commissions by intermediaries is required, they will work to develop a system of disclosure of expenses of selling through company representatives.

The Secretary of State's decision on LAUTRO was whether or not to give leave to its recognition by the board. LAUTRO amended its rules so as to require full disclosure of commissions from January 1 1990. The Secretary of State concluded that, as amended, LAUTRO's rules were not significantly anti-competitive, and accordingly gave leave.

Mr. McCrindle: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he received a copy of the report by Peat Marwick, commissioned by the Securities and Investments Board on the disclosure of remuneration and expenses of company representatives and tied agents; whether he has met the chairman of the Securities and Investments Board to discuss its recommendations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: I received a copy of this report when it was published by the Securities and Investments Board on May 17 1988, and expect to discuss it with the chairman of the board shortly.

Mr. McCrindle: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what estimate he has made of the number of intermediaries who will, as a result of his decision on the LAUTRO rules regarding commission disclosure, apply to become tied agents; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: I have made no estimate. It is for intermediaries themselves to decide whether to be independent or to become tied agents.

Mr. McCrindle: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if it remains his policy to ensure equivalence of disclosure of remuneration by independent intermediaries and company representatives; what form will this take; and if he will make a statement as to when he expects the full details to be known.

Mr. Maude: Under the rules made under the Financial Services Act, independent intermediaries will be required to disclose fully their commission to all investors from January 1 1990. The regulatory bodies under the Act will use the intervening period to prepare the way for disclosure of expenses of selling through company representatives.

Travel Companies (Exchange Rate)

Mr. Sean Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) whether any estimate is available to him of the amount which holiday travel companies will gain as a result of movements in the exchange rate of the pound sterling in recent months;

(2) if he will seek powers to compel holiday travel companies to refund to customers any excess profit arising from the movement in the exchange rate of the pound sterling in recent months; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Butcher: No estimates are available of the benefits to the travel industry of recent favourable movements in the sterling exchange rate. Whether or not a refund can be expected by a consumer in any particular case is entirely a civil matter and not for Government intervention. The terms of the consumer's contract with the tour operator will indicate whether or not he is entitled to a refund in these circumstances, and it will be for him to pursue the matter with the company concerned.

Fire Safety

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will estimate the likely effect of

the new furniture fire safety regulations on inventory charges to suppliers of furnishing fabrics arising from dual stocking for domestic and foreign markets.

Mr. Butcher: It is not practicable to provide a worthwhile estimate of the possible effect of the draft furniture fire safety regulations on inventory changes arising from dual stocking although if manufacturers and wholesalers adopt this course there will undoubtedly be some additional cost.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what estimate he has made of the effect on United Kingdom exports of fabrics to Australia arising from the 40 per cent. import duty rate on heavier grades instead of 2 per cent. following implementation of the proposed new furniture fire safety regulations.

Mr. Butcher: No estimate has been made of the effects on exports to any particular country, either in respect of tariffs or non-tariff barriers, of the proposed new furniture fire safety regulations. The regulations will not apply to exports.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what consideration he gave in formulating the new furniture fire safety regulations to the effect of fire retardant treatments on the weight of fabrics for export.

Mr. Butcher: The draft Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations will exclude exports. Any effect on the weight of fabrics resulting from fire retardant treatment from the United Kingdom market has not been a major consideration in drafting these regulations.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what estimate he has made of the impact of the new furniture fire safety regulations on exports to non-EEC countries.

Mr. Butcher: No such estimate has been made.

Nationalised Industries

Mr. Page: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what progress has been made in implementing the current programme of references of nationalised industries to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission; and what further references are planned.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The commission's report on the Welsh water authority was published on 18 May, and I expect to publish the report on the Post Office Counters services shortly. The Commission are currently investigating British Coal's capital investment and British Rail's provincial services.

Further references will relate to the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company and, once the King's Cross investigation is completed, London Underground.

SCOTLAND

Health Boards (Expenditure)

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the main areas of health spending in health boards.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Health boards' summarised accounts for 1986-87 show main areas of spending as follows:

	£ million
Recurrent	
Hospital services	1,264
Community health services	131
Family practitioner services	437
Headquarters administration	59
Associated services (eg nurse training, local health councils etc)	19
Capital	
Hospital and community health	99
Total	2,009

Forestry

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will state the overall target for afforestation of upland areas in Britain; and when he expects this target to be reached.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The present target for afforestation in Great Britain, excluding planting under the proposed farm woodland scheme, is 33,000 hectares a year. There is no separate target for afforestation in upland areas.

Mental Illness

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the amount spent on mental illness in each health board for each year since 1979 at 1979 prices.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The table shows health boards' expenditure on mental illness in each year from 1981-82 to 1986-87. Information is not available for years before 1981-82.

Scottish Health Boards' expenditure on mental illness

(£'000 at 1981-82 prices[1])

	1981-82	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
Argyll and Clyde	7,845	7,782	7,953	7,864	7,581	7,585
Ayrshire and Arran	3,435	3,318	3,673	4,081	4,179	4,424
Borders	1,191	1,104	1,074	1,095	1,106	1,174
Dumfries and Galloway	4,866	4,753	4,925	4,625	4,513	4,335
Fife	3,641	4,096	3,939	4,047	3,918	4,187
Forth Valley	[4]5,189	[4]5,121	4,827	4,328	4,695	5,735
Grampian	9,793	9,576	8,950	8,732	8,894	8,897
Greater Glasgow	[4]23,493	22,413	22,445	22,700	23,342	22,754
Highland	5,554	5,033	5,055	5,134	5,079	5,074
Lanarkshire[2]	10,857	10,976	11,065	11,878	11,895	12,033

	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87
Lothian	18,965	18,602	18,301	17,974	17,704	18,950
Orkney[3]	11	16	15	15	16	17
Shetland	4	5	2	3	2	25
Tayside	11,470	9,534	9,519	10,226	9,723	9,060
Western Isles	38	21	38	42	48	n.a.
Total	[4]106,352	[4]102,350	101,781	102,744	101,695	[5]104,250

[1] Measured using the GDP deflator.
[2] Includes elderly with mental disability.
[3] Includes mentally handicapped.
[4] On a different basis from later years.
[5] Excludes Western Isles.
n.a. Not available.

In the early years of the survey of expenditure, some anomalies in recording were present, which were subsequently corrected. These are noted in the footnotes.

Local Authorities (Statistics)

Mr. Squire: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the total rateable value, needs assessments, population, total expenditure and rateable value per head in total, for local authorities in Scotland, in each year from 1979-80 to 1988-89, estimate.

Mr. Lang: The information requested is set out in the table.

	Total rateable value £ million	Needs assessments £ million	Total population at 30 June	Relevant expenditure £ million	Rateable value per head £	Relevant expenditure per head £
1979-80	1,218	n/a	5,167,000	2,112	236	409
1980-81	1,255	n/a	5,153,300	2,520	244	489
1981-82	1,281	n/a	5,149,500	2,799	249	544
1982-83	1,296	2,448	5,166,557	3,010	251	583
1983-84	1,321	2,531	5,150,405	3,190	256	619
1984-85	1,325	2,658	5,145,722	3,340	258	649
1985-86	3,121	2,795	5,136,509	3,495	608	680
1986-87	3,190	2,972	5,121,013	3,731	623	729
1987-88	3,220	3,205	5,112,129	4,054	630	793
1988-89	3,220	3,566	n/a	4,464	630	873

Notes:
(1) 1982-83 was the first year in which client group assessments of relative expenditure need were used.
(2) The change in total rateable value in 1985-86 was caused by a revaluation.
(3) The population estimates for 1988-89 are not yet available. The population as at 30 June 1987 has therefore been used.

Mr. Squire: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the number of local authorities which spent, respectively, above or below *(a)* their assessed spending need and *(b)* any expenditure guidance issued in each year from 1981-82 to 1988-89, estimate.

Mr. Lang: The information requested is set out in the table.

Number of authorities

	Above assessed need	On or below assessed need	Above guideline	On or below guideline
1981-82	n.a.	n.a.	55	10
1982-83	33	32	37	28
1983-84	39	26	58	7
1984-85	36	29	28	37
1985-86	32	33	29	36
1986-87	26	39	24	41
1987-88	34	31	35	30
1988-89	30	35	31	34

Notes:
(1) Client group assessments of relative expenditure need were not used prior to 1982-83.
(2) The latest figures available about authorities actual or planned expenditure have been used.

Language Assistants

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many language assistants went to which countries under the auspices of the exchange of language assistants scheme in the last year for which figures are available; and how many come from which countries in each exchange.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The language assistants scheme administered on behalf of my Department by the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges does not operate on the basis of exchanges but of individual appointments arranged with reciprocating countries. In 1987-88 the central bureau made the following Scottish appointments:

Country	Outgoing assistants	Incoming assistants
France	199	192
West Germany	56	63
Spain	35	13
Austria	29	9
Italy	10	6
Switzerland	3	7
Columbia	3	2
Sweden	1	1
USSR	1	1
Canada	3	—
East Germany	3	—
Ivory Coast	—	2
Lebanon	—	1
Morocco	—	8
Senegal	—	1

Country	Outgoing assistants	Incoming assistants
Tunisia	—	4
Costa Rica	—	1
Total	343	311

Equal Opportunities

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what action he has taken to remedy past inequalities in employment practices in his Department, in compliance with the codes of the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission, respectively.

Mr. Rifkind: My Department has recently completed a survey of the ethnic origins of staff in the Scottish Office and associated Departments as part of the nationwide survey of civil servants. This information is being kept up to date by asking new entrants to the Department to complete a questionnaire showing their ethnic origin. It is my Department's intention to review the results of the survey with a view to determining what future action should be taken to encourage applications from ethnic minorities for posts in the Scottish Office.

In compliance with the Equal Opportunities Commission code of practice, facilities are offered to Scottish Office staff to enable them to combine a career with domestic responsibilities and to provide continuity of employment in such circumstances. These facilities include flexible working hours, special leave, reinstatement, re-employment and part-time working. Further opportunity for part-time working should be created as a result of a formal job sharing agreement which has recently been concluded between the Department and the trade union side.

In addition, there are developmental training courses exclusively for female officers which they can attend at the Civil Service College. The Department maintains a record, to which staff have access, of child care facilities available from local government.

Prisoners (Statistics)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the average length of custodial sentence of female prisoners in Scotland in 1986 and 1987.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The average length of custodial sentence imposed on female offenders in 1986 was 111 days and the provisional figure for 1987 is 115 days. Females sentenced to life imprisonment or indeterminate detention are not included in the above calculation.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many prisoners were transferred from *(a)* Scotland to Northern Ireland and *(b)* Northern Ireland to Scotland in 1987; and under which section of the Criminal Justice Act 1961 such transfers were carried out.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: None.

Terrorism

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many persons have been *(a)* killed and *(b)* injured in Scotland in 1987 as a result of paramilitary activity; and if he will break down the figures specifying whether the paramilitaries were (i) from Western Europe, (ii) from Northern Ireland, (iii) from the Republic of Ireland, (iv) from other parts of the world and (v) of unknown origin.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: No such deaths or injuries occurred in Scotland during 1987.

Planned Maintenance Programme (Lothian)

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if, in view of the deterioration in the fabric of Linlithgow primary school, he will make funds available to Lothian region council's planned maintenance programme.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Substantial resources have been made available to Lothian regional council for both current and capital expenditure on the maintenance of school buildings in the current financial year. It is for the regional council itself to determine its own priorities for allocating these resources, and I understand that the council is now making arrangements for necessary repairs to be carried out at Linlithgow primary school.

Scottish Office, Edinburgh

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was *(a)* the cost of providing office accommodation for him and other Ministers in his Department and their associated offices in Old St. Andrew's House, Edinburgh, and *(b)* the cost of removal there.

Mr. Rifkind: As regards capital expenditure, the final costs are not yet available, and I therefore cannot add to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Falkirk, East (Mr. Ewing) on 9 March 1988. The approximate cost of the removal is £2,000.

Rating Reform

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list for each region and island authority in Scotland the current state of registration of persons for collection of the community charge including *(a)* number of forms issued, *(b)* percentage of forms issued, *(c)* numbers of completed forms returned and *(d)* percentage of completed forms returned.

Mr. Lang: Detailed information on the progress of community charge registration is not available centrally, but it is clear that in many areas very high rates of return of forms have been achieved in the initial canvass.

New Towns

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he is yet in a position to give a substantive reply to the question about new towns tabled by the hon. Member for East Kilbride for priority written answer on 28 April.

Mr. Lang: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 25 May.

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each of the Scottish new towns for the period 1974-75 to 1989-90, inclusive, the actual or estimated *(a)* capital expenditure, gross and net of capital receipts, *(b)* revenue expenditure and *(c)* capital debt, expressed in cash and as per capita amounts.

Mr. Lang: The information requested concerning the development corporations' capital and current expenditure, capital receipts and loan debt is available in the annual accounts published in each corporation's annual reports for the period 1974-75 to 1986-87. The corporation's annual reports for the year 1987-88 are to be laid before Parliament on 13 July.

Information on the estimated capital and revenue expenditure of the new towns in aggregate for the years 1987-88 to 1990-91 is contained within the Government's expenditure plans 1988-89 to 1990-91 presented to Parliament in January of this year.

Information on population within the designated area of each Scottish new town for the years 1974-75 to 1989-90 was included in the answer given to the hon. Member on 25 May.

Fetlar

Mr. Dunnachie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will establish an inquiry into the circumstances in which unemployed workers have been attracted to the island of Fetlar with offers of jobs renovating old croft houses as part of a £200,000 publicly funded project, only to find on their arrival that no jobs exist; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: This is a matter for the Sheltand Islands council. I understand that the circumstances have already been investigated by the Commissioner for Local Administration and that the Shetland Islands council has his report.

Forestry Commission

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much gross income was derived in each of the last five years by the Forestry Commission from the use of its land and facilities by all forms of rally sport.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information is available only for car rallies, and is as follows:

Year ended 31 March	*Gross income* £
1984	331,000
1985	395,000
1986	323,000
1987	436,000
1988	349,000

Edinburgh Bypass

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he intends to appoint a public inquiry into the alternative routes for the M8 extension to the Edinburgh bypass.

Mr. Rifkind: I have already made provisional arrangements for a public local inquiry to be held in the autumn for the purpose of considering the objections received to the draft orders published by the Scottish Development Department in March 1988.

Cash Limits

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he proposes to announce any changes in the cash limits for 1988-89 within his responsibility.

Mr. Rifkind: Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplementary Estimates, the cash limit for Class XVI, Vote 14: "Prisons, Hospital and Community Health Services, etc, Scotland" will be increased by £86,100,000 from £1,783,653,000 to £1,869,753,000. Most of the increase—£86 million—follows the decision to implement the recommendations of the review bodies in respect of doctors, dentists, nurses, midwives and professions allied to medicine from 1 April 1988. The remaining £100,000 is the amount allocated to health boards following the error of calculation of the retail prices index as announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services on 18 December 1987.

The cash limit for Class XVI, Vote 15: "Education, Arts, Libraries and Social Work, Scotland" will be increased by £796,000 from £197,720,000 to £198,516,000. This is to allow the disbursement of funds to various voluntary sector bodies and teachers' benevolent funds as a consequence of the earlier announced error in the retail prices index.

Those changes represent a net charge on the reserve of £86,896,000 and will not therefore increase the planned total of public expenditure.

Historic Buildings and Monuments Directorate

Mr. Bill Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he will make a statement on the report of the efficiency scrutiny of the directly employed labour of the historic buildings and monuments directorate of the Scottish Development Department.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The report was submitted at the end of February. Copies are being placed in the Library of both Houses today. I have agreed that copies should be circulated to the appropriate bodies with a view to starting the necessary consultations on the recommendations contained in the report.

The report recognises that the primary task of the directly employed labour is the conservation of historic masonry and that the work force deploys specialist skills and experience of a high order with an impressive dedication to its task. The report suggests that to give value for money the directorate should continue to develop its existing sophisticated management information system, increase the amount of work contracted out and continually question how the existing service can be improved.

The main recommendations for obtaining better value for money are:

- the integration of maintenance expenditure and DEL staff costs in a single vote;
- extend contracting out of non-historic work and reduce DEL numbers;
- review the present Estate of monuments against modern criteria of the merits and the liabilities of each site;
- achieve further savings on goods and services purchased;
- change various practices, set up targets and establish quantified performance indicators for the DEL force;
- re-assess the geographic working areas of each DEL Depot;
- install an integrated computer network to give Area access to the management information system.

Implementation of the recommendations could lead to a reduction in annual costs of at least £300,000 per annum after three years. The recommendations will be carefully considered in the light of the consultations about to be undertaken.

Student Awards

Sir Hector Monro: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what action he proposes to take in relation to applications for student awards for session 1987-88 which were not received by 31 December 1987.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: My right hon. and learned Friend has decided that the period for acceptance of valid applications for student awards for session 1987-88 should, exceptionally, be extended to 30 June 1988. He has taken this step in view of the fact that a small proportion of students have apparently relied hitherto on informal final reminders from their academic institutions that they should apply before the closing date, which could not be provided on this occasion. We are making arrangements to advise the individuals and institutions concerned immediately.

Nurses

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will indicate the total amount expended on wage for *(a)* nurses and *(b)* midwives for each health board in (i) 1987-88 and (ii) the expected expenditure in 1988-89.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 24 May 1988]:* Complete information on actual exenditure incurred by each board in 1987-88 will not be available until their accounts are submitted later this summer. For 1988-89, we have announced that an additional £92 million is to be made available in Scotland to finance the full additional cost of the review body awards. The precise attribution of this amount among the various categories of staff is currently being assessed. Health boards will be informed of their additional allocations shortly.

Rent and Rate Rebates

Mr. Michael J. Martin: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what assessment he has made of the extent to which the recent changes in rent rebates and rates rebates are causing hardship to elderly tenants in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Portillo: I have been asked to reply.

The new housing benefit system ensures that a person's resources after paying housing costs including 80 per cent. of rates will not be below their level of income support entitlement.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Civil Servants (Pensions)

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will make a statement on the pension arrangements for staff of Government Communications Headquarters who formally served in the armed forces;

(2) if he will make a statement on the calculation of reckonable service for pension purposes of civil servants who previously served in the armed forces during peacetime.

Mr. Brooke: There are separate pension schemes for civil servants and for armed forces personnel. Staff employed by the Government communications headquarters are, in general, members of the Principal Civil Service pension scheme. However, an individual formally serving with the armed forces would normally be a member of the armed forces pension scheme and receive appropriate pension benefits from that scheme.

The armed forces pension scheme provides for the transfer of accrued pension rights by those who have left the services since 1 April 1975. As the armed forces pension scheme is a member of the public sector transfer club, a civil servant who transferred benefits from the armed forces scheme would receive broadly year for year credit in the Civil Service scheme. The armed forces scheme has no provision for those who left before April 1975 to transfer pension benefits to another scheme. It is not normally possible, therefore, for a civil servant to reckon service with the forces that ended before April 1975 towards a Civil Service pension, unless the individual concerned comes within the scope of the limited concessionary arrangements provided for under the Superannuation Act 1946 and the Superannuation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1948. The main concessions in regulations made under these Acts are that those who entered the Civil Service between 3 September 1939 and 30 June 1950, after serving in the armed forces during that period, could reckon their forces service as if it had been unestablished service in the Civil Service; and to enable national service to reckon if it interrupted service in the Civil Service.

Hereditament Maps

Mr. Nicholas Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish his reasons for requiring that hereditament maps should be sent from provincial offices to the public record office at Kew, London.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The valuation office is required to release these maps to the public record office in accordance with the provisions of the Public Records Act 1958, in order that they may be preserved and form a permanent source of public reference. The public will now be able to examine the maps alongside the relevant field books which are already preserved in the public record office.

Equal Opportunities

Mr. Janner: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what action he has taken to remedy past inequalities in employment practices in his Department, in compliance with the codes of the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission, respectively.

Mr. Brooke: The Treasury has taken a number of positive measures to encourage equal opportunities. All in-house management training courses include an equal opportunities element. External development training courses only for women are advertised in the Department and have been attended by a number of women. Training and personnel managers attend a number of equal opportunity seminars and conferences throughout the year which add to their understanding of equal opportunity issues.

Job sharing, part-time working and career breaks to assist with individual domestic circumstances are encouraged where practicable.

Monitoring of ethnic recruitment is also undertaken to determine whether there are any signs of discrimination. There is no evidence to show that there is.

Payroll Giving Scheme

Sir David Price: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many employers have now joined the payroll giving scheme, under the terms of section 202 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988.

Mr. Brooke: About 2,600 schemes have been set up by employers. In some cases an employer may have more than one scheme for separate payrolls.

Tax Forms (Reply-paid Envelopes)

Mr. Corbett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer on what date the Inland Revenue ceased the practice of providing reply-paid envelopes for the return of tax forms; and whether he will estimate the savings to be made to the revenue in a 12-month period.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith) on 29 January 1988 at column *420*. The Inland Revenue ceased, from 5 April 1988, to issue reply-paid envelopes for the return of income tax returns and other correspondence except where payment of tax is being requested (where the present first-class reply service will remain unchanged) and in a few other special circumstances.

The savings to the revenue in the 12 months to April 1989 are estimated to be in excess of £2·0 million.

Management and Computer Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list each management or computer consultant contract in the Inland Revenue as at 1 January 1987, giving in each case the name of the consultancy firm and the subject of the assignment.

Mr. Norman Lamont: As at 1 January 1987 the Inland Revenue had the following management and computer consultancy contracts:

	Assignment
PA Computers and Telecommunications Ltd.	Project Management and Control Operational Research
Computer Sciences Company Ltd.	Application Software
ICL	Systems Software and Technical Support
Peat Marwick McClintock	Financial Systems Taxes Clerical Work Measurement
Institute of Manpower Studies	Personnel Planning
AC Consultancy Services	Operational Research
National Coal Board[1]	Operational Research

[1] Now British Coal Corporation.

Non-residents' Personal Reliefs

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the cost to the Exchequer of the measures proposed in clause 30 of the Finance (No. 2) Bill relating to non-residents' personal reliefs and the number of tax units who would benefit from the measure were it to be introduced in 1988-89.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 20 May 1988]:* Detailed statistics are not available to make a firm estimate of the cost of the measures in clause 30 of the Finance Bill. However, including the cost of the change to independent taxation for those taxpayers affected, it is thought that the additional relief is unlikely to exceed £15 million to £20 million in a full year. The overall cost of the change is included in the cost of independent taxation given in paragraph 36 of annex 4 to chapter 4 of the Financial Statement and Budget Report 1988-89.

Precise figures are not available, but it is known that at least 65,000 non-resident taxpayers (counting husband and wife as one) currently benefit from personal reliefs under the provisions of section 278 Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988.

CIVIL SERVICE

Equal Opportunities

Mr. Janner: To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what action he has taken to remedy past inequalities in employment practices in his Department, in compliance with the codes of the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission, respectively.

Mr. Luce: The Office of the Minister for the Civil Service is an equal opportunity employer. Its personnel policies are designed to ensure that all staff, no matter what their age, colour, disability, ethnic or national origin, marital status, race or sex have equality of opportunity for employment and advancement solely on the basis of their ability, qualifications and suitability for the work.

Some examples of the Department's equal opportunity initiatives are: the introduction of a career break scheme; job sharing and part-time working; promotion board and recruitment monitoring.

THE ARTS

Arts Council (Grants)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Minister for the Arts what grants were given by the Arts Council in 1985-86 and 1987-88 to *(a)* the British Theatre Association, *(b)* the Puppet Centre Trust, *(c)* the Book Trust, *(d)* the Poetry Society, *(e)* the Minority Arts Advisory Service, *(f)* Shape and *(g)* the National Association of Arts centres; and what other similar arts support and service organisations have received such grants in those years.

Mr. Luce: The information requested is as follows:

	1985-86 (£)	*1987-88 (£)*
British Theatre Association	16,000	—
Puppet Centre Trust	6,000	—
Book Trust	60,000	60,000
Poetry Society	95,000	112,000
Minority Arts Advisory Service	17,300	20,500
Shape	23,980	[1]60,000
National Association of Arts Centres	9,900	3,000
Dance Umbrella	31,000	33,250

[1] Devolved to Greater London Arts Association.

Equal Opportunities

Mr. Janner: To ask the Minister for the Arts, what action he has taken to remedy past inequalities in employment practices in his Department, in compliance with the codes of the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission, respectively.

Mr. Luce: The Office of Arts and Libraries is an equal opportunity employer. Its personnel policies are designed to ensure that all staff, no matter what their age, colour, disability, ethnic or national origin, marital status, race or sex, have equality of opportunity for employment and advancement soley on the basis of their ability, qualifications and suitability for the work.

Some examples of the Department's equal opportunity initiatives are: the introduction of a career break scheme; job sharing and part-time working; promotion board and recruitment monitoring.

Libraries

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts how many representations he has received during the past 12 months by members of the public, asking to pay to borrow more books than the rules of the basic library service allow, as proposed in paragraph 5.11 of the public libraries Green Paper.

Mr. Luce: I have received no direct representations about this from members of the public in the last 12 months.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts whether he will list the library authorities who presently do not charge commercial companies for their use of the authority's *(a)* reference, *(b)* information and *(c)* lending services.

Mr. Luce: This is a matter for local authorities' discretion. No central record of this information is kept.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts what was the cost of *(a)* producing and *(b)* printing the public libraries Green Paper.

Mr. Luce: The cost to my office of producing the Green Paper was about £9,000.

The costs of printing, publishing and distributing it are borne by Her Majesty's Stationery Office, which recovers its costs from sales revenue.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts on what occasions in the last 10 years a Minister for the Arts has used his statutory powers to ensure that a library authority provided a free and comprehensive basic service under the 1964 Act.

Mr. Luce: No Minister responsible for the public library service in England has used his statutory powers under the 1964 Act to direct an authority.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts whether he will publish the detailed figures which led him to set an initial target of £50 million gross income a year for charged services in his Green Paper on public libraries.

Mr. Luce: The £50 million is a cautious assessment of the gross income which library authorities in England could earn if they used the full range of means proposed in the Green Paper. The figure is based on projections using the amount which the higher earning authorities now raise.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts whether he will publish tables which show the rate at which each public library authority in England and Wales charges for *(a)* notifying library users that reserved books are available for borrowing and *(b)* failure to return borrowed books on time.

Mr. Luce: This information is published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy in "Public Library Statistics", copies of which are available in the House of Commons Library.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts what criteria he used in coming to the conclusion that public libraries could be more cost-effective.

Mr. Luce: I have not reached any firm conclusions that public libraries could be more cost-effective. However, all library authorities should test regularly that their services are cost-effective and delivering value for money. My Green Paper, "Financing our public library service: four subjects for debate," seeks to explore ways in which public library services may be made more cost-effective.

In my answer to an earlier question from the hon. Member today, I referred to a costing model published by my office. In addition, I am currently funding, through the British Library, the production of a manual of performance indicators for public libraries. Both these initiatives will, I hope, provide authorities with useful management tools.

Office of Arts and Libraries

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts whether the staff of the Office of Arts and Libraries contains a qualified economist or accountant employed in that capacity.

Mr. Luce: While the staff of the Office of Arts and Libraries includes no qualified accountant or economist employed in that capacity, the Department is able to draw on such professional services when it requires them from within or outside the Civil Service.

Library Authorities (Costs)

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts what is his policy on the extent to which Library authorities should fully cost *(a)* staff time, *(b)* apportioned rent of premises, *(c)* apportioned rent of equipment, *(d)* apportioned rent of telephone, *(e)* postage, and *(f)* interest on capital.

Mr. Luce: As far as public library costs are concerned, I believe that library authorities will wish to calculate as accurately as possible the itemised costs of their services in the interests of good management and to test that they are achieving good value for money. "A Costing System for Public Libraries," published by the Office of Arts and Libraries in July 1987, provides a flexible model designed to assist them in this.

Museums

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Minister for the Arts what information he has about museums disposing of items not required for display or retention.

Mr. Luce: Most national museums and galleries have carefully circumscribed powers to dispose of items from their collections either by sale, exchange or gift. I believe

that this facilitates good collections management and it is my intention to grant such powers to the National gallery, Tate gallery and National Portrait gallery as part of their change to corporate status.

As I announced in the House on 20 May, I shall be initiating a wider consultation exercise on this question before reaching any final decisions. I shall be considering in the light of the response whether it would be appropriate for different collections to be treated differently in this respect.

It is for the trustees of each institution, advised by their director, to determine the extent to which their statutory powers are used. Information about items disposed of under these powers is not held centrally.

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will publish in the *Official Report*, for each of the national museums covered by Class XIII a list of operational facilities, the dates at which any admission charges were introduced and the structure of such tariffs and any changes over the period 1979 to 1988.

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 25 May 1988]:* The national museums and galleries sites at which the trustees charge for admission or seek a voluntary donation are as follows:

Institution	*Date charges introduced*	*Present charges*	
		Adult £	*Concession* £
British Museum (Natural History)			
Natural History Museum[1]	April 1987	2·00	1·00
Geological Museum[1]	April 1987	1·00	1·00
Zoological Museum[2]	April 1987	1·00	1·00
Imperial War Museum			
Lambeth Road	December 1984	Voluntary Donation	
HMS Belfast[3]	December 1971	3·00	1·50
Cabinet War Rooms	April 1984	2·80	1·50
Duxford Airfield[4]	January 1976	3·50	1·80
National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside			
Merseyside Maritime Museum	April 1986	1·00	0·50
National Maritime Museum	April 1984	2·20	1·20
Science Museum			
National Railway Museum	April 1987	1·50	0·75
Wroughton Airfield[5]	1980	2·00	—
Concorde[6]	1980	3·00	1·50
Tate Gallery			
Barbara Hepworth Gallery[7]	1976	0·50	0·25
Victoria and Albert Museum			
South Kensington	November 1985	Voluntary Donation	
Apsley House	1949	2·80	1·00
Ham House	1952	1·80	0·90
Osterley Park House	1953	1·80	0·90
Theatre Museum	April 1987	2·25	1·25

[1] Free entry 4.30-6.00 pm weekdays.
[2] Free entry 4.30-5.30 pm weekdays.
[3] Taken over by Imperial War Museum March 1978.
[4] £2·50 and £1·25 during winter.
[5] Seasonal opening. Charge per car.
[6] Charge is for entry to Fleet Air Arm Museum.
[7] Taken over by Tate in 1980.

The other information the hon. Member asks for can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table, covering each of the votes on Class XIII and each of the years 1979-80 to 1990-91, which analyse income other than supply grant by its source including admission charges, other charges, trading profit, miscellaneous sales revenue, support from non-Government sources, public donations and other miscellaneous income.

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 25 May 1988]:* It is the policy of this Government to maintain their support for museums and galleries, and the arts generally, and to do so in a way which encourages and assists arts organisations to become more self-reliant in their development and growth. Some of the national museums and galleries have been particularly successful in this; all are developing their non-Exchequer sources of funding.

The non-Exchequer receipts of the national museums and galleries that I sponsor, for the years since 1979-80, including the estimate for the current year, are as follows:

£ '000

	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89 (estimate)
British Museum	610	814	939	960	1,100	1,327	1,520	1,250	1,853	4,592
British Museum (Natural History)	609	767	844	942	931	1,174	1,392	1,657	3,843	4,441
Imperial War Museum	458	495	531	551	660	850	779	875	1,259	2,825
National Gallery	20	25	27	99	112	106	48	114	144	286
National Maritime Museum	180	210	217	227	255	624	720	672	879	1,089
National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	716
National Portrait Gallery	200	156	200	210	220	245	387	426	726	640
Science Museum	50	40	39	140	280	250	240	350	1,950	2,200
Tate Gallery	25	165	122	164	260	260	161	240	342	932
Victoria & Albert Museum	119	370	376	571	572	690	990	1,019	625	2,842
Wallace Collection	12	17	15	43	30	35	40	50	57	66
	2,283	3,059	3,310	3,907	4,420	5,561	6,277	6,653	11,678	20,629

Notes:
1. *Source:* Supply Estimates 1981-82 to 1988-89.
2. National Maritime museum figure for 1987-88 has been adjusted to take account of later information.
3. National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside was established in 1986. Receipts figures were not shown in Supply Estimates for 1986-87 and 1987-88.

An analysis of receipts on the basis and in the detail requested by the hon. Member is not available.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

ADAS (Charges)

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will outline the remit of his Ministry's review into the Agricultural Development Advisory Service charges; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: My right hon. Friend has asked senior officials concerned in this Department to complete before summer a review of the first year's experience of ADAS charging, including demand for all categories of ADAS services, the costs of providing such services in relation to the results of the first year of charging and the lessons to be drawn from this experience. Staff and trade union representatives have been informed of the review and will be consulted on the implementation of any follow-up measures of concern to them.

Corn (Co-responsibility Levy)

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will give the co-responsibility levy per tonne of corn in each European Community country and the percentage this represents of the price per tonne.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The co-responsibility levy for all cereals in all member states is 5.38 ecu per tonne. This is 3 per cent. of the intervention price for common wheat. The relationship between the levy and the intervention price does not change when they are expressed in national currencies because both are converted using the green rate applicable to cereals in each member state.

The levy is currently the following rate per tonne in each member state:

	Rate	Currency
United Kingdom	3·53	£
Germany	12·9008	DM
France	40·22	FF
Netherlands	14·462	DG
Belgium and Luxembourg	258·59	BF
Ireland	4·473	IRL
Denmark	47·102	DK
Italy	8591·86	L
Greece	712·86	DRA
Spain	829·67	PTA

Equal Opportunities

Mr. Janner: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what action he has taken to remedy past inequalities in employment practices in his Department, in compliance with the codes of the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission, respectively.

Mr. Donald Thompson: This Department has taken the following positive action:

Organised residential and non-residential development training courses solely for women managers.

Advertised opportunities for job-share and part-time work.

Notified staff of the opportunity for reinstatement and how to "keep in touch."

Established a register of staff who are interested in working reduced hours.

Contributed to the OMCS training review which will identify the scope for arranging further developmental or skills training for women. It will also identify areas where such training could be arranged for black and Asian staff.

Advertised staff vacancies in inner city job centres.

Agricultural Statistics

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when was the last time his Ministry produced a publication compiling agricultural statistics over a period of 100 years; and when he plans to publish the next compilation.

Mr. Donald Thompson: "A Century of Agricultural Statistics 1866-1966" was published in 1968. There are no plans to publish a further edition.

Nitrates

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many local meetings his Ministry has held with farmers to advise them about reducing nitrate applications in the areas where the level of nitrate exceeds the 50mg litre limit.

Mr. Gummer: Eight local meetings have been held during 1988 specifically to discuss the nitrate pollution issue and what farmers can do to help reduce nitrate leaching to water resources. These meetings form part of a publicity campaign run jointly by the Ministry and seven other interested organisations. They are not confined to particular areas but are organised wherever sufficient farmers seek information on the subject. In addition, the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service answers questions on the nitrate issue at many other meetings of farmers.

Food, Drink and Marketing Policy

Mr. Gregory: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what are the current management objectives of his Department's food, drink and marketing policy division.

Mr. Donald Thompson: These are set out in the relevant programmes of the Ministry's MINIM 1987 publication, a copy of which is in the Library of the House.

Salmon

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has reactivated his study of the economic value of British salmon fisheries.

Mr. Gummer: Following the termination of the contract for this study with Exeter university, the work is now being undertaken at Portsmouth polytechnic and is expected to last two years.

Milk

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many milk producers in Great Britain were contracted into the Community non-marketing premium schemes during the base year for the calculation of milk quotas.

Mr. Donald Thompson *[holding answer 25 May 1988]:* Precise figures are not available. Initial investigation indicates that about 4,500 dairy producers in Great Britain were contracted into the non-marketing of milk premium scheme during 1983. Some of these would have been able to resume milk production in time to qualify for consideration under the milk quota exceptional hardship or development award provisions.

Cereals

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the entitlement of British farmers to European small cereal producers' aid in respect of the harvests of 1987 and 1988, respectively; and what action he is taking to encourage the taking up of this entitlement.

Mr. MacGregor *[holding answer 25 May 1988]:* Farmers have until 31 July 1988 to submit claims for small cereals producer aid in respect of the 1987 harvest.

Cereal producers with not more than 100 hectares of crops and grass (excluding rough grazing) are eligible for the aid, provided that they can show that cereals co-responsibility levy has been deducted on their grain sales during the 1987-88 marketing year.

The amount payable will be £3·53 per tonne on a minimum of 3 tonnes and a maximum of 25 tonnes of grain (£88·25). However, this amount per tonne will be reduced if the total amount claimed by all producers is more than 5·35 million ecu (£3·51 million), which is the amount allocated to the United Kingdom for payment of this aid.

All producers who claimed the aid in 1987, have been sent a claim form. Others who are eligible should apply to their local MAFF divisional office for a form. I am anxious to ensure that there is the widest possible uptake of this aid.

It has been agreed that small cereal producers will continue to receive aid in respect of the 1988 harvest, but the details are still under discussion.

Badgers

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will provide a breakdown for each of the last five years of Government and other funding, respectively, of research into tuberculosis in badgers, including work on developing a live test and a vaccine for badgers.

Mr. Donald Thompson *[holding answer 19 May 1988]:* Funds provided by the Government for research into bovine tuberculosis in badgers during the last five years are as follows:

Year	*Diagnostic test in live badgers*	*Vaccine*	*Other relevant work (estimated)*
1983-84	12,361	78,415	91,000
1984-85	4,383	87,455	94,000
1985-86	24,598	166,734	95,000
1986-87	58,543	173,475	100,000
1987-88	313,738	43,686	102,000

Information on funding from other sources is not available.

SOCIAL SERVICES

AIDS

Mr. Jopling: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the probability of the incidence of AIDS in the United Kingdom at the present time for each adult male and female over 18 years.

Mr. Newton: It is not possible to assess the probability of the incidence of AIDS in the United Kingdom at the present time for each adult male and female over 18 years. The latest published figures, which give the current prevalence of HIV infection at the end of March, show that 7,380 men and 797 women have been reported to the national surveillance centres as being HIV antibody positive. With regard to cases of AIDS, to the end of April 1,412 males and 27 females had been reported. The latest

available figures for the population of the United Kingdom aged 18 and over are 20,747,900 males and 22,573,000 females. This represents rates of infection with HIV of 361 per million for males and 35 per million for females and rates of people with AIDS of 68 per million for males and 1·6 per million for females. It is necessary to interpret these figures carefully: some of the cases of AIDS will be included in the HIV figures and these HIV statistics include only those infected people who have presented for testing.

Electro-convulsive Therapy

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list, by region, for each of the last three years for which figures are available *(a)* the number of male patients treated with electro-convulsive therapy and *(b)* the number of female patients treated with electro-convulsive therapy; and, in each case, what is the average number of treatments per patient.

Mrs. Currie: I am sorry that I cannot give the hon. Member the information she seeks in the form requested as no record is kept centrally of the number or sex of patients undergoing electro-convulsive therapy. The table shows the data held centrally.

ECT Statistics national and regional summary

Regional Health Authority	*1984*		*1985*		*1986*	
	Treatments[1]	*Average Number of Treatments per course*	*Treatments*[1]	*Average Number of Treatments per course*	*Treatments*[1]	*Average Number of Treatments per course*
Northern	11,127	6·44	12,242	6·71	10,346	6·98
Yorkshire	10,803	4·62	12,503	4·90	12,947	5·57
Trent	14,084	6·40	14,423	6·61	12,609	6·37
East Anglian	6,339	6·58	7,689	5·87	6,879	6·53
North West Thames	6,189	5·37	6,596	5·44	7,083	5·50
North East Thames	7,156	6·67	7,733	7·07	6,867	6·45
South East Thames	7,620	5·91	9,163	6·11	8,647	7·06
South West Thames	7,255	6·31	8,380	6·82	6,799	6·69
Wessex	11,611	6·89	13,031	7·19	12,905	6·96
Oxford	2,390	5·60	3,630	6·55	3,291	5·70
South Western	6,434	6·09	7,624	6·41	6,706	6·07
West Midlands	14,547	6·84	15,128	6·95	13,952	7·23
Mersey	4,852	5·86	5,404	6·39	5,572	6·20
North Western	13,862	5·43	13,653	5·67	14,412	6·74
England	124,269	6·03	137,199	6·26	129,015	6·47
Special Health Authority	826	8·18	565	4·59	524	4·40
England (including Special Health Authorities)	125,095	6·04	137,764	6·25	129,539	6·46
Special Hospitals	262	6·14	176	4·86	218	5·59
Total	125,357	6·04	137,940	6·25	129,757	6·46

[1] The number of treatments is not the same as the number of patients treated, as some patients may undergo more than one course of treatment during the year.

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what studies his Department has made of the effects of electro-convulsive therapy.

Mrs. Currie: It is not generally the role of the Department to commission basic clinical research. This type of research falls within the remit of other agencies such as the Medical Research Council and individual clinical researchers.

NHS Ancillary Staff

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what are the latest figures available for the number of ancillary staff employed in the National Health Service by scale and point or standard payroll system code under the terms and conditions of the ancillary staffs Whitley Council agreement.

Mr. Newton: The latest available information to this level of detail relates to staff in post at 31 March 1987. At this date, there were an estimated 119,000 (whole-time equivalent) ancillary staff employed by the NHS in England. Within this total, the estimated numbers by pay scale and incremental point were as shown in the table.

Ancillary staff—estimated incremental distributions by payscale 31 March 1987

Payscale	*Whole time equivalents*[1] *Points on incremental scales*					
	Total	*1st*	*2nd*	*3rd*	*4th*	*5th*
Non-supervisors and chargehands						
Scale A	72,991	37,445	14,242	21,302	0	0
Scale B	24,437	1,949	19,577	1,725	1,183	0
Scale C	10,487	889	7,720	117	1,761	0
Scale D	799	53	703	26	18	0
Supervisors						
Scale I	4,010	360	3,092	189	349	0
Scale II	2,333	95	1,775	398	65	0

Payscale	Total	Whole time equivalents [1] Points on incremental scales 1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Scale III	1,833	94	1,113	498	127	0
Scale IV	1,049	39	539	362	62	47
Orthopaedic appliance makers and fitters						
	1	0	1	0	0	0
Trainee grades	16	16	0	0	0	0
	3	3	0	0	0	0
Orthopaedic appliance Maker II	57	57	0	0	0	0
Orthopaedic appliance Maker I	70	70	0	0	0	0
Orthopaedic appliance Fitters	2	2	0	0	0	0
Trainee cooks	30	2	16	7	4	1
Upholsterers	136	0	0	0	0	0
Others grades [2]	655	0	0	0	0	0
Total directly employed staff	118,910	0	0	0	0	0

Source:
DHSS (SR7) Quarterly count of NHS non-medical manpower.
Notes:
[1] All figures are independently rounded to the nearest whole-time equivalent.
[2] Includes juvenile grades, other staff paid on ad-hoc payscales, and staff of authorities not on computerised payrolls.

Thomas Connolly Moore

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the escape from a secure mental hospital of Thomas Connolly Moore.

Mrs. Currie: Mr. Moore absconded from Monyhull hospital, which is not a secure hospital, in the afternoon of 16 May and was found and returned on the morning of 17 May. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary is satisfied that the level of supervision is appropriate for Mr. Moore.

Donald Hume

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps have been taken to ensure that Donald Hume is kept under secure surveillance at St. Bernard's hospital, Ealing; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: I understand that Donald Hume is currently receiving treatment in the regional secure unit at St. Bernard's hospital, Ealing. As the responsibility for the regional secure unit rests with the North West Thames regional health authority, my hon. Friend may wish to approach the chairman for further information.

Computer Services (Privatisation)

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if his Department has any plans to privatise computer services currently provided by his Department.

Mr. Portillo: Government policy is to promote value for money in the management and delivery of public services. All Departments have been encouraged to consider areas of work, including computer services, which might be carried out more cheaply or more effectively under contract.

Child Abuse

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the number of child abuse cases on the records of each of the social service departments in the London boroughs on 30 April.

Mr. Newton: I regret that the information is not available. However, we announced on 9 July 1987 that arrangements would be made for the annual collection of national statistics on child abuse. The Department is carrying out a survey for the year ending 31 March 1988, which will be followed by the introduction of an annual statistical return. It is planned to publish some provisional results from the survey later this year which will include the number of children and young persons on the child abuse register at 31 March 1988 in each local authority in England.

New-born Babies (Eye Defects)

Sir Bernard Braine: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what progress is being made in improving the surveillance of new-born babies in respect of possible eye defects; when the expected recommendations from the professional bodies are likely to be made; and when appropriate action can be expected.

Mrs. Currie: The third report from the maternity services advisory committee recommended that all babies should be fully examined within 24 hours of birth by a doctor experienced in the care of the newborn. The content of the examination is a matter for the clinician.

I understand the joint working party on child health surveillance convened by the British Paediatric Association will be presenting its report later this year.

We shall consider its report carefully.

Residential Care Homes

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has on the numbers of hotels and guest homes which have been converted to use as residential homes for the elderly.

Mrs. Currie: No information is collected centrally on the origin of premises now used as residential care homes. However, this is one of the subjects being examined in a survey of residential and nursing homes which we have commissioned from the personal social services research

unit, university of Kent, and the centre for health economics, university of York, the report of which will be published later this year.

Ulcerative Colitis

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any plans to add irritable bowel diseases to the list of exemptions from prescription charges to cover the case of sufferers from ulcerative colitis.

Mr. Newton: We have no plans to do so.

NHS Review

Mr. Robert Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if the review of the National Health Service currently being undertaken is considering the auction of hospital beds as a method of resolving priorities and raising funds.

Mr. Moore: No.

Supplementary Benefit

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he has any plans to amend the regulation under which 19-year-old school leavers can qualify for supplementary benefit payments when they are estranged from their parents.

Mr. Portillo: Supplementary benefit was replaced by income support from 11 April 1988. All 19-year-old school-leavers can qualify for income support provided they meet the normal conditions of entitlement such as availability for work and the income and capital limits. There are no plans to change this regulation.

Community Care

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if, in the light of his response to the proposals of the Central Council for the Education and Training of Social Workers, he will set out his Department's plans for the training of staff involved with community care services; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: The training requirements of staff working in community care are provided by a variety of bodies including local authority social services departments, health authorities, the National Health Service Training Authority and the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work. Our recent £10 million training support programme initiative for staff working with the elderly has provided a significant training boost for certain groups of staff working in the area of community care, and we are currently seeking powers, through the Health and Medicines Bill, to allow for possible expansion of the programme to take in additional staff groups. We shall consider whether further training initiatives are required when we have brought forward our proposals on community care in the light of Sir Roy Griffiths's report.

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he is satisfied with the current arrangements for the joint planning of community care services between health authorities and *(a)* local authority social service departments and *(b)* the voluntary organisations.

Mr. Newton: The present systems for joint planning offer health authorities, local authorities, the voluntary sector and family practitioner committees valuable opportunities to develop and co-ordinate community care services. We will consider whether any changes are necessary as part of our current examination of funding mechanisms for community care, following Sir Roy Griffiths' recent report.

Attendance Allowance Unit (Blackpool)

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services why a courier service is used between the Blackpool attendance allowance unit and his Department's Leeds offices; whether this leads to delays in correspondence; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: An internal courier service is used to link up all DHSS offices, including Blackpool and Leeds. This does not lead to delays in correspondence and, in fact, the reliability of next day delivery is generally at least as good as first-class post. It provides the Department with a method of transferring internal correspondence cost-effectively and efficiently between all offices.

Nurses (Mobility)

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what assessment he has made of the effect that the European Communities (Amendment) Act 1986 will have upon the mobility of nurses between European Community countries, and with regard to the recognition of nursing qualifications in European Community countries.

Mr. Newton: The European Communities (Amendment) Act 1986 amends the European Communities Act 1972 so as to give legal effect in the United Kingdom to certain aspects of the Single European Act which was signed by the member states in February of 1986. The Single European Act amended the voting procedure on certain articles of the EEC treaty and introduced closer co-operation with the European Parliament. It did not affect the fundamental right of the freedom of movement for persons which is enshrined in the original EEC treaty. Directives to facilitate that right in relation to nurses responsible for general care were adopted in 1977. They provide for the co-ordination of nurse training and mutual recognition of qualifications throughout the Community. Specialist nursing qualifications which were not covered by the 1977 directives may be covered by the current proposal to provide for a general system for the recognition of higher education diplomas. The added impetus given by the Single European Act to complete the internal market by 1992 and the introduction of procedural and institutional reform may well enable this proposal to be adopted in the near future.

Fish (National Health Service)

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how much fish from the Faroe Islands was purchased by the National Health Service for each of the last two years.

Mrs. Currie: No national NHS contract is held for the purchase of fish from the Faroe Islands and information is not held centrally on the suppliers of fish to individual regional or district health authorities.

Clinical Grading Structure

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to his reply of 17 May 1988, *Official Report*, column 410, what provision he is making to ensure that health authorities are able to fill and fund posts which are currently vacant when implementing the clinical grading structure.

Mr. Newton: As in earlier years, the review body estimate of the cost of its recommendations has been based on actual pay bills for the previous year. It is for health authorities to determine their nursing establishment, having regard to the total resources available.

Cervical Cancer

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many cervical smear tests had not been processed in the Leicestershire health district on 23rd May.

Mrs. Currie: This information is not available centrally. The hon. Member may care to contact the chairman of Leicestershire health authority.

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the average delay in processing cervical smear tests in the Leicestershire health district on *(a)* 1 January 1987, *(b)* 1 October 1987, *(c)* 1 January 1988 and *(d)* 1 April 1988.

Mrs. Currie: This information has been collected centrally only since October 1987. The figures are as follows:

Date	*Average processing time*
1 October 1987	Four weeks
1 January 1988	Seven weeks
1 April 1988	Eight weeks

I understand that the current position as on 23 May is that the average processing time is now four weeks. This meets the departmental guidance.

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, how many women had cervical cancer smear tests in Leicestershire health district in each of the months January to December 1987, and for each month in 1988.

Mrs. Currie: This information is not collected centrally in the form requested. The latest centrally held figures are for the number of smear tests carried out in the calendar year 1986. This figure is 59,332 and includes some women who had more than one test.

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what are the latest figures for each district health authority with backlogs in cervical cancer smear testing of *(a)* over one month, *(b)* between one and two months and *(c)* two months and over.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 17 May 1988]:* There are 190 district health authorities in England. Those reporting an average processing time for cervical smear tests of more than one month as at 1 May are listed. The average processing time is shown in weeks.

(a) Over one month but less than two (between 4·5 and 7·5 weeks)

	Number
Durham	6
Gateshead	7
East Cumbria	6
Leeds Western	7
Leicestershire	7
North Lincolnshire	5
South Lincolnshre (part)	5
Bassetlaw	5
Rotherham	4·5
Great Yarmouth	5·5
Norwich	4·5
Peterborough	6·5
North Hertfordshire	6
Barnet	6
Southend	7
West Essex	7
Mid Essex	5·5
Hastings	6
Eastbourne	6
Tunbridge Wells	5
Greenwich	5·5
Lewisham and North Southwark	6
North West Surrey	7
Wycombe	7
Cheltenham	5
Cornwall (Mid and West)	5
Gloucester	6
Southmead	6
Somerset	6
Mid Staffordshire	7
North Staffordshire	5
South Warwickshire	4·5
Dudley	5·5
Walsall	5
Liverpool (part)	7
St. Helens and Knowsley (part)	6
Wirral	5

(b) Two months and over (eight weeks or more)

	Number
North West Durham	10
Scunthorpe	8
Bradford	8
Airedale	8
South Derbyshire	9
Nottingham	9
Doncaster	8
South Bedfordshire	8
Merton and Sutton	9
Chichester	8
Croydon	9
Plymouth/Cornwall (East)	8
Warrington	8
Halton	8
Central Manchester	11

Benefits

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what would be the annual cost of raising the capital disregard for social security benefits to £5,000 with a level taper to £10,000.

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what would be the cost of raising the start of the tariff income for social security benefits from £5,000 with an upper limit of £10,000.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer 25 April 1988]:* The additional cost over and above that of the changes announced on 27 April 1988 would be £85 million.

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what would be the annual cost of raising the capital disregard for social security benefits to £10,000 for married couples.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer 25 April 1988]:* The additional cost over and above that of the changes announced on 27 April 1988 would be £25 million.

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what would be the cost of raising the disregard threshold for social security benefits from £6,000 to £7,000.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer 25 April 1988]:* The annual cost would have been £24 million.

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what would be the cost of raising the disregard threshold for income support from £6,000 to £10,000.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer 25 April 1988]:* The annual cost would have been £10 million.

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what would be the cost of raising the start of the tariff income for social security benefits to £4,000 with an upper limit of £10,000.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer 25 April 1988]:* The additional cost over and above that of the changes announced on 27 April 1988 would be £55 million.

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what would be the cost of raising the disregard threshold for social security benefits from £6,000 to £8,000.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer 25 April 1988]:* The annual cost would have been £39 million.

Mr. Anthony Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what would be the cost to the Treasury of raising the capital disregard for social security purposes from the £6,000 proposed to £9,000.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer 25 April 1988]:* The annual cost would have been £52·5 million.

NHS Properties

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list by region and special health authority *(a)* those properties which are awaiting disposal and *(b)* those planned for replacement; and if he will give the total estimated values of those properties for each region and the nation as a whole.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 11 May 1988]:* The information that the hon. Member seeks has now been placed in the Library.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Civil Defence

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action has been taken on the recommendation of the UKWMO working party on UKWMO service to wartime headquarters concerning links to county standby emergency centres; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: The provision of such links is to be reviewed in the light of the current programme to extend the emergency communications network.

Terrorism

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the average number of days spent on remand by those remanded in custody for terrorist-type offences in the second half of 1987, with regard to cases now completed in England and Wales; and what was the number of bail applications refused, respectively.

Mr. Hurd: The cases of four people who were remanded in custody for terrorist-related offences in the second half of 1987 have now been completed. The average number of days spent on remand was 86. In each case one bail application was refused.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons in Great Britain were charged with terrorist-type offences relating to Northern Ireland in 1987; how many of those charged were released on bail; and what was the average period between remand and trial for prisoners refused bail, relating to such charges in Britain in 1987.

Mr. Hurd: During 1987 10 people in Great Britain were charged with terrorist-type offences in connection with the affairs of Northern Ireland. The charges against two of these people were later withdrawn, although one of the two was subsequently excluded from Great Britain under section 4 of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984. Six people are awaiting trial, one of whom has been released on bail. In the two completed cases the two people concerned were remanded into custody and were refused bail. The period between remand and trial in these two cases was 22 days and 294 days respectively.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the offences with which people initially detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act 1984 in Great Britain in 1987 were charged and give the outcome in each case as to acquittals, convictions and sentences imposed.

Mr. Hurd: Details of charges following detention under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984 in Great Britain in 1987, and the outcome, where known, are given in the following table:

Charges brought following detention under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984 in Great Britain in 1987

Charged under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984

Number charged	*Section*	*Outcome*
1	Section 9	2 years imprisonment
1	Section 10	Charges withdrawn
7	Schedule 3	1-30 days imprisonment 2-60 days imprisonment 4 fined: 1 × £30, 1 × £75, 1 × £92, 1 × £150

Charged under other legislation

Number charged	*Legislation*	*Outcome*
1	Criminal Law Act 1977 Section 1 (conspiracy to possess firearms)	4 years (and 2 years on a further charge, to run concurrently)
1	Criminal Law Act 1977 Section 1 (conspiracy to possess firearms)	Charges withdrawn (excluded under PTA)
2	Explosive Substances Act 1883 Section 1 (conspiracy to cause explosions)	Awaiting trial
5	Explosive Substances Act 1883 Section 3 (possession of explosives)	Awaiting trial
4	Criminal Law Act 1977 Section 1 (conspiracy to kidnap)	Prosecution gave no evidence. All cases dismissed. However one person was deported and one person was removed under the Immigration Act 1971.
3	Criminal Law Act 1977 Section 1 (conspiracy to commit murder)	Awaiting trial
2	Offences against the Person Act 1861 Section 1 (murder)	Awaiting trial

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons were remanded in custody before trial for terrorist-type offences in 1987.

Mr. Douglas Hurd: Nineteen such persons were remanded into custody during 1987.

Prisoners (Statistics)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners in British prisons who give as their domicile Northern Ireland have been returned to Northern Ireland to serve the whole or part of their sentences in 1986 and 1987; and how many of these prisoners were serving sentences for terrorist-type offences.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: In 1986 two inmates were transferred from England and Wales to Northern Ireland at their own request to serve the remainder of their sentences, and in 1987 three such transfers were made. Four of these inmates gave Northern Ireland as their domicile, and one was granted a transfer as an exception to the normal criteria in view of his strong family ties with Northern Ireland. None had been convicted of terrorist-type offences. Transfers of inmates from Scotland to Northern Ireland are a matter for my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the average length of custodial sentence of female prisoners in England and Wales in 1986 and 1987.

Mr. John Patten: In 1986 the average length of sentences of immediate custody imposed by the courts on female offenders was 10·2 months. Provisional estimates indicate that in 1987 the average increased to 12·3 months.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the average period of custodial remand for female custodial remand prisoners in England and Wales for the years 1986 and 1987.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Information on the average time spent on remand in prison department establishments is published annually in "Prison Statistics, England and Wales", table 2(a) of the latest issue, for 1986, Cm.210, copies of which are in the Library. Information for 1987 is not yet available.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners giving as their domicile either *(a)* the Republic of Ireland of *(b)* Northern Ireland have been permitted to return home to the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland on parole for humanitarian reasons in 1986 and 1987.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: This information is not available.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners were transferred from *(a)* England and Wales to Northern Ireland and *(b)* Northern Ireland to England and Wales in 1987; and under which section of the Criminal Justice Act 1961 such transfers were carried out.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Three inmates were transferred from England and Wales to Northern Ireland under section 26 of the 1961 Act, and two under section 27. Three inmates were transferred from Northern Ireland to England and Wales under section 29 of the Act.

Criminal Injuries Compensation Board

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many appeals to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board are pending at the latest date;

(2) how many cases referred to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board are still pending at the latest date.

Mr. John Patten: At the end of April about 79,000 applications were awaiting resolution by the board, including about 5,900 awaiting a hearing.

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the highest award made by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board to date.

Mr. John Patten: £481,400.

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cases have been dealt with by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board since its inception.

Mr. John Patten: The number of applications resolved between 1 August 1964 and 30 April 1988 was 379,820.

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how long on average it takes the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board to reply to legal representations on behalf of clients.

Mr. John Patten: The board's practice is to reply to legal representations as soon as possible. Information about the average time taken is not kept centrally by the board.

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the average waiting time for appeals to be heard by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board following an appeal against a decision by a single member.

Mr. John Patten: The board does not keep a central record of waiting times. The length of time between refusal of a board member's determination and a hearing varies between six and 18 months.

Mr. R. J. Driscoll

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the case of Mr. R. J. Driscoll, of Liverpool, arising from his claim to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board in December 1985, will be decided.

Mr. John Patten: As the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board is responsible for the consideration and determination of individual applications for compensation, I have asked the board to write to the hon. Member.

West Yorkshire Police (Report)

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place a copy of the Byford report on the West Yorkshire police in the Library.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: No. As the then Home Secretary said in his statement to the House on 19 January 1982 at column 163 the report was from an inspector of constabulary to the Home Secretary and as such enjoyed, and continues to enjoy, the normal confidentiality which such reports have always had. A detailed summary of the report was place in the Library at the time.

Birmingham Pub Bombings

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the City of London police as to why Mr. Chris Jameson was not interviewed in the course of the recent inquiry into conflicts between the two principal Crown witnesses at the appeal of the six men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings;

(2) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the City of London police listing the persons interviewed in their inquiry into contacts between the two principal Crown witnesses in the recent appeal hearing of the six men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings;

(3) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the City of London police as to the cost of the recent inquiry into contacts between the two principal Crown witnesses at the recent appeal hearing of the six men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings;

(4) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the City of London police as to how many people were interviewed during their recent inquiry into contacts between the two principal Crown witnesses during the appeal hearing of the men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings.

Mr. John Patten: No. I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to his question of 19 May at column *541*. The conduct of the investigation, including decisions on which persons to interview, is an operational matter and is the responsibility of the Commissioner of the Police for the City of London. I understand that no additional costs were incurred in the investigation.

Police (Civilian Staff)

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the percentage civilianisation in each of the police authorities in England as a percentage of the total force in each area.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information requested is as follows:—

Police authority force	*Position at 31 March 1988 Civilians[1] as a percentage of force establishment*
Avon and Somerset	21·1
Bedfordshire	23·7
Cambridgeshire	26·6
Cheshire	20·9
Cleveland	18·2
Cumbria	22·0
Derbyshire	30·9
Devon and Cornwall	25·4
Dorset	30·4
Durham	23·6
Essex	24·9
Gloucestershire	18·6
Greater Manchester	20·0
Hampshire	21·5
Hertfordshire	22·7
Humberside	24·0
Kent	23·7
Lancashire	19·9
Leicestershire	23·7
Lincolnshire	21·9
Merseyside	17·8
Norfolk	21·7
Northamptonshire	23·8
Northumbria	26·9
North Yorkshire	19·0
Nottinghamshire	20·2
South Yorkshire	21·1
Staffordshire	22·6
Suffolk	26·1
Surrey	21·5
Sussex	23·0
Thames Valley	29·1
Warwickshire	26·8
West Mercia	28·9
West Midlands	24·3
West Yorkshire	20·3
Wiltshire	29·1
City of London	27·4
Metropolitan	35·3

[1] The percentages in this column are based on the figures supplied by police forces of civilians whose work contributes significantly to the performance of the functions of the force. Part-time staff are included on a 2 for 1 basis.

Recidivism

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many ex-prisoners of Welford road prison, Leicester, have reoffended in each year since 1980.

Mr. John Patten: The information requested is not available centrally. Reconviction rates within two years of release from sentence for all males are published annually in "Prison Statistics England and Wales", (table 8(a) of the latest volume, for 1986, Cm. 210) copies of which are in the Library.

DNA Report

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will publish his findings on the DNA report proposed by Dr. Jeffreys of Leicester university.

Mr. Renton: It is intended that copies of the report prepared by the Home Office on the pilot trial of DNA use in immigration casework, in which the DNA testing was carried out by Professor Jeffreys of Leicester university, will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses shortly.

Concessionary Television Licences

Mr. Sims: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how the amendment regulations regarding residential care concessionary television licences, announced on 18 May *Official Report*, column *467*, affect those living in accommodation for elderly and disabled people with a dedicated warden and communal facilities for the use of all occupants provided or run by private companies; what distinction is drawn between such accommodation and similar accommodation provided by local authorities and housing associations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: The amendment regulations do not affect the position of sheltered housing schemes which are privately owned or run, and which continue to be ineligible for the concessionary television licence.

Racial Equality in Schools

Sir Rhodes Boyson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has reached any decision on the application by the London borough of Brent for a section 11 grant for the development programme for racial equality in schools.

Mr. Douglas Hurd: I have now received and considered the report of an inquiry which Sir David Lane carried out at my request on Brent's development programme for race equality. He is severely critical of the arrangements for the development and implementation of the programme in 1986. But he finds that, under a new director of education and on a much reduced scale, the programme has now been accepted in schools. Sir David Lane and Her Majesty's inspectorate of schools, in a parallel report also published today, find that the scheme is now making a useful contribution to tackling under achievement by ethnic minority pupils in Brent schools. He accordingly recommends that, subject to extensive undertakings by Brent and its acceptance that the scheme should be independently monitored, grant should be paid for a period of three years for a retitled programme. I accept Sir David Lane's recommendations. Copies of both reports have been placed in the Library.

Brent council has accordingly been informed that section 11 grant will be paid only on the basis of the reduced scheme and its acceptance of the undertakings and of independent monitoring. Baroness Cox has agreed to lead the monitoring panel.

I have also decided to set in hand a scrutiny of the whole basis for section 11 grant. It is time that we looked again at the criteria and procedures by which grants are made under section 11.

Immigration

Mr. Holland: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will give a breakdown by individual nationality of persons detained in Prison Department establishments under Immigration Act powers during 1987.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 19 May 1988]:* Information for 1987 is not yet available; the latest information is given in the table.

Receptions of persons detained under the Immigration Act 1971 into prison department establishments in England and Wales in 1986: by nationality

Nationality	*Number*[1]
Nigeria	240
Ghana	206
Bangladesh	188
India	164
Pakistan	128
Sri Lanka	62
Turkey	52
Iran	47
Saudi Arabia	18
Cyprus	17
Hong Kong	16
Morocco	16
Algeria	12
Eire	12
Mauritius	11
West Indies[2]	11
Yugoslavia	10
Colombia	8
Brazil	6
Indonesia	6
Egypt	5
France	5
Libya	5
South Africa	5
United States of America	5
Zimbabwe	5
Other countries[3]	126
Not recorded	36
All nationalities	1,422

[1] The figures are those recorded centrally and are approximate: detailed checking of individual cases would involve disproportionate cost.
[2] Includes other Commonwealth countries in the Americas.
[3] Where fewer than 5 were recorded.

Firearms

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the rights and entitlements which accrue to a firearms club which is approved by his Department under the terms of the Firearms Act 1968 as against a firearms club which is not approved for the use of small bore and full bore rifles and pistols and revolvers.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: My reply of 9 May may have been subject to misinterpretation and has been amended as follows.

Approved clubs are eligible to be issued with a club firearm certificate at no cost. The certificate authorises the purchase and possession of firearms and ammunition for club use. Approval also enables members who do not have their own firearm certificate to possess firearms and ammunition when engaged, as members of the club, in drill or target practice. Members of those clubs which are not approved must hold a personal firearm certificate which specifies the firearms and ammunition they are entitled to possess.

TRANSPORT

Ferries Safety Steering Committee

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received regarding the composition of the steering committee investigating the safety measures necessary for British roll-on/roll-off ferries.

Mr. David Mitchell: None.

Equal Opportunities

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action he has taken to remedy past inequalities in employment practices in his Department, in compliance with the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission, respectively.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Department has taken measures to reduce under-representation of women in the higher grades and of black and Asian staff. These measures include: women-only development training; advertising opportunities for job-share, part-time work and career breaks; using the ethnic minority press for advertising local vacancies; participating in feature articles to publicise the Department's work; taking part in schools liaison; using inner city job centres and other types of outreach work; and participating in a central training review and promotion monitoring projects.

London Airport

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made on studies on the provision of a direct rail link from Heathrow to Central London, and those examining the feasibility of releasing the Perry Oaks sludge works to the airport.

Mr. David Mitchell: We expect to receive very shortly a report from our consultants, Howard Humphreys and Partners, analysing the responses to the Heathrow surface access study. This will include an assessment of the most promising proposals which have been made for new or improved public transport links between central London and the airport. Discussions continue between BAA and the Thames water authority about the possible release of the Perry Oaks site.

Trunk Roads (Repairs)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action his Department is taking to repair holes in trunk roads.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Department's agents carry out regular inspections to identify potholes and other defects. Hazardous defects are repaired immediately. Other repairs are dealt with according to their priority within a planned programme of work compiled at six-monthly intervals.

Settle-Carlisle Railway

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his statement in the *Official Report*, column 677, 16 May, what weight he gave to the Jarvis/PLC report on the Settle-Carlisle corridor in judging the potential of the Settle-Carlisle railway.

Mr. David Mitchell: I welcome the Jarvis report, which I have studied closely. It emphasises the essentially leisure and pleasure-orinented growth potential of this line.

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if, pursuant to his statement in the *Official Report*, column 677, 16 May, he will define those people whom he considered will suffer hardship if the Settle-Carlisle railway close; and what assessment he has made of the effects on users of the Dales rail trains.

Mr. David Mitchell: The Transport Users Consultative Committee's report advised that there would be various types of hardship if the line closed ranging from hardship to those unable to travel on steam and charter services to hardship to local people needing to travel for essential purposes. We have considerable sympathy for the latter and are seeking the TUCC's further advice on how best to mitigate such hardship by the provision of guaranteed bus services. We shall take into account the TUCC's advice on routes and timing. We shall also take into account any new evidence on hardship before taking the final decision.

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his statement of 16 May, *Official Report*, column 677, whether there was any implied or expressed agreement that the local authorities supporting the Settle-Carlisle line were required to provide £500,000 capital expenditure to ensure retention of the line.

Mr. David Mitchell: No.

Cross-Channel Ferries (Boarding Passes)

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the system of boarding passes for cross-Channel ferries to ensure accurate passenger numbers is fully in place and operational; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: The Merchant Shipping (Passenger Boarding Cards) Regulations 1988, which apply to all United Kingdom roll-on/roll-off passenger ships of class II and II(A), entered into force on 29 February and the Merchant Shipping (Passenger Boarding Cards) (Application to non-United Kingdom Ships) Regulations 1988, which apply to foreign ships when departing from United Kingdom ports, entered into force on 1 April.

Air Safeguarding Areas

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library a copy of the map of air safeguarding areas designated by the Civil Aviation Authority and circulated by it to local authorities in east London, showing the broad effect of the provisions on the permitted heights of buildings within the designated area the names of the local authorities and parliamentary constituences so effected, together with the statutory basis of the provision.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The safeguarding of areas around airports is a matter for the Civil Aviation Authority. I will draw the attention of the chairman of the authority to the hon. Member's request.

Roads

Mr. McCrindle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has received any approach from private industry to develop new roads; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State reached agreement on 9 April 1987 for Dartford River Crossing Ltd. to design and build a new bridge and operate the Dartford-Thurrock crossing. In addition, as I said in my reply to my hon. Friend on 11 May at columns *162-63* my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has received a number of ideas for privately funded infrastructure projects, including roads, particularly as a result of his letter of 28 March to firms in the finance and construction industry.

Channel Tunnel

Mr. McCrindle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has received any approach from private industry to develop a rail link between London and the Channel tunnel; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: Some interest has been expressed, but I have received no firm proposals.

London-Heathrow (Rail Link)

Mr. McCrindle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has received any approach from private industry to develop a rail link from London to Heathrow airport; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: My Department has received a number of approaches from the private sector in response to the Heathrow surface access study. We hope to make an announcement shortly.

Dartford Tunnels

Mr. Rowe: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects the tolls at the Dartford tunnels to be increased; how that increase will be calculated; and what the new rates are likely to be.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: If the Dartford-Thurrock Crossing Bill currently before Parliament receives Royal Assent by 30 June, I expect that tolls at the Dartford tunnels will be increased with effect from 1 September 1988.

Clause 17 of the Bill sets a limit to the size of toll increases. The limit is calculated by applying the percentage movement in the retail prices index (RPI) between December 1985 and the base month of each year (normally June), to the toll rates in force on 1 January 1986. Tolls were last increased on 1 January 1984. The June 1988 RPI will not be known until mid-July. I expect that, on current trends, the toll rates will be as set out in the table. The rates in force on 1 January 1986 are shown in brackets.

	£	£
Motorcycles	0·20	(0·20)
Cars	0·70	(0·60)
Light and medium goods vehicles	1·10	(1·00)
Coaches: Heavy goods vehicles	1·80	(1·60)

The construction of the new bridge, which the Bill would authorise, is planned to start on 1 August 1988.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Magistrates' Courts (Files)

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Attorney-General what is the average number of files being presented to prosecutors in the magistrates' courts on a daily basis by Crown Prosecution Service area or region.

The Attorney-General: The information required to answer this question is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. The following table sets out the total number of cases completed in the magistrates' courts in each area during the first three months of this year. These figures do not include committals for trial, remands (either in custody or on bail), or other applications. It would be misleading to reduce the figures to a daily average, as some courts may sit only one day a week, with a small number of cases, whilst others sit six days a week, regularly dealing with well in excess of 100 cases a day.

For the Period 1 January 1988—31 March 1988

All Areas	*Cases finalised*
Avon/Somerset	9,636
Bedfordshire/Hertfordshire	7,144
Cambridgeshire/Lincolnshire	8,850
Cheshire	6,718
Derbyshire	7,486
Devon/Cornwall	7,778
Dorset/Hampshire	14,031
Essex	6,688
Gloucestershire/Wiltshire	7,199
Humberside	7,475
Kent	9,772
Lancashire/Cumbria	16,825
Leicestershire/Northamptonshire	9,812
London/Inner	47,592
London/North	26,376
London/South	18,571
Manchester	22,573
Merseyside	13,826
North Wales/Dyfed	7,913
North Yorkshire/Cleveland	8,761
Northumbria/Durham	20,009
Nottinghamshire	8,671
South Wales/Gwent	19,108
South Yorkshire	10,108
Staffordshire/Warwick	10,968
Suffolk/Norfolk	9,269
Sussex	10,435
Thames Valley	12,441
West Mercia	7,380
West Midlands	20,976
West Yorkshire	17,975
Grand Total	412,366
Average/Area	13,302

Crown Prosecution Service

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Attorney-General what proposals he has to recruit more staff to the Crown Prosecution Service; and how many are currently employed.

The Attorney-General: Recruitment of non-legally qualified staff in the Crown Prosecution Service has not posed difficulties which require special attention. As far as lawyers are concerned, I refer my hon. Friend to the answer that I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Erith and Crayford (Mr. Evennett) on 26 April 1988 at column 95.

The staffing figures on 18 May 1988 were as follows:

	Complement	*Staff in post*
Lawyers	1,788	1,314·5
Non-lawyers	2,992·5	2,595·1
All staff	4,780·5	3,909·6

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Attorney-General what are the current pay scales for members of the Crown Prosecution Service.

The Attorney-General: For the current pay scales of all members of the Crown Prosecution Service at grade 5 and

below, I refer my hon. Friend to the answer that I gave to the right hon. and learned Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris) on 26 February 1988 at columns *353-54*.

The current pay scales for staff at grades 1 to 4 are as follows:

Grade	*Range* £
1	65,000
2	43,500-54,000[1]
3	34,000-43,000[1]
4	30,344-33,469[1]

[1] Includes additional increment payable under the performance point scheme.

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Attorney-General if he intends to raise the pay levels of members of the Crown Prosecution Service in the light of the recent internal survey by members of the staff on their pay and conditions.

The Attorney-General: I refer my hon. Friend to the answers I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Erith and Crayford (Mr. Evennett) and the hon. Member for St. Helens, South (Mr. Bermingham) on 26 April 1988 at column *94* and 21 April 1988 at columns *507-509*.

Crime Statistics

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Attorney-General if he will give for each of the following categories of crime, namely murder, attempted murder, conspiracy to commit murder, wounding with intent to do serious bodily harm, possession of firearms or explosives with intent, possessing firearms or explosives, other major firearms offences and membership of an illegal organisation, the number of cases reported to and investigated by the Director of Public Prosecutions, the number of persons charged and the number of persons convicted who were serving members of the security forces at the time of the alleged offence in the years 1986 and 1987.

The Attorney-General: I regret that the figures requested are not kept separately by the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. To ascertain whether the defendant in a case in any of the categories mentioned was a serving member of the security forces at the time of the alleged offence would involve checking each case individually. This could not be done without incurring disproportionate cost.

Plastic Bullets

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Attorney-General how many cases in 1987 involving persons injured by plastic bullets in Northern Ireland have been considered by the Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland; and what action was taken in each case.

The Attorney-General: Between 1 January 1987 and 31 December 1987 the Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland considered 19 cases involving persons injured by plastic bullets in Northern Ireland. No prosecutions were directed in 18 cases. In the remaining case, a direction pends the receipt of further information from the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

Police Operations (Football Matches)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Attorney-General what was the cost to public funds of the trials associated with the police operations codenamed Own Goal, Full-time and Dirty Den in relation to alleged public order offences in connection with football matches in London.

The Attorney-General: The cost to public funds of an individual trial cannot be precisely quantified. It comprises a number of separate elements borne by different Government Departments. Most of these form part of the ordinary running costs of the Departments concerned. The only amounts which can be precisely identified are those payable to prosecuting counsel and the defence lawyers.

The fees payable to prosecuting counsel have not yet been assessed. Defence costs which are payable out of the legal aid fund are determined by an officer of the Crown court upon receipt of the lawyers' claims for fees. No such claims have yet been received.

Football Hooliganism

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Attorney-General how many possible prosecutions of persons for alleged offences involving football hooliganism are currently outstanding.

The Attorney-General: It is not practicable to enumerate the number of possible prosecutions of persons for alleged offences involving football hooligans which are currently outstanding. The Crown Prosecution Service does not keep separate figures for prosecutions which have been brought against persons following incidents at or in the vicinity of football matches. Such information could be made available only at disproportionate cost.

Gloucester United Schools Charity

Mr. French: To ask the Attorney-General if he will request the Charity Commissioners to institute an inquiry under section 6 of the Charities Act 1960 into the affairs of the Gloucester United Schools Charity; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: I have no present intention of making such a request, but if my hon. Friend would care to write to me suggesting any reason why I should do so I shall consider the matter.

WALES

Homelessness

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many people were classified as homeless in Clwyd and Gwynedd in 1979; and what is the most recent figure.

Mr. Grist: The numbers of persons accepted as homeless in Gwynedd during 1979 and 1987 were 875 and 644 respectively, and in Clwyd 1,059 and 2,027.

Job Training Scheme

Mr. Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the target figure for JTS in Wales in the last financial year, the total number of participants, and the underspend on appropriation.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Numerical and financial regional targets were not set when new job training schemes started in April 1987, since the pace of expansion of the scheme was to be determined by the quality of training. In Wales up to 12,040 places were contracted by managing agents in the year ending April 1988, during which 4,586 unemployed adults entered the scheme and expenditure by Manpower Services Commission was £2·069 million.

Private Clinics

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give the total number of beds in private clinics in Wales.

Mr. Grist: There were 212 beds in private hospitals in Wales as at 31 December 1986, the latest year for which information is available.

In addition, there were 56 authorised pay beds in National Health Service hospitals (including two for emergency use only) as at 31 December 1986 and 1987.

Grant-related Expenditure

Mr. Squire: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the total rateable value grant-related expenditure assessment from 1981-82, population, total expenditure and rateable value per head, in total, for local authorities in Wales in each year from 1979-80 to 1988-89, estimate.

Mr. Grist: The information requested, taken from the latest rate support grant report for each year from 1981-82 to 1988-89, is given in the table. Comparable information for 1979-80 and 1980-81 is not available.

	Total rateable value £ million	*Grant-related expenditure £ million*	*Population £ Thousands*	*Total expenditure £ million*	*Rateable value per head £*
1981-82[1]	274·3	1,092·6	2,775	1,140·8	99
1982-83[2]	276·8	1,169·7	2,778	1,207·1	100
1983-84[2]	279·7	1,240·2	2,801	1,267·3	100
1984-85[2]	281·5	1,284·1	2,808	1,304·0	100
1985-86[3]	284·3	1,343·4	2,808	1,352·8	101
1986-87[2]	284·9	1,425·4	2,807	1,456·3	101
1987-88[3]	285·9	1,551·4	2,812	1,574·6	102
1988-89[4]	289·7	1,669·7	2,821	1,707·4	103

[1] Supplementary (No. 3) Report.
[2] Supplementary (No. 2) Report.
[3] Supplementary Report.
[4] Main Report, except for total expenditure which is taken from local authorities' budgets.

Mr. Squire: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the number of local authorities which spent, respectively, above or below *(a)* their grant-related expenditure assessment and *(b)* any expenditure target set in each year from 1981-82 to 1988-89, estimate.

Mr. Grist: The information requested is given in the table. Comparisons of spending with grant-related expenditure assessments have been based on local authorities' total expenditure as defined for rate support grant purposes. The current expenditure targets set for 1981-82 have been compared with actual current expenditure reduced to allow for any spending disregards and revalued to the November 1980 rate support grant price base used for the targets. To compare spending in the years from 1982-83 to 1985-86 with total expenditure targets, actual total expenditure adjusted for disregards has been used. No expenditure targets have been set since 1985-86.

	Spending above grant-related expenditure	*Spending below grant-related expenditure*	*Spending above target*	*Spending at target*	*Spending below target*
1981-82[1]	32	5	24	0	21
1982-83[2]	25	12	18	5	22
1983-84[2]	21	16	6	11	28
1984-85[2]	23	14	8	11	26
1985-86[2]	22	15	0	16	29
1986-87[2]	24	13	n/a	n/a	n/a
1987-88[3]	29	8	n/a	n/a	n/a
1988-89[4]	29	8	n/a	n/a	n/a

n/a = not available.
[1] Supplementary (No. 3) Report.
[2] Supplementary (No. 2) Report.
[3] Supplementary Report.
[4] Main Report, with total expenditure taken from local authorities' budgets.

Housing Statistics

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many *(a)* housing starts and *(b)* housing completions were made in each of the housing authorities of Gwynedd and Clwyd in 1979 and for the most recent year for which figures are available; how many houses in Gwynedd and in Clwyd are estimated to be (i) in urgent need of repair, (ii) without one or more basic amenities, (iii) without an inside toilet and (iv) without a fixed bath; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: The information on housing starts and completions is given in the table. In 1986 there were 11,200 dwellings in Clwyd and 14,000 in Gwynedd in serious disrepair (that is, with repair costs of £3,000 or over) and 3,800 in Clwyd and 3,700 in Gwynedd lacking one or more

basic amenity. There were 1,800 dwellings in Clwyd and 1,700 in Gwynedd lacking a WC inside the dwelling and 1,600 in Clwyd and 1,800 in Gwynedd lacking a fixed bath or shower. Since 1979, some 12,076 renovation grants have been completed in Gwynedd and 7,500 completed in Clwyd.

Dwelling starts and completions; Clwyd and Gwynedd; 1979 and 1987

	Dwellings started		*Dwellings completed*	
	1979	*1987*	*1979*	*1987*
Clwyd				
Alyn and Deeside	275	275	257	257
Colwyn	511	394	373	251
Delyn	233	227	166	189
Glyndwr	166	197	210	125
Rhuddlan	323	126	290	151
Wrexham Maelor	786	329	474	352
	2,294	1,548	1,770	1,325
Gwynedd				
Aberconwy	185	156	237	255
Arfon	137	178	134	158
Dwyfor	203	64	226	104
Meirionydd	80	26	95	20
Ynys Mon	553	176	403	175
	1,158	600	1,095	712

Health Authorities (Expenditure)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish a table including the budgeted current and capital expenditure, respectively, and the forecast actual, current and capital expenditure, respectively, of each of the new district health authorities in Wales for the current year.

Mr. Grist: The resources currently available to each authority for 1988-89 are detailed in the table. These allocations will be subject to change during the course of the year as funds for centrally directed developments are released and for the extra funds which have been made available for the additional costs of this year's review bodies' awards, over and above the allowance for inflation in authorities' initial allocations. Allocations may also be subject to further adjustment in the event of authorities transferring funds from revenue to capital or vice versa or borrowing or lending funds under brokerage arrangements.

	Revenue cash allocations £ million	*Capital cash allocations £ million*
Clwyd	95·960	4·918
East Dyfed	60·323	2·180
Gwent	114·996	5·166
Gwynedd	57·903	1·964
Mid Glamorgan	134·556	5·716
Pembrokeshire	22·727	1·040
Powys	27·185	1·120
South Glamorgan	157·171	2·652
West Glamorgan	99·905	7·443

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give the expenditure levels forecast for each district health authority in Wales for the coming financial year, together with comparable expenditure for each of the preceding five years.

Mr. Grist: The information requested, which is expressed in cash terms for comparability with allocations in 1988-89, is as follows:

£ million cash prices

	1983-84		*1984-85*		*1985-86*		*1986-87*		*1987-88*		*1988-89*	
	Revenue	*Capital*	*Revenue*	*Capital*	*Revenue*	*Capital*	*Revenue*	*Capital*	*Revenue*	*Capital*	*Revenue*	*Capital*
Clwyd	66·252	2·161	71·169	4·476	76·212	7·452	82·016	5·893	91·332	5·690	95·960	4·918
East Dyfed	42·982	1·863	45·627	2·063	47·987	1·861	51·883	2·362	57·238	2·103	60·323	2·180
Gwent	84·303	3·388	89·201	4·204	93·466	4·154	98·646	6·221	110·573	6·772	114·996	5·166
Gwynedd	39·148	1·093	44·250	2·809	47·794	1·007	49·903	1·228	55·846	3·934	57·903	1·964
Mid Glamorgan	95·763	2·055	104·853	3·303	110·634	7·768	118·911	5·335	130·940	5·111	134·556	5·716
Pembrokeshire	13·798	0·569	15·221	1·810	15·755	1·708	17·573	2·369	19·871	2·625	22·727	1·049
Powys	19·616	0·539	20·858	0·869	21·627	1·266	22·951	1·164	26·197	1·026	27·185	1·126
South Glamorgan	111·958	2·951	119·661	6·111	127·956	3·754	132·775	5·789	150·865	5·205	157·171	2·652
West Glamorgan	65·067	2·462	66·436	4·991	75·450	8·458	82·415	10·689	91·735	11·090	99·905	7·443

Notes:

1 The information provided relates to the actual or estimated cash spent by each authority in the period reviewed, for the years 1983-84 to 1986-87 it is taken from DHA annual accounts.

2 The figures for 1987-88 are estimates; actual figures will not be available until after 30 June when the health authorities submit their annual financial statements for 1987-88.

3 The figures provided for 1988-89 reflect current allocations. These will be subject to change in respect of funds for centrally directed developments, provision for which is currently held in central reserves, and for each authority's share of the extra money which has been made available in respect of the additional cost of this year's Review Bodies' awards over the allowance for inflation in their allocations. Authorities may also transfer funds between their revenue and capital allocations or borrow or lend funds under brokerage arrangements and such action would further effect the 1988-89 figures.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will provide a table showing the revenue expenditure of each district health authority in Wales for each year since 1979 both at 1988 and outturn prices.

Mr. Grist: The revenue expenditure of each district health authority in Wales for each year since 1979, in income and expenditure terms estimated 1988-89 prices is as follows:

£ thousands

District health authority	*1978-79*	*1979-80*	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*[1]
Revenue expenditure at outturn prices									
Clwyd	32,460	38,998	52,916	59,244	64,125	66,898	71,638	76,293	83,818

District health authority	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87[1]
Dyfed (East Dyfed from 1982-83)	27,984	34,000	42,425	48,307	39,698	43,003	46,076	47,907	52,641
Pembrokeshire (from 1982-83)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	12,942	13,958	15,163	16,227	17,550
Gwent	42,554	50,809	65,980	73,047	79,565	84,567	89,279	93,560	100,119
Gwynedd	19,137	23,478	30,445	34,257	37,236	39,666	44,204	47,515	51,389
Mid Glamorgan	49,244	59,618	76,760	84,071	90,806	96,980	104,022	110,475	119,41.
Powys	9,661	11,797	15,062	16,624	18,516	19,754	20,627	21,288	23,152
South Glamorgan	59,063	70,655	88,892	98,739	107,438	114,501	119,313	127,402	134,842
West Glamorgan	32,025	38,746	50,435	56,665	61,508	65,173	68,667	76,020	83,091
Wales[2]	272,128	328,096	423,915	471,008	511,834	544,500	578,989	516,697	665,013
Revenue expenditure at estimated 1988-89 prices[3]									
Clwyd	69,512	71,448	31,776	83,309	84,180	83,875	86,019	86,445	89,872
Dyfed (East Dyfed from 1982-83)	59,927	62,299	67,109	67,929	52,114	53,916	55,325	54,282	57,760
Pembrokeshire (from 1982-83)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	16,990	17,500	18,207	18,386	19,257
Gwent	91,128	93,099	101,966	102,718	104,449	106,028	107,201	106,021	109,856
Gwynedd	40,981	43,019	47,050	48,172	48,882	49,732	53,078	53,838	56,387
Mid Glamorgan	105,455	109,239	118,625	118,220	119,206	121,591	124,904	125,175	131,024
Powys	20,869	21,616	23,277	23,377	24,307	24,767	24,768	24,121	25,404
South Glamorgan	126,482	129,463	137,374	138,922	141,039	143,558	143,264	144,355	147,905
West Glamorgan	68,581	70,995	77,942	79,682	80,745	81,712	82,451	86,136	91,172
Wales[2]	582,756	601,178	655,119	662,327	671,911	682,678	695,216	698,759	729,686

Source: Health Authorities Annual Accounts.

[1] Latest year for which information in income and expenditure terms is available.

[2] Excludes the Welsh Health Common Services Authority.

[3] Adjusted for actual and expected inflation using the GDP deflator.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will provide a table, for 1987-88 and for each of the past 20 years, showing the total expenditure on the services provided by health authorities in Wales and their predecessors and by Gwynedd health authority and its predecessors, respectively.

Mr. Grist: The total expenditure on the services provided by health authorities in Wales for the period 1974-75[1] to 1986-87[2] is given in the table:—

Health Authorities Expenditure in Wales: 1974-75 to 1986-87

(£ thousands)

Health Authorities	1974-75	1975-76	1976-77	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87
Clwyd	18,108	23,808	26,341	29,921	34,380	41,544	35,419	62,143	66,761	69,142	76,112	83,647	88,784
Dyfed (East Dyfed from 1982-83)	14,351	19,580	21,859	24,707	28,949	34,857	44,218	49,287	40,972	44,761	48,280	49,725	55,202
Pembrokeshire (from 1982-83)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	13,288	14,608	16,423	17,951	19,936
Gwent	23,307	30,667	34,175	38,799	44,632	53,176	57,135	76,003	83,434	88,186	93,380	97,599	107,089
Gwynedd	10,459	14,110	15,563	17,641	19,538	24,449	31,781	35,175	38,175	41,055	47,015	48,451	52,637
Mid Glamorgan	26,439	35,306	39,339	44,529	51,008	61,133	78,004	86,121	92,912	99,230	107,035	118,430	124,609
Powys	5,200	6,951	7,633	8,640	10,114	12,197	15,371	17,169	19,063	20,308	21,576	22,545	24,338
South Glamorgan	34,113	44,457	48,287	55,402	62,081	72,747	92,648	104,295	112,869	119,513	125,558	131,016	142,283
West Glamorgan	17,621	23,031	25,995	25,676	33,869	40,863	52,622	59,178	64,422	67,645	73,926	84,368	93,926
Welsh Health Services Authority	10,444	14,280	13,600	12,782	13,620	14,432	22,461	25,211	31,675	34,652	25,766	21,830	23,612
Wales	160,042	212,190	232,798	261,997	298,391	365,398	459,679	514,582	563,511	599,102	635,070	675,572	731,416

Source: Health Authorities Annual Accounts.

Notes:

[1] It is not possible to provide information prior to 1974-75 since the boundaries of the hospital management committees which preceded the health authorities were not coterminus with those of the successor authorities.

[2] Latest year for which expenditure in income and expenditure terms is currently available.

Private Treatment

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will take steps to amend National Health Service procedures to enable area administrators of health authorities in Wales to know the numbers of patients treated privately by doctors and specialists employed on a part-time basis by the area health authority.

Mr. Grist: No, because in this matter district general managers need ensure only that consultants on part-time contracts honour their commitments to the National Health Service.

Private Beds

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give the number of private beds within National Health Service hospitals in each area health authority in Wales, the percentage occupancy of these beds and the annual income to each health authority from charges made for boarding costs for their private beds for each year since 1979.

Mr. Grist: The information is given in the table:

Health authority financial year	[1]Number of private beds authorised	[2]Percentage occupancy by private patients	[3]Income from boarding costs private patients (£ thousands)
Clwyd			
1979-80	12	56	113·9
1980-81	12	64	161·7
1981-82	12	60	184·4
1982-83	12	42	132·1

Health authority financial year	[1]Number of private beds authorised	[2]Percentage occupancy by private patients	[3]Income from boarding costs private patients (£ thousands)
1983-84	12	56	224·0
1984-85	12	57	251·3
1985-86	12	55	284·3
1986-87	12	48	256·9
East Dyfed			
1979-80	9	35	60·4
1980-81	9	48	107·1
1981-82	9	42	112·0
1982-83	7	41	102·9
1983-84	7	34	84·5
1984-85	7	48	130·0
1985-86	7	41	119·5
1986-87	7	50	164·0
Pembrokeshire			
1979-80			
1980-81	Figures included with East Dyfed		
1981-82			
1982-83	3	41	35·9
1983-84	3	10	38·0
1984-85	3	7	46·6
1985-86	3	43	49·8
1986-87	3	80	67·8
Gwent			
1979-80	1	13	3·2
1980-81	1	10	2·2
1981-82	1	5	0·9
1982-83	1	3	0·4
1983-84	1	—	—
1984-85	1	—	—
1985-86	1	—	—
1986-87	6	—	—
Gwynedd			
1979-80	8	43	67·7
1980-81	8	49	95·8
1981-82	8	43	95·6
1982-83	8	34	92·9
1983-84	8	36	103·3
1984-85	8	29	91·6
1985-86	8	49	189·2
1986-87	8	45	190·8
Mid Glamorgan			
1979-80	3	21	11·1
1980-81	3	17	12·2
1981-82	3	27	20·0
1982-83	3	13	9·1
1983-84	3	28	24·7
1984-85	3	13	10·9
1985-86	3	13	18·2
1986-87	3	28	40·2
South Glamorgan			
1979-80	1	94	40·7
1980-81	1	48	26·4
1981-82[4]	10	5	17·4
1982-83[4]	10	4	26·2
1983-84[4]	10	4	19·4
1984-85[4]	11	10	22·3
1985-86[4]	11	16	66·6
1986-87[4]	11	13	73·5
West Glamorgan			
1979-80	2	19	7·0
1980-81	2	22	10·7
1981-82	2	37	20·6
1982-83	2	29	19·2
1983-84	2	43	32·0
1984-85[5]	4	23	33·3
1985-86	4	25	43·1
1986-87	4	23	53·6

[1]As at 31 December.
[2]Excludes occupancy of private beds by NHS patients.
[3]Private patient income has been shown on an accruals basis. As such the amounts will reflect invoices raised throughout the accounting period and also take into account any provision for bad debts from previous years.
[4]Excludes 2 beds for emergency use only.
[5]Excludes 1 bed for emergency use only.
Powys does not have any authorised private beds.

District Health Authorities (Transport and Travelling Grant)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list for each district health authority in Wales, the amount within the total grant which is provided to meet the transport and travelling needs of that authority.

Mr. Grist: District health authorities' resource allocations do not contain specific allowances for transport and travel costs. However, in the revenue formula, which is used in determining the revenue resource allocations to authorities, the ambulance component is weighted to take account of population sparsity as measured by road length per head of population. I have arranged for a copy of the 1988-89 revenue formula assessment to be placed in the Library of the House.

Tourism (Ambulance Cover)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will seek to ensure that every area health authority in Wales makes resources available to ensure increased ambulance cover in summer for those areas which receive substantial influxes of tourists.

Mr. Grist: It is the responsibility of health authorities in Wales to ensure that adequate ambulance cover is available for their resident population and, in summer months, for any increases due to the influx of tourists. Each authority organises its ambulance service accordingly.

Bilingual Health Staff

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will give the number of qualified speech therapists employed by each of the area health authorities in Wales; and how many of those currently employed are bilingual in Welsh and English;

(2) what proportion of staff in each of the area health authorities in Wales is bilingual.

Mr. Grist: The number of speech therapists employed by each of the district health authorities in Wales was given in my reply to the hon. Gentleman on 1 March 1988. Information on the number of staff employed in the National Health Service who are bilingual is not held centrally.

Psychiatric Patients

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give the numbers of persons in Wales who were ordered to be held in psychiatric hospitals under provisions of Mental Health Acts during 1987 or most recent available and the number of such persons detained under orders in Wales at the current time.

Mr. Grist: The latest available figures indicate that during 1986 there were 830 admissions to mental illness

and mental handicap hospitals and units in Wales under the various provisions of the Mental Health Act 1983. Details are as follows:

Mental Health Act 1983 Section	*Number of people*
2	333
3	121
4	254
[1]37	17
[2]37	3
46	1
47	2
136	31
Other powers	68
TOTAL	830

[1]Without section 41 restriction.
[2]With section 41 restriction.

On 5 April 1987, there were 192 patients in these hospitals and units who were being detained under the Act.

Ambulances

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give the number of ambulances in working condition in each of the district health authorities in Wales; and what are the corresponding figures for each year since 1979.

Mr. Grist: This information is not held centrally.

Area Health Authorities (Finance Allocation)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make it his policy to give further recognition in deciding on allocation of finance to area health authorities in Wales of sparsity of population, impact of tourism, and costs associated with elderly population migration.

Mr. Grist: The revenue formula, used in determining the revenue resource allocations to district health authorities in Wales, takes account of population sparsity in the ambulance component, which is weighted by road length per head of population. The formula also takes account of the seasonal pattern of activity in accident and emergency services, reflecting the effects of tourism. Each element of the formula is weighted by the age and sex structure of the population and therefore incorporates the effects of the movement of elderly migrants into authorities' areas. A copy of the 1988-89 revenue formula assessment is in the Library of the House.

The formula is kept under review by the joint NHS —Welsh Office resource allocation working group. This group is currently considering the need for and possible means of taking further account of population sparsity in the formula and will be reporting to my right hon. Friend in July.

Single European Market

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what research has been undertaken by his Department into the effects on the Welsh economy of the completion of the single European market in 1992; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: Completion of the single European market will bring greater freedom of trade. I have not commissioned a formal study, but research from various sources has shown that this liberalisation of trade will offer great potential benefits to all nations and regions within the European Community. The effects within Wales will, however, depend very much on the response of individual businesses to the new opportunities which the single market will present. A major programme is planned to raise the awareness of industry in Wales to the opportunities and what can be done to realise them. Currently, I am in the process of writing to all exporting companies and potential exporters known to my Department—over 3,000 companies—encouraging them to respond to the challenge and sending them advice on how to do so.

Expenditure Allocations

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much money remains unallocated under each expenditure heading for Wales for 1988-89.

Mr. Peter Walker: There are many areas of spending within my responsibility where resources remain which have not yet been specifically committed or allocated. These are far too numerous to detail.

I envisage that these remaining resources will be wholly spent during the course of the current financial year in accordance with the plans which have been clearly set out in the Wales chapter of the Government's "Expenditure Plans 1988-89 to 1990-91" (Cm. 288—II) and the Supply Estimate booklet (HC 339-XVII) presented to Parliament on 15 March.

Should circumstances change, it may be necessary for me to switch some of the uncommitted resources from one expenditure heading to another. Where these changes are significant, Parliament will be notified by means of the normal cash limit and Supplementary Estimate procedures.

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what allocations of resources under each expenditure heading have been made to the south Wales valleys for the current year and for each of the next two years.

Mr. Peter Walker: Most of the resources under my control are allocated to local authorities and health authorities whose areas do not correspond precisely to the valleys. Allocations are also made to agencies which operate on an all-Wales basis. Specific expenditure allocations have not therefore been made to the valleys.

Water Pollution Offences

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what were the numbers of prosecutions and convictions arising from water pollution offences in 1984-85, 1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987-88, respectively, in Wales.

Mr. Grist: The Department has not instigated any prosecutions against the Welsh water authority in respect of discharges from sewage treatment works during the four years in question. Prosecution in respect of other discharges to water is the responsibility of the Welsh water authority and I have asked the chairman of the Welsh water authority to write to the hon. Gentleman.

Cash Limits

Mr. Raffan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he proposes to make any changes to the cash limits for class XVII, votes 5 and 8, for 1988-89.

Mr. Peter Walker: Yes. Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplementary Estimates, the cash limit for Class XVII, Vote 5 will be increased by £1,294,000 from £223,490,000 to £224,784,000 and the cash limit for Class XVII, Vote 8 will be increased by £33,366,000 from £743,259,000 to £776,625,000.

The whole increase for Class XVII, Vote 8, together with £634,000 of the increase for Class XVII, Vote 5, follows the decision to implement the recommendations of the review bodies in respect of doctors, dentists, nurses, midwives and professions allied to medicine as announced by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 21 April 1988. Those increases will be charged to the reserve and do not, therefore, add to the public expenditure planning total.

A further increase of £600,000 is required for Class XVII, Vote 5 to augment the provision for the development and implementation of the education national curriculum in Wales. Provision for this service formed part of the last public expenditure survey and does not, therefore, constitute either an increase in the planning total or a claim on the reserve.

The remaining increase of £60,000 for Class XVII, Vote 5 is required to meet preliminary costs of the privatisation of the Welsh Water Authority. A corresponding reduction of £60,000 is being made to the cash limit for Class X, Vote 9 (Sale of shares in the water services public limited companies, etc.).

Civil Servants (Outside Activities)

Mr. John: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many civil servants in his Department are also directors or consultants in *(a)* public liability companies, *(b)* companies limited by guarantee, *(c)* building societies, *(d)* other friendly societies and *(e)* commercial undertakings other than the above; and what rules or instructions govern these activities with particular reference to remuneration.

Mr. Peter Walker *[holding answer 23 May 1988]:* The information is not available. The involvement of Welsh Office staff in outside occupations is covered by several staff rules, including one which requires that without permission no officer may hold a directorship or engage in consulting work which has a connection with official duties or is on behalf of a firm or concern which is in contractual or other special relationship with the Department. There is no requirement to obtain consent where the activity does not impinge on the Welsh Office.

Housing Statistics

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many houses in Wales are seriously in need of repair.

Mr. Grist *[holding answer 16 May 1988]:* The number of dwellings in Wales in serious disrepair was 123,600 a substantial improvement over 1981, as a result of 130,210 renovation grants completed since that time.

ENVIRONMENT

Ministerial Duties

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many meetings with the National Consumer Council concerning water privatisation the Minister for Sport, the hon. Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan) has attended in the course of his official duties in the last year; and if he will list them.

Mr. Moynihan: Since taking office I have had no meetings with the National Consumer Council concerning privatisation, although I have had informal discussions with one of its representatives.

I am content that, after flotation, consumers' interests will be satisfactorily served by the proposed Director General of Water Services.

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many meetings with the National Federation of Anglers the Minister for Sport, the hon. Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan) has attended in the course of his official duties in the last year; and if he will list them.

Mr. Moynihan: I met representatives of the National Federation of Anglers on 25 February 1988, when they formed part of a delegation from the National Anglers' Council to discuss the proposed National Rivers Authority.

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many meetings with the National Trust the Minister for Sport, the hon. Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan) has attended in the course of his official duties in the last year; and if he will list them.

Mr. Moynihan: I have visited a number of National Trust properties. My noble Friend the Minister for Environment, Countryside and Water has met members of the National Trust during the last year.

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many meetings with the Council for the Protection of Rural England the hon. Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan) has attended in the course of his official duties in the last year; and if he will list them.

Mr. Moynihan: I have not attended any meetings of the Council for the Protection of Rural England in the last year. My noble Friend the Minister for Environment, Countryside and Water has met members of the Council for the Protection of Rural England during the last year.

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many meetings with the Council for Environmental Conservation the Minister for Sport, the hon. Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan) has attended in the course of his official duties in the last year; and if he will list them.

Mr. Moynihan: I have not attended any meetings of the Council for Environmental Conservation this year.

North Sea

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the progress

made nationally and internationally on action agreed at the first intergovernmental conference to protect the North sea.

Mr. Moynihan: Progress made nationally and internationally on action agreed at the first intergovernmental conference to protect the North sea (the Bremen conference) was reported on and reviewed by the second international conference on the protection of the North sea in London in November 1987. This is reflected in the programme of further action in many of the areas covered by the Bremen declaration which is set out in the ministerial declaration issued at the London conference, copies of which are in the Library.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the atmospheric pollutants which he believes need to be reduced, or, if appropriate, to be eliminated in order to protect the maritime environment of the North sea.

Mr. Moynihan: There is great uncertainty about the quantities of atmospheric pollutants entering the North sea and therefore uncertainty in the efficacy of reducing emissions in protecting the sea from pollution. However, the United Kingdom is already committed to a precautionary policy to reduce airborne emissions, illustrated by the investment of £1 billion by CEGB on flue-gas desulphurisation and on low-NO_x burners. It also participates in the work of the Paris commission on the monitoring and deposition modelling of heavy metals and has increased its research efforts to improve our understanding of the interaction of atmospheric pollutants with the marine environment.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his policy towards the use of best available technology to reduce nutrients in discharges from waste water treatment plants whose effluent enters the North sea.

Mr. Moynihan: The Government are participating fully in the Paris commission working group on nutrients and in discussions in other international forums concerning nutrients discharged into marine waters. The North sea declaration calls for reduction of inputs of nutrients into areas where these are likely to cause pollution. A review of nutrient concentrations in United Kingdom estuarial and coastal waters is being carried out under the auspices of the marine pollution monitoring and management group. The Government will consider if there are specific actions needed in the light of this.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the most dangerous substances from which it is necessary to protect the North sea and for which adherence to a precautionary approach to pollution control is necessary.

Mr. Moynihan: The ministerial declaration following the second international conference on the protection of the North sea in London (copies of which are in the Library) identified substances which are persistent, toxic and liable to bioaccumulate. Annex A of the declaration lists examples of those substances which are already the subject of specific action. Annex B lists examples of other potentially significant pollutants where it was agreed to consider what further action might be taken to reduce inputs. The United Kingdom is drawing up a list of the most dangerous substances for priority action, which will be called the red list.

The United Kingdom Government has taken an early lead in implementing this part of the declaration and their proposals are set out in the guidance note on the ministerial declaration published on 3 February 1988, copies of which are also in the Library.

Phosphates

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has plans to regulate the use of phosphates in detergents; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: The Government have no plans at present to regulate the use of phosphate in detergents.

Pollution

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list all the uniform emission standards presently in place for all the pollutants controlled in all the rivers and estuaries under United Kingdom jurisdiction entering the North sea.

Mr. Moynihan: The United Kingdom does not generally set uniform emission standards for discharges of particular substances. Under the present pollution control system for water in this country, the levels of a substance permitted in discharges may vary according to the nature and use of the receiving water, the degree of dilution available and the number of other inputs affecting the water. However, the Government have announced that they intend to introduce a requirement to use the best available technology not entailing excessive cost in relation to significant discharges of the most dangerous substances, and this would be reflected in emission standards for discharges of such substances.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list all the environmental quality standards presently in place for all the pollutants controlled in all the rivers and estuaries under United Kingdom jurisdiction entering the North sea.

Mr. Moynihan: The following national environmental quality standards in microgrammes per litre have been set for the individual substances listed below in all United Kingdom waters:

Mercury (rivers): 1·0, (estuaries): 0·5

Cadmium (rivers): 5·0, (estuaries): 5·0

Hexachlorocyclohexane (HCH) (rivers): 0·1, (estuaries): 0·02

Lead; Chromium; Zinc; Copper; Nickel; Arsenic—The ranges of environmental quality standards for these substances are set out in Appendix 2 of Department of the Environment Circular 18/85, a copy of which is available in the Library.

National quality standards for a number of additional substances will be set in the near future.

In addition, quality standards for a range of substances and other parameters apply to waters specifically designated under or falling within the scope of the following EC directives:

76/160/EEC concerning the quality of bathing water,

78/659/EEC on the quality of fresh water needing protection or improvement in order to support fish life,

79/923/EEC on the quality required of shellfish waters,

75/440/EEC concerning the quality required of surface water intended for the abstraction of drinking water in the Member States.

The quality standards applied to these waters are those set down in the directives, copies of which are available in the Library.

Water authorities may also in some cases set local quality standards where national standards are not currently in place.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the key industrial and other sectors where he intends to achieve a reduction in aerial emissions using strict emission standards, if practicable, within the next four years; and how large a reduction he hopes to achieve.

Mr. Moynihan: Control over atmospheric emissions is effected by applying emission standards and by other mechanisms. Standards apply primarily to emissions from those industrial processes controlled by Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution (mainly in the fuel and power industry, production and processing of metals, non-metallic mineral production, and the chemical manufacturing industry) and to emissions from vehicles. gnhe extent to which emission standards will bring about reductions in aerial emissions of a wide range of pollutants over the next four years will depend on many different factors, but new standards for power station and vehicle emissions will result in substantial long-term reductions in air pollution.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what improvements are necessary in the scientific base and monitoring data, which exist for the North sea, to allow a more thorough assessment of its condition.

Mr. Moynihan: Improvements in the scientific base and monitoring of data were among the issues discussed at the second international conference for the protection of the North sea, and some of the areas where improvements were felt to be required are set out in annex G to the ministerial declaration, which is available in the Library. The conference also asked the Oslo and Paris commissions and ICES jointly to consider the setting up of a scientific task force to take forward this work and the United Kingdom hosted an inaugural meeting of the task force in March.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the details of the agreed criteria which have to be met to ensure that the knowledge of behaviour of pollutants in the North sea is sufficient to allow these pollutants to be continuously discharged into the North Sea.

Mr. Moynihan: The principal criterion governing the issue of discharge consents, whether for discharges to rivers and estuaries or direct to marine waters, is the need to protect the aquatic environment and to safeguard legitimate uses of water. Where environmental quality standards are set for specific substances. These are derived from the available date about the ecotoxicological effects of the substance of sensitive species, with a suitable safety factor built in. Regular monitoring also takes place to assess the effects of discharges. A major research programme is being undertaken by the United Kingdom and other countries bordering the North sea to add to our knowledge about the behaviour and impact of potential pollutants in the North sea.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what action he is taking to reduce the quantity of substances that are persistent and toxic from reaching the North sea; what reduction he expects to achieve by 1995; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will detail the measures taken to reduce the inputs into the North sea of *(a)* mercury, *(b)* cadmium, *(c)* carbon tetrachlorides, *(d)* organic compounds, *(e)* pentachlorophenol, *(f)* polychlorinated camphino and *(g)* drins, wastes from titanitum oxide industry and oil from refineries and reception facilities; what steps will be taken to reduce them further; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: Discharges to water of these and other substances that are persistent and toxic are already subject to control under part II of the Control of Pollution Act 1974. These controls are operated by the relevant pollution control authorities. In addition, some substances are subject to environmental quality standards laid down in EC directives.

Further action was agreed upon in the declaration following the second international North sea conference which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State chaired in the United Kingdom last November. The United Kingdom is taking an early lead in the implementation of the declaration. We have opened discussions with the water industry on the measures to be taken in order to achieve a substantial reduction (of the order of 50 per cent.) by 1995, in total inputs to the North sea, of substances that are toxic, persistent and liable to bioaccumulate. Such measures will be applied consistently throughout all United Kingdom coastal waters.

The United Kingdom's reduction programme will forcus on a priority list of the most dangerous substances, selected on the basis of strict scientific criteria, to be termed the red list. Substances on this list will be subject to stringent controls under the new unified approach to the control of dangerous substances which I announced on 18 November. The detailed proposals will be set out in a forthcoming consultation paper.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what alternative plans he has for the incineration of waste currently incinerated at sea.

Mr. Moynihan: The United Kingdom accounts for a very small proportion of the total waste incinerated in the North sea. In 1986, the last year for which comparable figures are available, the United Kingdom accounted for 3,754 tonnes or about 3·2 per cent. of the total. This amounts to only 5 per cent. of the total waste incinerated on land, but for logistical and local nuisance reasons marine incineration is currently the preferred option for these wastes. As indicated in paragraph 30 of the guidance note on the ministerial declaration following the second international North sea conference, the licensing authorities, advised by Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution, will seek reductions in the use of this option where practicable and seek to ensure that adequate alternative disposal capacity is available by the end of 1994.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has plans to issue advice on the action required by regulatory authorities and companies to follow up the declaration agreed at the end of the second intergovernmental conference on the North sea.

Mr. Moynihan: Follow-up action by regulatory authorities, industrial interests and others to implement the ministerial declaration following the second international conference on the North sea is the subject of a guidance note on the ministerial declaration issued by the Department on 3 February. Copies have been placed in the Library.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to whether pollution from the United Kingdom has contributed to the ecological deterioration of the Wadden sea; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: None of the assessments or models so far used in North sea studies indicate that discharges from United Kingdom rivers are serious factors in the condition of the Wadden sea or other contaminated areas on the eastern side of the North sea. The main sources of pollution of these waters are the major load bearing continental rivers.

Houses of Parliament (Legionella)

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what checks have been made recently for the presence of Legionella in the water systems of the Houses of Parliament; and what were the results.

Mr. Chope: I will write to my hon. Friend.

Ports (Oils and Chemicals)

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how often he reviews the availability, capacity and standards of service of oil and chemical reception facilities operating at British ports.

Mr. Moynihan: Legislation requiring ports and terminals to provide reception facilities for oil residues came into force in July 1984 and the availability and capacity of these facilities have since been assessed annually by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport. In the case of other noxious residues, including chemicals, legislation was enacted in April 1987 and the same monitoring arrangements are being put into place. There have been no reports of inadequate standards of service, but if such a report were received, it would of course be investigated.

Disabled Persons

Mr. Heddle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the initiatives his Department is taking to assist the disabled with their house adaptations.

Mr. Waldegrave: Local authorities give grants of £40 million each year for the adaptation of houses for disabled people. My Department has published today a manual which will provide practical advice for all those engaged in this work. Copies have been sent to all housing, social services and health authorities in England and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales is taking similar action. A copy has been placed in the Library.

Local Government Superannuation Scheme

Mr. Bell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will take steps to ensure that new entrants to the local government superannuation scheme should be treated as members unless they elect to the contrary; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what resources are available in the local government superannuation scheme to make improvements, including pensions for widowers, children of married women, dependants of single persons, spouses of post-retirement marriages, and a guaranteed pension for five years as well as a minimum death-in-service lump sum of two years' pay; and what the total cost would be of these improvements on top of current liabilities;

(3) what plans he has to terminate the difference in the local government superannuation scheme whereby women contributors pay into the scheme at the same rate as men for unequal benefit;

(4) why women receive less than their male counterparts when paying into the local government superannuation scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: I will write to the hon. Member.

Equal Opportunities

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what action he has taken to remedy past inequalities in employment practices in his Department, in compliance with the codes of the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission, respectively.

Mr. Ridley: My Department has taken measures to reduce under-representation of women in the higher grades and of black and Asian staff. These measures include women-only development training; advertising opportunities for job-share, part-time work and career breaks; using the ethnic minority press for advertising local vacancies; participating in feature articles to publicise the Department's work; taking part in schools liaison; using inner city job centres and other types of outreach work; and participating in a central training review and promotion monitoring projects.

Somerset Wetlands (SSSI)

Mr. Ashdown: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how long he estimates the site of special scientific interest in the Somerset wetlands will continue to qualify as such, at current rates of drying out; and whether he will introduce a system of water table management, aimed at preserving the levels, and moors, wetland status.

Mr. Moynihan: The results of recent surveys commissioned by the NCC into the possible lowering of water levels and a decline in the density of breeding wading birds on the Somerset levels and moors over the last 10 years are currently under examination. The NCC has no plans at present to denotify any of the SSSIs. It has recently met Wessex water authority to discuss the position and will be having further consultations with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Wessex water authority, internal drainage boards, other environmental interests and farming representatives.

Rating Reform

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether community charge officers will be able to ask for information concerning an individual from

gas, water and electricity boards; and whether those boards could exchange information about individuals to the community charge officer.

Mr. Howard: No. The powers of community charge registration officers to request information are set out in schedule 2 to the Local Government Finance Bill. They do not include power to request information from the bodies mentioned. Nor will registration officers have any power to pass information to those bodies.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment why Price Waterhouse was chosen to carry out a study concerning the costs of implementing the community charge; how many companies tendered for the study; and why the actual cost of implementing the community charge in Scotland was not used as a basis for a reliable estimate as to the likely true cost of introducing the legislation in England and Wales.

Mr. Howard: The actual cost of preparing for and implementing rates reform in Scotland will not be known until after April 1989. Our estimates of these costs in England and Wales have been questioned by local authority associations and some individual authorities have made their own forecasts. Price Waterhouse was selected to undertake an independent study of these costs after we had examined tenders and written proposals from six firms of consultants.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment why, pursuant to the answer of 16 May, the information requested relating to illustrative community charges for 1988-89 was given by reference to figures for 1987-88; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: Because estimates for 1988-89 are not yet available for England. I apologise for not making that clear.

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has had from Community Service Volunteers with regard to exemption from the community charge; what reply he is sending; what action he will be taking; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: I have received a number of such representations from various organisations. This matter was also discussed during the consideration of the Local Government Finance Bill in Committee in another place. My noble Friend the Minister of State agreed to consider the possibility of making special provision for residential voluntary workers.

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what percentage of single pensioners he estimates will be adversely affected by the introduction of the community charge;

(2) what percentage of pensioners he estimates will be adversely affected by the community charge.

Mr. Howard: I shall write to the hon. Member shortly.

Local Government (Wage Earners)

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to how many wage earners currently make no direct contribution towards the cost of local government.

Mr. Howard: On the basis of data contained in the family expenditure survey, I estimate that about 10 million wage earners currently do not receive rate bills.

European Directives

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of the proposed European directives that he has vetoed in the Council of Ministers since 1979.

Mr. Moynihan: The Council does not keep records of votes on a national basis. The information requested is therefore not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Wetlands (Ramar Convention)

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) pursuant to his reply of 11 May, *Official Report*, column 128, whether he will make it his policy that sites meeting the revised criteria and guidelines for the identification of wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar convention should be listed under article 2 of the convention;

(2) pursuant to his reply of 11 May, *Official Report* column 127, whether he will make it his policy that sites confirmed by the Nature Conservancy Council as qualifying for designation as special protection areas under EC directive 79/409 or wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar convention should be so designated.

Mr. Moynihan: The Government consider the formal classification under the Ramsar convention and/or the EC birds directive of all sites which the Nature Conservancy Council concludes meet the relevant criteria when the necessary preparatory work is completed. Our aim is to designate those sites which are necessary to meet the conservation objectives of the convention and the directive.

Housing Stock

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to implement a detailed inventory of the existing housing stock with estimates of replacement costs.

Mrs. Roe: No.

Cross-Bradford Rail Link

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the reasons given by the Property Services Agency why a cross-Bradford rail link could not be accommodated on the proposed Bradford courthouse site; and if he will make a statement

Mr. Chope: A cross-Bradford rail link could not be accommodated on the proposed Bradford courthouse site because its closeness to the courthouse would produce unacceptable levels of noise and vibration, would create unsurmountable security problems, and would be visually intrusive.

Water Environment

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has amended his plans, in the event of privatisation of the water authorities, for the legal framework protecting the water environment.

Mr. Moynihan: No. It remains the Government's firm intention to strengthen protection of the water environment, in particular by providing a statutory framework of quality objectives and standards for rivers and estuaries; and by establishing the National Rivers Authority, for the management and protection of the water environment. Detailed provisions will be brought forward in the forthcoming water privatisation Bill.

London Docklands Development Corporation

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give the name of the main contractors for any development, including infrastructure and building works, for each site sold by the London Docklands Development Corporation since July 1981.

Mr. Trippier: Appointment of contractors by developers of sites sold by the LDDC is a matter for the developers.

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will give the name of the main contractor, the value of the contract and the date when the contract was signed for each site where the London Docklands Development Corporation has let a contract for infrastructure works, including land reclamation and the provision of drainage or other services, since July 1981;

(2) if he will name the purchaser for each site sold by the London Dockland Development Corporation since July 1981.

Mr. Trippier: I will write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will place in the Library a copy of any letter written to the London Docklands Development Corporation by Messrs Robson Rhodes concerning the annual accounts of the corporation, together with any respective responses which have been made.

Mr. Trippier *[pursuant to his reply, 2 March 1988, c. 579]:* The Department has examined the management letter sent by Messrs Robson Rhodes in relation to the LDDC's 1985/86 external audit, and the corporation's response and has consulted Messrs Robson Rhodes and officers of the corporation on both. Having considered the results of these consultations carefully I have reached the following conclusions:

(i) Management letters, which are the formal means by which external auditors draw the attention of the audited body to various aspects of that body's systems of internal control, do not deal with matters of substance which materially affect the annual accounts. Such matters are properly dealt with by qualification of the accounts. Robson Rhodes made it clear that none of the issues raised in its letter was of such substance in relation to the 1985/86 accounts.

(ii) None of the issues raised in the management letter alleged or implied irregularity or impropriety by the corporation, or misuse of public funds.

(iii) The auditors accept that the corporation's use of financing mechanisms was not improper or irregular. They pointed out, however, that such mechanisms are generally complex, somewhat open to misinterpretation and if multiplied in future years could increasingly press against the legal constraints by which the corporation is bound. Such timely advice is one of the purposes and benefits of external audit.

(iv) On consultancy appointments, I am satisifed that LDDC has in fact operated within the current guidelines laid down by the Department for ensuring proper competition. Robson Rhodes' main concern was that, under the internal approval procedures for appointment of consultants, full documentary evidence of the competitive process that had been carried out was not always immediately available to those ratifying appointments. LDDC has made it clear, however, that such evidence was always available for inspection, and has agreed to review supporting documentation more thoroughly.

(v) Where the award of a consultancy contract is based on a comparison of competitive rates (as distinct from the submission of tenders) there should be a full and explicit definition of the criteria used for selection. The Department will discuss this further with LDDC, and agree revised procedures as necessary.

(vi) Proper procedures were employed by LDDC in awarding consultancy appointments to three former employees of the corporation. In view of the comments made by Messrs Robson Rhodes, however, the corporation accepts that additional arrangements are required to fully demonstrate propriety in all such cases. The corporation has therefore reviewed its procedures, and now requires that all such cases should go to the board for approval.

(vii) Messrs Robson Rhodes suggested that the corporation should obtain clarification from the Department on competition requirements and how they should best be satisfied. My officials are reviewing the existing guidance to the corporation on this and will bring forward revised proposals.

(viii) The other issues raised in the management letter related to negotiated land disposals, reporting and seeking approval for project overspends, and actioning internal and external audit recommendations. I am satisfied that LDDC has taken appropriate follow-up action in each case and, where necessary, has revised and strengthened its procedures.

My Department's primary concern is that the LDDC should always respond fully and effectively to the matters raised in management letters. These letters are intended to raise issues which require detailed consideration by the body under audit and the Department and to lead to agreement on ways in which procedures could be further improved or adjusted to meet changing circumstances. But I should add that the unauthorised disclosure of such letters undermines their effectiveness for this purpose.

I am satisfied that in relation to the 1985-86 letter that the corporation has paid proper attention to the issues raised, and that a full and effective response has been made.

Youth Projects (Kensington)

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list those youth projects in existence in the Kensington parliamentary constituency for each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: My Department does not keep comprehensive information on youth projects in Kensington or any other area. A number of projects in Kensington aimed at benefiting young people have been

supported by my Department through the urban programme in the past five years. These are listed as follows.

Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Youth projects supported through the Urban Programme 1983-88.
YTS Training Centre
Construction of new training centre for borough wide youth training scheme.
Glissando Steel Orchestra
To build a sound-proofed rehearsal centre for orchestra.
Outward Bound Courses
12 Outward Bound places on courses.
Cremorne Riverside Centre
Training centre for water based activities.
St. Stephen's Intermediate Treatment Centre
Centre for the prevention and treatment of delinquency.
North Kensington Family Centre
Family centre with a Caribbean focus.
North Kensington Students Hostel Ltd.
Accommodation for homeless students.
Unemployed Centre (Venture Community Association)
Drop in centre for the unemployed.
Holiday Projects
Provision of play projects during the school summer holidays.
Stopgap
Holiday project.
Unity Association Hostel
Accommodation and support for young people.
Tabernacle Community Association Ltd.
Community Centre.
Harvey IT/Education Centre.

Water Pollution Offences

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what were the numbers of prosecutions and convictions arising from water pollution offences in each English water authority during 1984-85, 1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987-88; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: No prosecutions have so far been taken out against water authorities by the Department. The number of prosecutions for water pollution offences taken by each English water authority during 1984-85 and 1985-86 were:

	1984-85[1]	*1985-86*[1]
Anglian	17	14
Northumbrian	2	1
North West	70	26
Severn Trent	23	33
Southern	15	6
South West	12	34
Thames	5	12
Wessex	29	38
Yorkshire	33	40
Totals	206	204

[1] Some data is for calendar year.

Details for 1987 are not yet available but will be published later in the year.

Information about convictions following prosecutions is collected by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department but is not collected in a comparable form. I understand, however, that in general over 90 per cent. of these cases result in convictions.

Decisions on whether or not to prosecute rest with water authorities and will depend upon factors such as the severity of the pollution and whether the source can be clearly identified.

Berne Convention

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment in which way the United Kingdom representative voted at the sixth meeting of the standing committee of the Berne convention in Strasbourg when considering the proposal to include Lululla arborea in appendix II of the convention; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: The Government accepted the Nature Consevancy Council's advice to support the listing of the Lululla arborea in appendix II to the Berne convention. However, the species is already listed in annex I of the birds directive (79/409 EEC) and therefore comes within Community competence. I understand that, following consultations with all members states at the sixth meeting of the standing committee to the Berne convention, the Commission abstained from voting on the proposal to include the Lululla arborea in appendix II.

Dover Castle (Officers' Mess)

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) when the officers' mess in Dover castle was last used; and for what purpose;

(2) on how many occasions *(a)* he, *(b)* his officials and *(c)* English Heritage have had discussions with interested parties in the last 12 months concerning proposals to bring the officers' mess in Dover castle back into commercial use;

(3) whether he will review the progress being made by English Heritage in processing proposals for developing the officers' mess in Dover castle; and if he will make a statement;

(4) what assistance his Department is prepared to give to English Heritage and Dover district council in order to assist private proposals for bringing the officers' mess in Dover castle into commercial use;

(5) when his officials last discussed with English Heritage proposals for developing and using the officers' mess in Dover castle; and what specifically they discussed.

Mr. Moynihan: The management, presentation and future development of Dover castle are matters for English Heritage. The former officers' mess ceased to be used for that purpose some years before the castle was placed in the care of the Ministry of Public Building and Works in 1965. It has remained empty ever since. Various proposals have been considered at different times for its re-use and I understand that English Heritage has had discussions with several potential developers. At English Heritage's request last March, my officials offered informal advice on a question of tendering procedure. Apart from that, the Department has had no discussions with English Heritage or any other party about the future use of the officers' mess building since the transfer of responsibility to English Heritage on 1 April 1984. I am sure the chairman will be happy to provide my hon. Friend with further details of his plans.

Water Industry Privatisation

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what powers are being currently proposed for him with regard to the setting of initial water quality standards prior to the privatisation of the water industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: In its 1986 consultation paper, "The Water Environment; The Next Steps", the Government indicated:

"In order to launch [the new Statutory Quality Objective System] on a firmly established clear basis, the Government proposes to use initially the objectives which the Water Authorities have adopted. These objectives are widely understood, have been the subject of local consultation, and can be related to the classifications used as a basis for water quality measurement in the [1980 and 1985] River Quality Surveys. Using them at the outset will ensure continuity and provide a good basis for comparison between progress in different . . . areas, and between the present situation and any future review".

This remains the Government's position. Legislation to give effect to it will be brought before Parliament in due course.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether it is intended to make provision for water protection zones following the privatisation of the water industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: It remains the Government's intention to re-enact and simplify the existing legislative provisions relating to water protection zones in the forthcoming water privatisation Bill.

National Rivers Authority Advisory Committee (Chairman)

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how widely the vacancy for the position of chairman of the National Rivers Authority advisory committee was advertised; and how many applicants were considered.

Mr. Moynihan: The position of chairman of the National Rivers Authority advisory committee was not advertised. But a number of candidates were considered before the decision was taken to appoint my right hon. and noble Friend Lord Crickhowell.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what expenses the chairman of the national rivers authority advisory committee will be eligible to claim.

Mr. Moynihan: As chairman of the National Rivers Authority advisory committee, my right hon. and noble Friend, Lord Crickhowell, will be eligible to claim current Civil Service class I travelling and subsistence allowances.

Local Authorities (Investments)

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Hendon, South (Mr. Marshall) of 3 December, *Official Report*, column *642*, what progress he has made in consideration of options to control further the investment of local government pension fund moneys in the light of the failure of the *News on Sunday* newspaper.

Mr. Chope: My right hon. Friend is still considering the matter and will be consulting representatives of local government and others in due course.

Planning Enforcement Notice Appeals

Mr. Day: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish the report of the efficiency scrutiny of his Department's handling of planning enforcement notice appeals, carried out in 1987, and his response to the report's recommendations.

Mr. Waldegrave: A volume incorporating the report and the action plan which we have agreed is being published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office today. Copies have been placed in the Library of the House. The scrutiny examined the procedures under which local planning authorities issue planning enforcement notices and the Department deals with appeals to my right hon. Friend against such notices. The report makes 51 recommendations for more efficient and effective handling of these appeals.

We have accepted many of the report's key recommendations and one of the main objectives of the action plan will be to ensure that the majority of enforcement appeals decided by planning inspectors are eventually processed, and the decision issued, within 22 weeks from receipt of the appeal.

Some of the recommendations involve proposals to amend provisions in part V of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 and to adapt existing administrative procedures for processing enforcement appeals. My Department will shortly be consulting the local authority associations, and the professional and other organisations with an interest in the planning control process, about the feasibility of implementing these recommendations.

We have also said that we shall now be undertaking urgently a full review of the enforcement powers available to local planning authorities. This review will build on the detailed analysis in the enforcement scrutiny report.

Spent Magnox Fuel

Mr. Gwilym Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if the studies recommended by the Select Committee on the Environment on dry storage and direct disposal of spent Magnox fuel have been completed.

Mr. Moynihan: The reports and an independent review have today been deposited in the Library of the House of Commons and with the British Library. Copies have been sent to members of the Environment Committee and to other interested organisations.

The reports and the review confirm that a change to a strategy of long-term storage and direct disposal of spent Magnox fuel would not give rise to significant reductions in radiation exposures to the public or to the work force in the nuclear industry, and uncertainties would remain about the suitability of the chemically reactive fuel for direct disposal. At this late stage in the life of Magnox power stations the extra costs which would be entailed cannot, therefore, be justified. A continuation of fuel reprocessing to the end of the Magnox programme remains prudent policy.

Discharges of radioactivity from fuel reprocessing at Sellafield have been considerably reduced; they are now only one tenth of the level in 1978. Further reductions are planned from about 1991 when the enhanced actinide removal plant (EARP) becomes operational. This should enable discharges to alpha emitters to be reduced further.

The length of time for which the Magnox programme continues will depend on financial considerations, the reviews of safety of the reactors and the fuel reprocessing plant, waste management and energy strategy considerations.

Water Privatisation

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has taken any steps to prevent water authorities from acquiring stocks in statutory water companies in anticipation of the privatisation of the industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 23 May 1988]:* It is in the first instance for the water authorities to decide in the light of the facts and circumstances of each case whether they have the legal powers and the resources to acquire water company shares.

Homeless Persons

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what surveys have taken place as to the number of people who sleep rough in London each night; when such surveys were conducted; and what was the number of people found to be sleeping rough.

Mrs. Currie: I have been asked to reply.

I am not aware of any more recent official survey than the one in 1965 by the National Assistance Board which found that there were then approximately 275 people sleeping rough in London. There are extreme methodological difficulties in counting accurately the number of people sleeping rough because of their constant mobility and lack of willingness to respond to official inquiries.

EMPLOYMENT

ILO Convention 45

Mr. Tredinnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether the Government has reached any decision with regard to the current opportunity to denounce International Labour Organisation (ILO) convention 45 as mentioned in his Department's recent consultative document.

Mr. Nicholls: The Government are considering carefully the many responses to the consultative document on restrictions on employment of young people and the removal of sex discrimination in legislation, including these of the CBI and TUC.

A clear majority of the responses favoured changes to many aspects of the legislation. In order to clear the way for possible changes to the statutory restrictions on women in mining which could not take place within the constraints of the convention, the Government propose to denounce ILO convention 45. Denunciation will take effect 12 months after the date on which it is registered with the ILO.

Remploy

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what plans he has to ensure that Remploy pays rates of pay to its workers consistent with the standard rates of pay for the work undertaken and rates of pay for jobs considered to be of similar value; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: Within a framework of wider public spending considerations, it is for the board of Remploy to determine wage rates for the company's workers. I am pleased to say that Remploy's manual work force has now voted by a sizeable majority to accept the pay offer which the board put to it recently.

Dock Labour Scheme

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what estimates he has as to the likely number of retirements from the dock labour scheme in each year until 1995 and the number of new entrants who will be required in each year until 1995.

Mr. Nicholls: It is not possible to make such estimates since the numbers will depend upon the choices of individuals and a variety of commercial and other factors.

Job Release Scheme

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people in each year have taken advantage of the job release scheme since its inception.

Mr. Lee: The information requested is set out in the table:

	Number
1976-77	9,979
1977-78	14,529
1978-79	25,643
1979-80	68,164
1980-81	24,239
1981-82	38,674
1982-83	46,134
1983-84	44,045
1984-85	14,895
1985-86	11,960
1986-87	12,046
1987-88	10,005

Perivale Skillcentre

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what steps he is taking to secure the future of the Perivale skillcentre; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced a review of the skills training agency at the end of last year and has received an initial report which he is considering.

Penlee Quarry

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment, pursuant to the reply to the hon. Member for Bradford, South, *Official Report*, column *285*, 13 May, what was the date of the last visit to Penlee quarry by a mines and quarry inspector prior to 28 January 1987; whether the inspector was satisfied that all troughed belt conveyors at the quarry were to the British Standard; and whether the 1974 British Standard for machinery guards was required, reached or imposed.

Mr. Nicholls: The date of the last visit to Penlee quarry by a mines and quarries inspector prior to 28 January 1987 was on 5 January 1987. This visit was to deal with a matter relating to the security of stockpiles. The inspector did not deal with any other matters during that visit.

Quarries (Investigations)

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will place in the Library *(a)* a copy of the Health and Safety Executive metallurgical laboratory report on the broken derricking pawl shaft boss from the Anderson and Grice 15-tonne Scotch derrick crane at Hantergantick quarry, St. Bernard and *(b)* a copy of the investigation report into the accident at Penlee quarry, Newlyn, on 28 January 1987.

Mr. Nicholls: No. The Health and Safety Executive is still considering whether or not to instigate proceedings following the Hantergantick accident. Individual accident investigation reports, which may contain personal information and opinion, are not usually made public.

Scotch Derrick Cranes

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will place in the Library a list of all scotch derrick cranes in use and their location and age so far as is known in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Nicholls: The Health and Safety Executive does not hold a list of all Scotch derrick cranes currently in use in the United Kingdom. A list of all those cranes known to be located at quarries has been placed in the Library.

List of Scotch derrick cranes located at quarries as at May 1988

Name of Quarry	*Crane make and Safe Working Load*	*Date of Manufacture (if known)*
Watson	Anderson Grice 5 ton	—
Bolton Wood	Butters 10 ton	—
Britannia	Morgan 20 ton	1950-approx
Britannia	Henderson 15 ton	1969
Britannia	Henderson 15 ton	1972
Deep Lane	Butters 6 ton	1940's
Squire Hill	Bradley 7 ton	—
Naylor Hill	Morgan 10 ton	—
Dunhouse	Morgan 10 ton	—
Dunhouse	Butters 15 ton	—
Stainton	Butters 10 ton	1964
Locharbriggs	Anderson Grice 15 ton	—
Stoneraise	Butters 5 ton	—
Darney Crag	Morgan 7 ton	—
Whitestone and Quarry Lane	Balmforth 4 ton	1920's
Trannach	Rushworth 4 ton	—
Trannach	Rushworth 2 ton	—
De Lank	Henderson 15 ton	1975
Bosahan	Henderson 15 ton	1939
Merrivale	Butters 35 ton	1975
Hantergantick	Butters 15 ton	1960
Hantergantick	Butters 20 ton	1975
Bowers	Butters	1942
Doulting	Henderson 15 ton	1968
Maesgwyn	Butters 20 ton	1960
Independent No. 1	Henderson 35 ton	1964
Independent No. 1	Sangster 10 ton	—
Portland No. 6	Anderson Grice 15 ton	—
Portland No. 4	Anderson Grice 15 ton	—
Holywell	Butters 7 ton	1953
Holywell	Smith 4 ton	—
Holywell	Smith 4 ton	—

Mines and Quarries Inspectorate

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what training individual inspectors in the mines and quarries inspectorate have received to enable them to prepare all the necessary documents for a prosecution to be taken on indictment in the Crown court.

Mr. Nicholls: As a result of a comprehensive training programme, all inspectors of the mines and quarries inspectorate have the necessary knowledge and skills to prepare the documentation for consideration for prosecution.

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when the next meeting is to take place between the Health and Safety Executive and the Chief Inspector of Mines and Quarries to review progress in reducing the number of fatal and serious accidents; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: When the chief inspector saw the executive on 23 March, he described a number of measures already in train to improve health and safety in quarries, and they were discussed. The measures in train are the responsibility of the chief inspector and need time to develop before a meeting to review progress could be useful.

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many prohibition and improvement notices have been issued by the Mines and Quarries Inspectorate; and how many prosecutions there are now pending following the meeting in April between Dr. Mike Jones and the health and safety executive.

Mr. Nicholls: The information requested is listed for the period 14 April 1988 to 20 May 1988.

	Number
Improvement Notices issued	13
Deferred Prohibition Notices issued	9
Immediate Prohibition Notices issued	30
Prosecutions Pending	2

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will introduce legislation to transfer the duty to prosecute under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 from the mines and quarries inspectorate to the Crown Prosecution Service; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: There is no need to change the existing arrangements since the Director of Public Prosecutions in England and Wales and the Procurator Fiscal in Scotland can already initiate proceedings in respect of contraventions of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act.

Escalators

Mr. Corbett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what consideration he has given to making regulations under section 15 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to impose requirements with respect to the construction, maintenance and examination of escalators similar to those contained in Offices, Shops and Railway Premises (Hoists and Lifts) Regulations 1968 (S.I., 1968, No. 849).

Mr. Nicholls: I have received no such proposal from the Health and Safety Commission. I am not aware of any reason to take a substantially different view from that taken by my predecessor in replying to the Adjournment debate held on 23 December 1981 at column 1043.

Mr. Corbett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he will discuss with the Health and

Safety Executive the case for revising its guidance notes relating to escalators with respect to *(a)* uniformity in the siting, size and content of escalator warning notices and *(b)* the fitting of stand-off skirt guards or other deflector devices to all existing escalators to minimise trapping accidents.

Mr. Nicholls: The Health and Safety Executive will review its guidance note "Safety in the use of escalators" when it has received a report on research which is being undertaken on their behalf by the Institute for Consumer Ergonomics and which includes *(a)* an appraisal of escalator warning signs and *(b)* an evaluation of deflector devices on escalators in shopping centres and department stores.

Ceramic Industry

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people are employed in the ceramic industry at present; and how many have been employed in that industry over each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Lee: The available information is as follows:

Employees in Employment in the Refractory and Ceramic Goods industry in Great Britain (Group 248 of the Standard Industrial Classification 1980)

Thousands

December of each year	*Number*
1978	75·1
1979	72·2
1980	66·2
1981	58·8
1982	56·6
1983	59·1
1984	64·2
1985	67·4
1986	68·5
[1]1987	70·0

[1]The latest date for which figures are available.

These estimates are subject to considerable potential estimation error due to the relatively small number of employees in the industry.

Separate estimates for the ceramic goods industry are not available.

MSC (Grants)

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when he expects the Manpower Services Commission to finalise supplementary grant levels to local Manpower Services Commission areas; and whether inner city areas will receive a higher level of supplementary grant to take account of the cost of premises and salaries.

Mr. Cope: The Training Commission (formerly the Manpower Services Commission) is currently in the process of determining the distribution of training places and supplementary grants to its areas. I expect the process to be completed shortly. The grants are intended to meet the higher costs of training provision associated with a wide variety of need, including the special need of the inner cities.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) what is the total number of people under the age of 25 years who are unemployed in the Kensington constituency *(a)* as a percentage of all people under the age of 25 years and *(b)* as a percentage of the total number of unemployed people in the constituency;

(2) how many people under the ages of *(a)* 23 years and *(b)* 25 years have been unemployed in Kensington for (i) less than six months, (ii) between six months and one year, (iii) between one year and two years and (iv) over two years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: The following information is in the Library. The table shows the number of unemployed claimants under 25 years in Kensington constituency on 14 April 1988 for the requested durations, together with the under 25 years unemployment level expressed as a percentage of the total unemployed in the constituency. Separate figures are not available for those aged under 23. Data are not available on the number of people in Kensington aged under 25.

Unemployed claimants, Kensington constituency, April 1988

	Under 25 years	*Under 25 as a percentage of total unemployed Per cent.*
Less than six months	503	—
Six to twelve months	216	—
One to two years	120	—
Over two years	149	—
All durations	988	23.8

YTS (Kensington)

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the numbers of young people who have obtained full-time jobs on leaving YTS schemes in the Kensington constituency for each of the past three years; and what percentage this is of all those who have completed YTS schemes during that period; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: Figures for the Kensington constituency are not available. The table gives details of leavers from YTS schemes in the royal borough of Kensington and Chelsea and nationally. The figures have been obtained from the 100 per cent. postal follow-up surveys of young people three months after leaving YTS schemes.

	Per cent. in full time work Kensington and Chelsea	*Per cent. in full-time work Great Britain*
April 1985 to March 1986	53	53
April 1986 to March 1987	63	60
April 1987 to December 1987	56	51

In Kensington and Chelsea, as in the country as a whole, large numbers of trainees also leave YTS for further education and training.

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people have been on YTS schemes in the Kensington parliamentary constituency for each of the past three years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: The number of people who have been on YTS schemes in the royal borough of Kensington and Chelsea for the past three years is:

	Number
1985-86	30
1986-87	102
1987-88	154

I am pleased to see that an increasing number of young people are entering work via a structured training programme in this area.

Construction Industry (Deaths)

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many *(a)* deaths *(b)* serious and major injuries and *(c)* employees there were in (i) the public and (ii) the private construction industries for each year from 1970 to 1987.

Mr. Nicholls: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) on Monday 18 April 1988, at column *317*.

Stallite Batteries

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will itemise the number and year of each visit the number, type and year of each notice, and the offence by year and resultant fine with regard to Health and Safety Executive action at Stallite Batteries, Worsborough Dale, Barnsley in each of the years from 1958 to 1987.

Mr. Nicholls: The following table shows the number and year of visits to Stallite Batteries, Worsborough Dale, Barnsley, from 1965 to 1986. During 1986 the company moved to new premises in Bolton-on-Dearne.

Year	Number of visits
1965	5
1966	4
1967	3
1968	4
1969	3
1970	1
1971	16
1972	13
1973	4
1974	25
1975	14
1976	12
1977	12
1978	22
1979	7
1980	5
1981	11
1982	4
1983	5
1984	4
1985	18
1986	17

The factory was not known to Her Majesty's factory inspectorate, now part of the Health and Safety Executive, prior to 1965.

The following enforcement notices were served during the same period.

Year	Number of notices issued
1975	1 Prohibition notice 1 Improvement notice
1978	2 Improvement notices 1 Prohibition notice
1981	2 Improvement notices
1982	1 Improvement notice
1983	2 Improvement notices
1985	1 Improvement notice

Prosecutions by year with resultant fines are as follows:

Year and Offence	Total fine £
1965	
Failure to notify occupation and illegal employment on a lead process:	21-18-0
1973	
Failure to control fumes and failure to have an employee medically examined.	100
1988 (offence in 1986)	
Failure to suspend person who was issued with a certificate of unfitness for work with lead.	750

Building Sites (London)

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many prosecutions in connection with construction sites there were in London in 1987; how many offences were committed; and what was the fine for each offence.

Mr. Nicholls: The table shows the available information.

The number of prosecutions [1]: informations laid in 1986-87 [2]	The number of convictions	The average penalty per conviction £
53[3]	39	810

[1] Data are for construction related prosecutions taken by Factory and Agricultural Inspectorates of the Health and Safety Executive London area offices. They exclude any that may have been taken by other enforcing authorities.

[2] Provisional data for the 12 month period April 1986 to March 1987.

[3] The outcome of eight of these informations laid is not yet known.

Building Sites

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many prosecutions in connection with construction sites there were in 1987; what regulations were broken; and what was the fine for each offence.

Mr. Nicholls: The table shows the available information, concerning prosecutions associated with the construction industry.

Regulation	The number of prosecutions [1]: informations laid in 1986-87 [2]	The number of convictions	The average penalty per conviction £
Construction (General Provisions) Regs 1961	52	44	792
Construction (Lifting Operations) Regs 1961	40	27	649
Construction (Working Places) Regs 1966	181	145	347
Construction (Health and Welfare) Regs 1966	11	8	288
Other Regulations [3]	112	92	325
Specific Regulations not Quoted	254	166	688
Grand Total	[4]650	482	517

[1] Data are for construction related prosecutions taken by Factory and Agricultural Inspectorates of the Health and Safety Executive London area offices. They exclude any that may have been taken by other enforcing authorities.
[2] Provisional data for the 12 month period April 1986 to March 1987.
[3] Information separately distinguishing each of the other regulations can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.
[4] The outcome of 29 of these informations laid is not yet known.

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how frequently the average building site has been inspected, each year, in each of the years from 1970 to 1987.

Mr. Nicholls: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what were *(a)* the estimated number of building sites and *(b)* the number of construction Health and Safety Executive inspectors for each of the years from 1970 to 1987.

Mr. Nicholls: The Health and Safety Executive does not keep estimates of the number of building sites. All inspectors in the factory inspectorate division of the HSE may work in construction groups. The number of experienced inspectors employed on construction work for the years as at 1 January 1979-86 was as follows:

	Number
1979	86
1980	87
1981	90
1982	89
1983	88
1984	88
1985	86
1986	84·5

In September 1987 there were 92 qualified inspectors employed on construction work.

No information is available centrally for the years 1970-78.

Sellafield (Safety Allegations)

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will arrange for independent interviews and investigations to be carried out into recent allegations by employees of BNFL of safety breaches at Sellafield.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I have been asked to reply.

I understand that various anonymous allegations have been made of breaches in safety rules in certain buildings at BNFL's Sellafield site. BNFL and the Health and Safety Executive's nuclear installations inspectorate will both be looking into these allegations and undertaking any further necessary investigations.

DEFENCE

Small Firms (Research Information)

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on progress in making available the results of research sponsored by his Department to small firms.

Mr. Sainsbury: We attach high importance to the fullest possible exploitation of research carried out by, or on behalf of, the Ministry of Defence. Defence Technology Enterprises Limited is specifically charged with the commercial exploitation of this research and now has some 265 members, mostly in the small firms sector. The defence research information centre also plays a very important role.

Tucano

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the latest cost estimate for the Tucano trainer project; what were the original estimates; when the trainers are expected to be in operation; what was the original estimate; what financial and operational contingency plans have been made; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: The estimated cost for the Tucano trainer project has not changed since the contract was let. Aircraft were ordered on a firm price basis, with payment to be made on delivery. Consequently, there is no increase in the contract price as a result of delays in the programme. The value of the contract is, however, commercially confidential. We expect deliveries of Tucano to the RAF to commence shortly. Deliveries were initially scheduled to begin in January 1987. As a result of the delay, the RAF's Jet Provost fleet is continuing in service for longer than originally planned.

Radar Station (Bradwell)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a further statement on the role and function of the trial radar station near Bradwell-on-Sea, Essex; which unit or agency is responsible for operating this installation and its experiments; what is the estimated cost of the activities at this location; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: As I have already explained in my reply to the hon. Member for Cunninghame, North (Mr. Wilson) on 29 April, the facility is used for high-frequency

surface wave radar technology studies. The site is managed by Marconi Radar Systems Ltd. and has been sub-let to the Royal Signals Research Establishment (amongst other users) to undertake research work. They are paying a proportional element of the total maintenance costs of the site currently estimated to be about £70,000 a year, together with costs of dedicated Marconi personnel incurred in supporting these studies.

Tornado

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Royal Air Force Tornados have been destroyed or seriously damaged in a flying accident since the Tornado entered Royal Air Force service; in which countries they occurred; how many were on low-flying exercises; how many lives have been lost; and what has been the cost of the Tornados involved.

Mr. Freeman: Since entering service with the Royal Air Force, 17 major Tornado accidents have resulted in 15 aircraft being lost and a further three sustaining major damage. In these accidents, six aircrew were killed. Eleven of the accidents occurred in the United Kingdom or surrounding waters, four took place in the Federal Republic of Germany, and the remaining two were in Canada and the United States of America. Eleven of the aircraft were involved in low-flying operations when the accident occurred. In respect of the cost of the aircraft involved, it is now our practice not to publish unit production costs, but I refer the hon. Member to table 3·2 of volume 2 of the "Statement on Defence Estimates 1988" (Cm. 344-11).

Flying Accidents

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about the accident on 10 May involving a Tornado GR1 which crashed near Ankum, in northern Germany.

Mr. Freeman: On 10 May, during the course of a training exercise, a Royal Air Force Tornado GR1 of 17 Squadron, RAF Bruggen crashed some five miles north west of Ankum in the Federal Republic of Germany. Both members of the crew were killed. There were no civilian casualties, but there was minor damage to a farm building near the crash site. The RAF has convened a board of inquiry to examine fully all the circumstances of the accident, with a view to establishing its cause, and preventing recurrence. A summary of the board's findings will be published in due course and a copy placed in the Library of the House.

Army Strength (Northern Ireland)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the manpower strength of the British Army in Northern Ireland, giving details of the number of operatives for the following categories: Ulster Defence Regiment, regular British Army and British Territorial Army, on 31 December 1987.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The figures requested are as follows:

	Number
Ulster Defence Regiment	6,364
Regular Army	9,645
Territorial Army	3,744

The figures for the Ulster Defence Regiment include both full-time and part-time soldiers. Soldiers of the Territorial Army are not used in support of the RUC in counter-terrorist operations.

Ulster Defence Regiment

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the average time served by officers and other ranks of the Ulster Defence Regiment separately for full-time and part-time officers as at 31 December 1987.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The information on the average time in years served by UDR personnel on strength as at 31 December 1987 is as follows:

	Full-time	*Part-time*
Officers		
Male	4·6	9·4
Female	4·5	4·1
Other ranks		
Male	7·6	6·9
Female	6·9	4·6

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give details of the numbers of operatives by rank, separately of those who have joined the Ulster Defence Regiment and its reserve, and of those who have resigned from the Ulster Defence Regiment and its reserve, in the calendar years 1986 and 1987.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The information is not available in the form requested. However, the following figures are available for those male and female officers and other ranks who have joined the UDR and who have left the UDR for reasons other than medical or disciplinary or on death:

	1986		*1987*	
	Intake	Outflow	Intake	Outflow
Officers				
Male	29	29	18	30
Female	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Other ranks				
Male	880	694	738	701
Female	156	117	117	119

South African Armed Forces

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what training facilities are, or have been provided at the 4th Parachute Regiment's premises at Leeds road, Bradford, for members of the South African armed forces; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: There is no Territorial Army centre in Leeds Road, Bradford; Headquarters Company of 4 Parachute Regiment has its premises in Thornbury barracks, Pudsey. No training facilities have been extended to South African armed forces within these premises, nor are there any plans to do so.

P and O

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang) *Official Report*, 20 May,

column *611*, how many P and O company personnel have been allowed use of Ministry of Defence facilities; if he will list the facilities so used; over what period of time they have been used; what has been the charge to the company; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The P and O company has hired the swimming pool belonging to the Royal Marines school of music thrice-weekly since 9 May. On each occasion about 20 P and O employees have used the pool and changing facilities. The company has been charged at the normal rate of £7·75 per 45-minute session for use of the pool. The hire of the pool to P and O is consistent with long-standing arrangements which I referred to in my reply to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang) on the 20 May at column *611*.

Major Cory

Mr. Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a further statement on his Department's handling of the case of Major Cory, in the light of the inaccuracies now acknowledged by his Department in the statement made by Mr. James Ramsden in the House on 17 December 1963, with particular reference to the judgment of the court martial appeals court.

Mr. Freeman: Mr. Ramsden made certain omissions in his statement to the House in his account of the internal investigation in 1963 into the trial of Major Cory but these were made in the interests of brevity. Major Cory has also drawn attention to the fact that certain references in the statement were at variance with certain statements in the judgment of the courts-martial appeals court. I wish to make it quite clear that if any statements were made to the House which were open to misinterpretation, or if any facts were omitted, thereby allowing an interpretation to Major Cory's discredit, there was no intention to mislead and the statement made should not be taken to contradict or minimise Major Cory's complete exoneration by the courts-martial appeal court's judgment. Major Cory is innocent of all the charges and an ex gratia payment was made to him in 1963 in respect of this miscarriage of justice. I regret that due to an administrative error by the MOD Major Cory's name was not removed from the records held at the national identification bureau. I can assure my hon. Friend that this has now been rectified.

"Tumbledown"

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what advice and assistance was sought of his Department during the production of the British Broadcasting Corporation film "Tumbledown"; what assessment was made of the extent to which the proposed portrayal of the treatment of Lieutenant Robert Lawrence following his wounding during the Falklands war was *(a)* accurate and *(b)* in conformity with standard military procedure; what representations he has received on this matter; what action has been taken as a result; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: At an early stage, the BBC sought assistance in making the drama "Tumbledown" and gave the MOD a copy of the playwright's script and asked for facilities including permission to film within MOD establishments and for equipment, aircraft and helicopters to be made available. The BBC was told, however, that the MOD was unhappy about the script mixing fact with fiction and that it could cause offence to individuals who would consider themselves portrayed and who had no means of defending themselves or their reputations. Since the BBC were adamant the script was a work of drama and were unwilling to consider any rewriting, the MOD declined to offer any assistance with "Tumbledown" and, consequently, made no detailed analysis of how accurately the script reflected events or military procedures. There has been no further contact with the BBC on the subject. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has received two letters from private individuals expressing concern that "Tumbledown" might misrepresent actual events.

Military Land (Rally Sports)

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much gross income was derived in each of the last five years by the use of military controlled land and facilities by all forms of rally sport.

Mr. Freeman: I regret the information requested is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Glasgow Airport

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many military operations and excercises, by month and for each year since 1974 have in any way used Glasgow airport.

Mr. Freeman: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

"British Defence Policy 1988-89"

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what has been the total cost of preparing and printing "British Defence Policy 1988-89"; how many copies have been printed; whether there will be a charge made for copies; and what is the expected readership.

Mr. Freeman: The estimated costs of producing "British Defence Policy 1988-89" were approximately £69,000; 80,000 copies of the booklet have been printed initially, for issues free of charge to Members of Parliament, peers, journalists, foreign defence attaches and advisers, diplomatic posts abroad, officials and members of the armed forces, recruits to the services and members of the public who request it.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Social Fund

15. **Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the first full month's operation of the social fund in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Needham: Information about social fund applications is collected on the basis of calendar months, and I will place details in the Library on a similar basis to that announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services on 6 May.

Unemployment Levels

16. **Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what proposals he has to monitor changes in relative unemployment levels among Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland over the next five years; and what goals and timetables he intends to set for reduction of existing inequalities.

27. **Mr. Parry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the Government will set goals and timetables for the eradication of present inequalities in levels of unemployment among Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland; and what steps are proposed to monitor changes in relative levels.

Mr. Viggers: The Government's plans for evaluating the impact of our fair employment policies are set out in the White Paper on fair employment which was published yesterday. It would be inappropriate to set targets for unemployment levels.

Michael Tighe

18. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has received about the validity of the legal authority under which a bug was placed in the hay shed where Michael Tighe was killed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tom King: I have answered three parliamentary questions on this subject from the hon. Member.

West Belfast (Job Creation)

19. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he intends to announce further proposals for job creation in west Belfast; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: As my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland told the House on 28 April, the Government are considering what additional steps, in which the private sector must have a major role, could be taken to strengthen economic activity in west Belfast. However, the biggest single boost to job creation would come from a renunciation of violence.

Jobcentres

20. **Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what contribution is being made by jobcentres in Northern Ireland to the provision of opportunities for equal and fair employment.

Mr. Viggers: Job markets provide employment services to all persons regardless of sex, or religion. The "Guide to Effective Practice" issued by the Department of Economic Development last year encouraged employers to use job markets to fill job vacancies. Special help is given to disabled persons through the Department's disablement resettlement officer service.

Explosives and Arms Caches

21. **Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the number of explosive and arms caches discovered since 1 January.

Mr. Tom King: The determined efforts of the security forces throughout the island of Ireland have led to the recovery of a substantial amount of arms, ammunition and explosives. Since 1 January this year there have been over 100 caches of various sizes discovered in Northern Ireland. The most significant of these were the discovery of 91 assorted weapons, 150 hand grenades and 11,500 rounds of ammunition at Portadown on 8 January; 27 weapons, 20 hand grenades, two rocket launchers and 11,000 rounds of ammunition at Lisburn on 3 February; and 53 weapons, 126 hand grenades, one rocket launcher and 40,500 rounds of ammunition in north Belfast the following day.

Overall, a total of 296 weapons, just over 70,000 rounds of ammunition and approximately 4,100 lb of explosives have been recovered in Northern Ireland. Some 200 weapons, about 139,000 rounds of ammunition and 600 lb of commercial explosives have also been recovered by the Garda Siochana.

Security

22. **Mr. William Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he remains satisfied with the implementation of security in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

40. **Sir John Biggs-Davison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement about the security of the Province.

Mr. Tom King: I refer the hon. Gentleman and my hon. Friend to the answer I gave earlier today to the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux).

42. **Rev. William McCrea:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on security in Northern Ireland, with special reference to Mid-Ulster.

Mr. Tom King: Since the beginning of this year, two people have been killed in Mid-Ulster as a result of terrorist activity. Both were members of the security forces; Private Gibson a part-time member of UDR and Gunner Morgan from 19th Field Regiment, Royal Artillery, who were murdered by the Provisional IRA in separate incidents on 26 April.

School Meals

23. **Mr. Meale:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information he has on the number of children taking school meals; and if he will make a statement.

Dr. Mawhinney: At the annual census on a day in October 1987, 165,387 pupils were taking school meals.

Benefits

24. **Mr. McGrady:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland who were in receipt of social security benefit at 31 March are now *(a)* no longer in receipt of benefit and *(b)* in receipt of benefit at a reduced rate; and what is the range, in money terms, of such loss of benefit suffered by the above categories.

Mr. Needham: The information is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Anglo-Irish Agreement

25. **Mr. McCusker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the achievements of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

Mr. Tom King: The agreement has offered reassurance to members of both traditions that their rights and identities will be respected; it has opened the way to intensified cross-border co-operation on a wide range of matters, and in particular in the security field offers the opportunity for fundamentally improved links between the security forces; and it has permitted Anglo-Irish relations to be conducted on a closer and more informal basis and provides a more immediate forum for the discussion of problems that arise either between north and south or between the two traditions.

Intergovernmental Conference

26. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what reforms in the administration of justice were discussed at the recent meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tom King: I refer the hon. Member to the statement issued after the last meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference on 4 May. The Government attach great importance to ensuring that where there are genuine concerns about justice issues, everything possible is done to tackle those issues so as further to enhance the confidence of the whole community in Northern Ireland in the administration of justice.

Schoolchildren (Integration)

28. **Mr. Favell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a further statement on progress towards the greater integration of schoolchildren of different denominations.

34. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a further statement on the progress towards integrated schools in Northern Ireland.

Dr. Mawhinney: The Government are encouraged by the growing evidence of the willingness of parents to have their children educated in the integrated schools. The Government's proposals to facilitate the creation of grant-maintained integrated schools will offer a further opportunity for the expression of parental wishes.

Benefit System

29. **Ms. Mowlam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent discussions he has with pensioners' organisations concerning the changes in the social security benefit system; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: None.

Political Parties (Consultations)

30. **Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he last consulted the leaders of the Northern Ireland political parties represented at Westminster.

Mr. Tom King: I regularly consult the leaders of the constitutional political parties in Northern Ireland on legislative and other proposals. I last discussed prospects for political progress with the hon. Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume) and party colleagues on 26 April, and with the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux) and the hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley) on 11 May. I expect to meet the Unionist leaders again today.

Intergovernmental Conference

31. **Mr. Alton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on matters discussed at the last meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference.

Mr. Tom King: I refer the hon. Gentleman to a reply I gave earlier to a question from the hon. Member for Falkirk, West (Mr. Canavan).

Health and Social Services

32. **Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement about his plans for health and social services in the Province for the next year; and whether he has yet met the chairman of the four area boards.

Mr. Needham: My long-term strategy for the health and personal social services remains as set out in the regional strategy which I published in August 1987.

I met the chairman of the Western health and social services board on 16 May in the course of the 1988 accountability reviews and I have made arrangements to meet the other chairmen soon. One of my aims will be to consider and agree with them on detailed plans for 1988-89.

Harland and Wolff

33. **Mr. Nicholas Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he last met representatives of Harland and Wolff; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Viggers: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Heywood and Middleton (Mr. Callaghan).

Rating Reform

35. **Mr. Clifford Forsythe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had regarding the possible introduction of a community charge to replace the existing Northern Ireland rating system.

Dr. Mawhinney: I have had no discussions on this matter.

Irish Republican Army

36. **Mr. John M. Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will seek to procure from right hon. and hon. Members representing Northern Ireland who attend this House, and from Protestant and Catholic leaders, a common declaration against the Irish Republican Army.

Mr. Tom King: I trust that all right hon. and hon. Members who represent the constitutional political parties

in Northern Ireland, as well as the leaders of the Churches in the Province, will continue to make clear their condemnation and detestation, which the Government fully share, of all acts of terrorism in Northern Ireland.

Fair Employment (Code)

37. **Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he will take steps to ensure that the principles upon which the new code of conduct on fair employment will be based will be included in the proposed legislation in this area.

Mr. Viggers: The White Paper on fair employment indicates that the future code of practice will be a comprehensive guide to the ways in which employers can discharge their responsibilities under the proposed legislation. As such, the code will reflect the principles of that legislation.

Gibraltar Shootings (BBC Programme)

38. **Mr. Corbett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with the British Broadcasting Corporation prior to the broadcast of the Spotlight programme on the Gibraltar shootings.

Mr. Tom King: None.

Police (Discussions)

39. **Mr. Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he last met the Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the Commissioner of the Garda Siochana; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Tom King: I last met the Chief Constable and the Garda Commissioner at the meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference on 4 May. As the statement which was issued after the meeting made clear, we discussed a number of matters relating to security co-operation including joint action against racketeering and smuggling.

RUC (Recruitment)

41. **Rev. Ian Paisley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the implications for security in Northern Ireland of recruitment to the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

Mr. Tom King: The Royal Ulster Constabulary has no difficulty in attracting the necessary number of high calibre recruits required to maintain the level of manpower in the force at its full establishment. Last year 4,872 applications were received for the regular force, a substantial increase on previous years, with 246 officers appointed including 17 graduates. 3,909 applications were received for the full-time reserve with 403 appointed. The increased establishment of 250 officers, announced on 6 May 1987, was reached by 31 January 1988.

Republic of Ireland (Ministers)

7. **Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he will next have meetings with Ministers of the Republic of Ireland; and what subjects he will discuss.

Mr. Tom King: I hope to meet Irish Ministers shortly, at a meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference. The final agenda is not yet fixed but security co-operation will certainly be one of the subjects and as announced after the last meeting, the problems of west Belfast and other disadvantaged areas will be discussed together with a number of other matters.

The joint statement issued after the last meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference on 4 May sets out the matters discussed. A copy has been placed in the Library.

West Belfast (Job Creation)

14. **Mr. Jim Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he intends to announce further proposals for job creation in west Belfast and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: As my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Northern Ireland told the House on 28 April the Government are considering what additional steps, in which the private sector must have a major role, could be taken to strengthen economic activity in west Belfast. However, the biggest single boost to job creation would come from a renunciation of violence.

Terrorism Cases (Appeals)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cases concerning scheduled offences were referred to the Northern Ireland Court of Appeal in 1986 and 1987; and in how many of these referred cases the original conviction was *(a)* quashed and *(b)* upheld.

Mr. Stanley: Outcome of appeals disposed of in the Court of Appeal (Criminal Appeals) following conviction for scheduled offences.

	1986	*1987*
Appeal abandoned	30	26
Appeal dismissed	58	92
Conviction quashed	70	2
Sentence varied	5	25
Total number disposed of	163	145

Irish Language

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many times the role of Irish in the curriculum was discussed at the curriculum conferences of the inspectorate of education since 1968; and if he will make a statement.

Dr. Mawhinney: The role of individual subjects is not normally discussed at the full conference of the Inspectorate. However, in recent years the inspectorate's panel for languages other than English has discussed various aspects relating to the teaching of Irish including the initial and in-service training of teachers of Irish, the development of resource materials for teachers and pupils in Irish language classes, the assessment of Irish through the graded objectives approach and the introduction of GCSE Irish.

West Belfast

Mr. Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he last met community groups in west Belfast to discuss the economic and social problems of the area; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ilsley: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he last met community groups in west Belfast to discuss its economic and social problems; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: Ministers and officials frequently meet Community and other groups to discuss how to improve economic, social and physical conditions. I believe that further measures taken must include a role for the voluntary and private sectors.

Crime Statistics

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were convicted in 1987, either on their own admission of guilt or following a plea of not guilty, on the basis of evidence on behalf of the Crown given by alleged accomplices in cases concerning scheduled offences in Northern Ireland; how many suspects arrested on the basis of such evidence have been released as a result of the retraction of evidence given by accomplices; how many people are presently awaiting trial as a result of evidence obtained from alleged accomplices; and how many people have been found not guilty, or not guilty on appeal, on the basis of such evidence.

Mr. Stanley: In 1987, none.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many persons were remanded in custody before trial for scheduled and non-scheduled offences and both together in the second half of 1987.

Mr. Stanley: A total of 939 persons were remanded in custody in the scond half of 1987, 542 of whom were charged with scheduled offences and 397 with non-scheduled offences.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of prisoners on custodial remand for scheduled and non-scheduled offences, respectively, were *(a)* given a non-custodial sentence, *(b)* given a custodial sentence and *(c)* found not guilty or not proceeded against in 1987.

Mr. Stanley: Following is the information:

Disposal	*Scheduled offences* per cent.	*Non-scheduled offences* per cent.
Non-custodial sentence	12·9	17·4
Custodial sentence	74·6	64·2
Found not guilty or not proceeded against	12·5	18·4

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the average number of days that prisoners spent on custodial remand for scheduled and non-scheduled offences and both together in 1987.

Mr. Stanley: For persons who were tried in 1987 and who were in custody at the time of their trial, the average time spent on custodial remand was 178 days for persons charged with scheduled offences and 46 days for persons charged with non-scheduled offences.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many applications for bail by those held on remand for scheduled and non-scheduled offences and both together were refused bail in 1987.

Mr. Stanley: A total of 576 bail applications were refused in 1987 in respect of persons charged with scheduled offences and 228 in respect of persons charged with non-scheduled offences. The latter includes a corrected figure of 111 refusals in the first six months of the year rather than 110 as stated in my reply to the hon. Member on 18 December 1987, at column 800.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the average number of days spent on remand for both scheduled and non-scheduled offences together, in the second half of 1987; what was the total number of persons remanded in custody before trial for both scheduled and non-scheduled offences together in the second half of 1987; and what was the number of bail applications refused for *(a)* scheduled offences, *(b)* non-sheduled offences and *(c)* both together in the second half of 1987.

Mr. Stanley: In the second half of 1987, 939 persons were remanded in custody, 341 bail applications were refused in respect of persons charged with scheduled offences and 117 in respect of persons charged with non-scheduled offences. The average length of time spent on custodial remand for persons tried in the second half of 1987 and who were in custody at the date of the trial was 108 days.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many persons were detained under the Emergency Provisions (Northern Ireland) Acts 1973 and 1978 in the first six months of 1987 and in the second half of 1987; and how many of these persons were subsequently charged with *(a)* scheduled offences and *(b)* non-scheduled offences.

Mr. Stanley: In the first half of 1987, 48 persons were arrested under section 14 of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978, and 378 under section 11. The power of arrest under section 11 was repealed from 15 June 1987. Nobody was arrested under section 13. Fourty-four of those arrested were subsequently charged with scheduled offences and two with non-scheduled offences.

In the second half of 1987, nine persons were arrested under section 13 of the Act and 47 under Section 14. I shall write to the hon. Member with the numbers subsequently charged.

Prisoners (Statistics)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the average period of custodial remand for female custodial remand prisoners in Northern Ireland for the years 1986 and 1987.

Mr. Stanley: The information is as follows.

The average length of time spent on custodial remand by female prisoners who were in custody at the time of their trial was 129 days for those tried in 1986, and 43 days for those tried in 1987.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many prisoners were remanded in custody prior to trial for scheduled and non-scheduled offences, respectively, in 1987.

Mr. Stanley: A total of 1,813 persons were remanded in custody in 1987, 1,043 of whom were charged with scheduled offences and 770 with non-scheduled offences.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will give details of the number of prisoners in Northern Ireland's prisons as at 31 December 1987, detailing the numbers by sex, in prison and in young offenders centres separately.

Mr. Stanley: On 31 December 1987 there were 1,871 inmates in Northern Ireland prison establishments of whom 1,844 were males and 27 were females; 1,673 were in prisons and 198 in young offenders centres.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the size of the present prison population in Northern Ireland, divided into terrorist type offenders and other offenders, categorised by age and by sex in the following groups *(a)* under 18 years of age, *(b)* 18 to 25 years, *(c)* 25 to 30 years, *(d)* 30 to 40 years, *(e)* 40 to 50 years, *(f)* 50 to 60 years and *(g)* over 60 years; and if he will give a breakdown of the length of sentence being served by each age group under the following headings: *(i)* up to three months, *(ii)* over three months and up to six months, *(iii)* over six months and under 12 months, *(iv)* over 12 months and under 18 months, *(v)* over 18 months and up to four years, *(vi)* over four years and up to eight years, *(vii)* over eight years and *(viii)* life, together with a breakdown, divided into terrorist-type offenders and other offenders under the same sentence headings, of the numbers as a percentage of the total prison population.

Mr. Stanley: On 1 April 1988 (the latest date for which figures in such detail are available) there were 1,753 sentenced inmates in Northern Ireland prison establishments. This includes those detained in the young offenders centres. The requested breakdowns of the population are set out in the tables below.

Breakdown by sex, age and length of sentence

MALES

Sentence Length	*Offence Type*	*Up to 18*	*18 up to 25*	*25 up to 30*	*30 up to 40*	*40 up to 50*	*50 up to 60*	*Over 60*
Up to three months	Scheduled	1	8	3	1	1	1	0
	Non-scheduled	0	29	12	16	6	3	0
Three up to six months	Scheduled	3	4	3	0	1	0	0
	Non-scheduled	14	43	17	5	4	1	1
Six up to 12 months	Scheduled	4	20	7	2	2	0	0
	Non-scheduled	23	62	22	18	1	1	2
12 up to 18 months	Scheduled	1	15	6	1	1	0	0
	Non-scheduled	2	26	12	4	2	1	0
18 months up to four years	Scheduled	6	106	48	21	7	0	0
	Non-scheduled	4	73	32	39	14	6	1
Four up to eight years	Scheduled	0	76	56	25	4	1	1
	Non-scheduled	1	22	17	13	14	2	0
More than eight years	Scheduled	0	69	107	85	9	0	0
	Non-scheduled	0	5	6	4	1	3	0
Life[1]	Scheduled	2	18	121	251	39	5	1
	Non-scheduled	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Total		61	576	469	485	107	24	6

[1] Including those detained at the pleasure of the Secretary of State.
Sentence Length: as imposed by Court.

Sentence Length	*Offence Type*	*Up to 18*	*18 up to 25*	*25 up to 30*	*30 up to 40*	*40 up to 50*	*50 up to 60*	*Over 60*
Up to three months	Scheduled	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Non-scheduled	0	1	2	1	0	0	0
Three up to six months	Scheduled	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
	Non-scheduled	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Six up to 12 months	Scheduled	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Non-scheduled	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
12 up to 18 months	Scheduled	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Non-scheduled	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
18 months up to four years	Scheduled	0	2	2	0	0	0	0
	Non-scheduled	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Four up to eight years	Scheduled	0	2	1	0	0	0	0
	Non-scheduled	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
More than eight years	Scheduled	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
	Non-scheduled	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Life[1]	Scheduled	0	1	3	0	2	0	0
	Non-scheduled	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total		1	8	9	3	3	1	0

[1] Including those detained at the pleasure of the Secretary of State.
Sentence Length: as imposed by Court.

Scheduled and non-scheduled offenders, by sentence length, as a percentage of the total sentenced prison population

Sentence length	*Scheduled offences Per cent.*	*Non-scheduled offences Per cent.*
Less than three months	0·9	4·0
Three up to six months	0·7	4·9
Six up to 12 months	2·0	7·5
12 up to 18 months	1·4	2·7
18 months up to four years	11·0	9·6
Four up to eight years	9·5	3·9
Over eight years	15·5	1·1
Life (including SOSP)	25·3	0·1
Total	66·2	33·8

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many prisoners charged with scheduled offences in the latest calendar year were remanded in custody prior to trial for periods between *(a)* nil to three months, *(b)* three to six months, *(c)* six to nine months, *(d)* nine to 12 months, *(e)* 12 to 18 months and *(f)* over 18 months, for scheduled and non-scheduled offences, respectively.

Mr. Stanley: The length of time spent on custodial remand for persons tried during 1987 and who were in custody at the time of their trial and charged with scheduled and non-scheduled offences respectively was as follows:

Time in Custody	*Scheduled offences*	*Non-scheduled offences*
Less than three months	249	397
Three months up to six months	71	47
Six months up to nine months	64	20
Nine months up to 12 months	47	4
12 months up to 18 months	53	5
Over 18 months	20	4
Total	504	477

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the average length of custodial sentence of female prisoners in Northern Ireland in 1986 and 1987.

Mr. Stanley: The information is as follows: The average determinate sentence imposed on female prisoners in 1986 was 12.8 months, and in 1987 10 months. Four women prisoners were sentenced to life imprisonment in 1986, none in 1987.

Plastic Bullets

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many formal complaints have been made about incidents of police use of plastic baton rounds in 1987; in how many cases the complaint has been upheld; and in how many cases disciplinary action has been taken against the officers involved.

Mr. Stanley: During 1987, seven formal complaints were made concerning the use of plastic baton rounds by the Royal Ulster Constabulary. Two were later withdrawn. Police reports on four others were sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions who directed no prosecution on each. The question of disciplinary action is now being considered by the deputy Chief Constable, and in due course the papers will be referred to the Independent Commission for Police Complaints. The remaining complaint is still under investigation.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many plastic bullets were fired in Northern Ireland in 1987 and in what circumstances: in what location the bullets were fired; and how many persons were injured as a result of the use of plastic bullets.

Mr. Stanley: During 1987, 2,575 plastic baton rounds were fired in Northern Ireland; 40 people were allegedly injured in the period. I am writing to the hon. Member with the information he has requested about the circumstances and places in which the baton rounds were fired. A copy of my letter will be placed in the Library.

Security (Fatalities)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many fatal casualties there were in 1987 arising from incidents where security forces in Northern Ireland opened fire on vehicles taken without their owners' consent.

Mr. Stanley: There was one such incident in 1987. On 8 May, eight terrorists attacked the RUC station at Loughgall using vehicles which had been hijacked earlier. All the terrorists were killed. An innocent passer-by was also killed during this attack.

Royal Ulster Constabulary

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will give details of the manpower strength of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, and its Reserve, as between full-time, part-time, male and female, operatives as at 31 December 1987.

Mr. Stanley: The information is as follows:

Strength of RUC and RUC reserve as at 31 December 1987

	Male	*Female*	*Total*
RUC	7,591	645	8,236
RUC reserve (full-time)	2,983	4	2,987
RUC reserve (part-time)	1,336	321	1,657

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will detail how many attacks on Royal Ulster Constabulary personnel took place in 1987, showing whether the attack was on *(a)* a foot patrol and *(b)* a mobile patrol and the total attacked while on duty each month together with details of the type of attack, namely (i) physical assault, (ii) stone throwing, (iii) petrol bomb, (iv) explosion and (v) shooting, and the number of persons made amenable.

Mr. Stanley: Information is not readily available in the form requested and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. However, in 1987 there were over 950 incidents in which the police were attacked either on or off duty. Of these, 105 incidents involved the use of explosives and 92 the use of firearms.

Firearms

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will detail the number of arms found in 1987 under the headings of *(a)* machine guns, *(b)* rifles, *(c)* shotguns, *(d)* pistols/revolvers and *(e)* others.

Mr. Stanley: The information is as follows:

	Number
Machine Guns	23
Rifles	223
Shotguns	76
Pistols/Revolvers	152
Others	108

Note:

"Others" include—Antique weapons, anti-tank weapons, blank firing pistols, replica pistols, replical revolvers, replica sub-machine guns, starting pistols and starting revolvers.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will show in a table how many legally held firearms were stolen in Northern Ireland during 1987 from (i) Royal Ulster Constabulary/Royal Ulster Constabulary Reserve and Special Constabulary, (ii) Ulster Defence Regiment, (iii) British Army and (iv) civilians; and if he will give a breakdown of weapons stolen as in (i) bullet firing, (ii) shotguns and (iii) air weapons and miscellaneous, to include blank firing weapons, muzzle loading weapons and antique weapons.

Mr. Stanley: The information is as follows:

	Bullet Firing	*Shotgun*	*Air weapons/ miscellaneous*[2]
Royal Ulster Constabulary and Royal Ulster Constabulary Reserve[1]	10	—	—
Ulster Defence Regiment	178	—	4
Regular Army	—	—	—
Civilians	35	91	14

[1] Ulster Special Constabulary were disbanded in 1970.
[2] Also included in this category are air rifles, humane killers and flare pistols.

Security Forces (Offences)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many members of the security forces convicted of offences in Northern Ireland and sentenced to custodial sentences have been allowed to return to Great Britain to serve their sentences for humanitarian reasons in 1987; and how many members of the security forces secured early release from their sentences in 1987.

Mr. Stanley: There were no transfers of sentenced members of the security forces to Great Britain during 1987, and in that year no such person was released in Northern Ireland except under normal release procedures.

Fair Employment

Mr. Snape: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the proposed legislation on equality of opportunity in employment in Northern Ireland will include the principles upon which a revised code of conduct on fair employment will be based.

Mr. Viggers: The White Paper on fair employment indicates that the future code of practice will be a comprehensive guide to the ways in which employers can discharge their responsibilities under the proposed legislation. As such the code will reflect the principles of that legislation.

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 27 May 1988

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Cash Limits

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will give details of any revised cash limits for his Department's Votes.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: Subject to parliamentary approval to the necessary supplementary estimate, cash limits for the following Votes will be revised as follows:

Vote	*Current cash limit* £	*Increase-decrease* £	*Revised cash limit* £
Class XII Vote 1	463,655,000	16,366,000	480,021,000
Class XII Vote 3	1,843,563,000(1)	−53,000	1,843,510,000

Of these changes, £1,900,000 will be charged to the reserve and £14,436,000 is contained within the planned provision for programmes. There will therefore be no increase in the planned total of expenditure.

Additional provision is sought for Class XIII, Vote 1 as follows:

Fifty three thousand pounds to enable the Cranfield institute of technology to participate in the programme for manufacturing systems engineering courses. This increase to be offset by a matching reduction in provision on Class XIII, Vote 3.

Eleven million, four hundred and thirteen thousand pounds for costs associated with the establishment, subject to the passage of the Education Reform Bill, of the National Curriculum Council; the School Examination and Assessment Council; the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council and the Education Assets Board.

Welsh Language

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list those of his Department's forms, leaflets and pamphlets in relation to university education in Wales which were issued in bilingual or Welsh language format.

Mr. Jackson: Most publications concerning university education in Wales are issued by other agencies: the Department does not use the Welsh language in its publications.

Lecturers

Mr. Summerson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what steps he will take to reorganise the pay structure of lecturers in further education so that they receive promotion through merit rather than by effluxion of time.

Mrs. Rumbold: The Department has only observer status on the National Joint Council (Further Education). The grade of a lecturer is currently determined largely by the level of teaching in which he or she is engaged, and whether he or she has management responsibilities. The basic lecturer grade will from July have a salary maximum of £15,369—£1,506 more than a school teacher on the main professional grade who does not hold an incentive allowance. Progression to the next grade is automatic only for lecturers engaged for 50 per cent. of their time essentially on courses above A-level standard, and it is possible for progression to be refused on the grounds that a lecturer is inefficient. Progression to the remaining grades is on merit. Further education lecturers are thus not generally guaranteed promotion within the existing pay structure on the basis of length of service alone. The Government will be looking to the further education sector in the years ahead to refine this salary structure so as to provide further incentives for good cost-effective teaching.

A-levels (Bolton)

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many pupils in Bolton's secondary schools took A-level examinations during 1986 and 1987; and how many are scheduled to sit the examination in the current year.

Mrs. Rumbold: In 1985-86, 710 school leavers from maintained schools in Bolton attempted A-levels and 670 achieved one or more A-level passes. Information for 1987 and 1988 is unavailable.

Pupils (Equal Opportunities)

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will give guidance to local education authorities about the implications of the recent decision in the courts with respect to equal opportunities between male and female pupils.

Mr. Dunn: I assume the hon. Member is referring to the recent decision by the Court of Appeal to uphold the earlier High Court ruling that Birmingham city council was guilty of unlawful sex discrimination in providing fewer selective places for girls than for boys in the city's maintained grammar schools. I understand that the council now intends to appeal against the judgment to the House of Lords. My right hon. Friend wishes to await the outcome of that appeal before considering whether it would be appropriate to offer any guidance to local education authorities.

Dementia

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the current level of funding by his Department for research into problems associated with dementia in the elderly.

Mr. Jackson: The Medical Research Council, which receives a grant in aid from this Department, is the main agency through which Government fund medical research in the United Kingdom. In 1986-87, the last financial year for which figures are available, the council spent £435,000 on projects directly related to dementias and a further £2·4 million on research that could increase our understanding of dementias. Some support for research on dementia is also provided through UGC block grants to universities and medical schools.

Aging

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many research students are funded by the Medical Research Council; and what proportion of the total are engaged in research into aging.

Mr. Jackson: I understand that the Medical Research Council is currently supporting 605 research students. The council does not hold any information on the proportion of these students engaged on research into aging.

TRANSPORT

Planning Inquiries (Reports)

Mr. Tom Arnold: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will take steps to introduce in England and Wales a facility for the proposal of corrections of facts in drafts of inspectors' reports at planning inquiries, similar to that which already exists in Scotland.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We have no plans to make such a change.

Air Routes

Mr. Snape: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if, when he next meets the chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority, he will discuss the criteria to be used at the route licence hearings involving the former British Caledonian routes from Gatwick to Nice, Oslo, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Manchester.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: In view of his appellate role, it would be improper for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to discuss individual cases with the chairman. The authority will consider these applications on the evidence and arguments presented, in the light of its duties and its current statement of air transport licensing policies.

Mr. Snape: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the implications of the decision by the Civil Aviation Authority not to award the Gatwick-Brussels route formerly operated by British Caledonian Airways to British Airways for Her Majesty's Government's policy on competition and consumer choice in aviation.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State does not comment on the implications of specific licensing decisions which may be subject to appeal to him.

Road Schemes (Kent)

Mr. Speed: To ask the Secretay of State for Transport if he will list his Department's proposed road improvement or new road schemes costing £100,000 or more which are planned to start in Kent within the next five years.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: "Policy for Roads in England: 1987" (Cm125) lists the following national trunk road programme schemes in Kent:

(a) Planned start of construction to March 1989.

M20 Maidstone-Ashford.
A282 Dartford-Thurrock Crossing and Approach Roads.

(b) Planned start of construction April 1989 to March 1991

A20 Folkestone-Dover Stage 1 (Folkestone-Court Wood)
A249 A2 Junction-M2 Junction Dualling
A249 Iwade Bypass

(c) Planned start of construction from April 1991 onwards

M2 Widening between Junctions 1-3
M20 Widening between Junctions 5-8 (Maidstone Bypass)
A20 Folkestone-Dover Stage 2 (Court Wood-Dover)
A21 Kipping's Cross-Lamberhurst Improvement
A21 Lamberhurst Bypass
A21 Tonbridge Bypass-Pembury Bypass Improvement
A259 New Romney Bypass
A259 St. Mary's Bay and Dymchurch Bypass
A261 M20-A259 Hythe Improvement

In addition work to provide hard shoulders on the A2 from the London boundary to the M2, phased over the period 1985-1991, is continuing. Construction of the Maidstone-Ashford section of the M20 should start later this year. The start dates for the remaining schemes are dependent upon the completion of the statutory procedures.

The Department is also considering the following trunk road schemes in Kent, costing £100,000 or more, within its south-east regional programme:—

M20 Traffic lights at the Junction 7 exit.
M25 Crossovers between Junction 5 and the Surrey boundary.
A2 Lighting to the west of the Medway towns.
A2 Central reserve safety fencing between the M2 and Harbledon; and between Harbledon and Bridge.
A21 Central reserve safety fencing between the A225 and A2014.
A249 Brielle Way Improvement.
A259 Improvement to the Junction with the A2070 at Brenzett.
A259 Taylors Lane—Coast Drive Improvement.
A259 Tartane Lane—Tudor Avenue Improvement.
A259 Park Farm/Pavilion Road Junction Improvements.
A259 Shorncliffe Road, Castle Road and Cheriton Avenue Junction Improvements.

Passenger Ferries

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Stretford on 23 May, if he plans to alter his definition of and acceptable evacuation time for a passenger ferry; if the research programme to which he refers is concerned with evacuation time; and when he expects it to report.

Mr. David Mitchell: The maximum evacuation time of 30 minutes, which is the time within which the muster and evacuation arrangements (including the launching and deployment of lifeboats and other life-saving appliances) must enable the ship to be evacuated, came into force on 1 July 1986 and there are no plans to alter it. The research programme referred to in my answer on 23 May is concerned with facilitating movement in, and escape from, a ship at high angles of heel and not with evacuation time. I expect to receive a report on this work by spring 1989.

North Sea Surveyor (Collision)

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he has taken to hold an inquiry into the collision on 7 May between the Danish-registered Pandalus and the North Sea Surveyor which resulted in the death of two fishermen; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: The collision involved two foreign vessels—the Danish fishing vessel Pandalus and the Norwegian survey ship North Sea Surveyor. The Danish and Norwegian authorities are conducting their own

inquiries and surveyors from my Department are co-operating with them. The question of a fatal accident inquiry is a matter for the procurator fiscal.

Fishing Vessels (Collisions)

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many recorded collisions there have been between fishing vessels and other ships in the North sea in each of the past five years.

Mr. David Mitchell: The following table shows the numbers of collisions in the Department's records, between fishing vessels and other ships in the North sea, since 1983.

	Number
1983	1
1984	5
1985	4
1986	1
1987	2

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many meetings have been held between his officials and representatives of the Scottish fishing industry in connection with accidents or near misses of fishing boats and other seafaring vessels in each of the last five years; and if he will list such incidents in the *Official Report*.

Mr. David Mitchell: There has been one formal meeting between my officials and representatives of the Scottish fishing industry within the last five years devoted specifically to accidents or near misses of fishing boats and other seafaring vessels. And there have been a number of meetings at which accidents involving fishing vessels have been among the topics for discussion, notably those of the fishing industry safety group on which the Scottish industry is represented. This group meets regularly, and has held 11 meetings since April 1983.

Mobility Advice and Vehicle Information Service

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many disabled people have visited the mobility advice and vehicle information service since its foundation.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Since January 1986, 493 disabled people have attended for assessments and advice on driving and car adaptations; and a further 7,702 have been given advice by telephone or letter. In addition several hundred disabled people and professionals in the disability field have visited the centre as individuals or in groups.

Tachographs (Repairs)

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures he proposes to introduce regarding the approval of tachograph repairers.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We have today issued a consultation paper setting out in detail proposals for a new scheme for approving tachograph repairers, following preliminary consultation last year. Copies are available in the Library.

PRIME MINISTER

National Health Service

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Prime Minister if she will make a statement on co-ordination between the Department of Health and Social Security and the Scottish Office of Government policy towards the future development of the National Health Service, with particular reference to the inquiry currently in progress and its consideration of matters of particular application to Scotland; and what representations she has received on this subject.

The Prime Minister: The circumstances of the Health Service in Scotland will be taken fully into account in our review of the National Health Service. The Scottish Office and the Department of Health and Social Security are closely in touch on these matters.

Year 2000 (Celebration Plans)

Mr. Butler: To ask the Prime Minister if she will report on progress of the Government's plans to celebrate the year 2000.

The Prime Minister: I have nothing to add to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon (Mr. Amess) on 23 February 1988 at column *126*.

Gibraltar (Shootings)

Mr. Soley: To ask the Prime Minister whether any Government Department in the United Kingdom or its representatives abroad were consulted about the decision to delay the inquest on the three Irish Republican Army members shot in Gibraltar; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: The decision to delay the inquest was the coroner's alone, although it was known for some time before his announcement that he was considering this.

Mr. Soley: To ask the Prime Minister why the decision to delay the inquest on the three Irish Republican Army members shot in Gibraltar was announced from No. 10 Downing street in advance of any formal announcement by the coroner in Gibraltar; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: A decision by the coroner to postpone the inquest had been widely forecast in the press. My press office understood that it had already been announced, as indeed it was later that same day. The decision to delay the inquest was the coroner's alone.

ENERGY

CEGB (Energy Efficiency)

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will direct the Central Electricity Generating Board to undertake investment in energy efficiency programmes, so as to reduce the need for its growing programme of pressurised water reactor nuclear power stations.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The electricity supply industry already promotes the efficient use of energy through

schemes in the domestic sector such as Economy 7, Budget Warmth, Energy Wise, Medallion and Civic Shield awards; and in the industrial and commercial sectors through Energy Management in Lighting, PEP and BETA awards.

Petroleum Production Licences

Sir Gerard Vaughan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if there is a minimum agreed work obligation linked to all petroleum production licences.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Most licences in practice include a work obligation, but there is no standard programme.

Sir Gerard Vaughan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he varies or amends obligations entered into with companies to whom petroleum production licences have been granted exclusively.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer my right hon. Friend gave him on 5 May 1988 at columns *559-60*, which details the circumstances in which amendments or variations are usually made.

Sir Gerard Vaughan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if *Gazette* notices are required inviting applications for petroleum production licences which have been surrendered.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Surrendered areas which it was proposed to offer for relicensing in a future licensing round would be included in an announcement of the round made by means of parliamentary written statement, press notice and *Gazette* notice. Where the licence has been replaced by another form of licence, there would not be a notice inviting applications for the area.

Sir Gerard Vaughan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy on what basis his Department decides to replace surrendered licences with different types of licences.

Mr. Peter Morrison: When considering applications for replacement of surrendered licences with different types of licences, I expect applicants to meet the requirements of the relevant regulations and to establish that it would be appropriate to award them the licence.

Sir Gerard Vaughan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what mechanisms exist, where the holder of a petroleum production licence seeks to have it extended, for other applicants to be considered for the rights conferred by that licence.

Mr. Peter Morrison: For certain forms of production licence, I have a discretion, set out in the relevant regulations, to extend the term. I would consider all the circumstances of the case before deciding whether to extend the term. If it was decided that the licence should not be extended, then the area in question would normally be made available in a future licensing round.

Sir Gerard Vaughan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) if it is the practice of his Department to notify owners of land affected when an extension is sought for an existing petroleum production licence;

(2) if it is the practice of his Department to notify owners of land affected when the holder of a petroleum production licence seeks to have the licence altered materially.

Mr. Peter Morrison: No. I refer my hon. Friend to the answers given by my right hon. Friend on 5 May 1988 at column *558*. A petroleum licence by itself does not confer on the licence holder any rights over the freeholder's land, and the position would not change if the licence were extended.

Sir Gerard Vaughan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy by what the Petroleum (Production) Regulations 1976 (S.I. 1976 No. 1129) were replaced when superseded; and in what ways the regulations were varied.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The regulations referred to by my hon. Friend were amended by SIs 1978/929 and 1980/721 and then replaced in their entirety so far as the grant of new licences is concerned by the Petroleum (Production) Regulations 1982. In respect of seaward areas, the 1982 regulations have been amended by SIs 1984/397 and 1986/1021. For landward areas, the 1982 regulations were in turn superseded insofar as the grant of new licences was concerned by the Petroleum (Production) (Landward Areas) Regulations 1984, which are still in force. Details of the new system introduced by the 1984 regulations were given in the 1984 report to Parliament by the then Secretary of State for Energy on the development of the oil and gas resources of the United Kingdom, copies of which are available in the Library of the House.

Sir Gerard Vaughan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how his Department notifies freehold owners of land that it is the Department's intention to grant or issue a petroleum production licence in respect of their land.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given of 5 May 1988 by my right hon. Friend at column 558. My hon. Friend wil also wish to note that information about the area which will be covered by new licences is given when my Department publishes a press release following every petroleum licensing round, showing the geographical areas over which I intend to issue the new licences. A notice is also published in the *London Gazette* giving the relevant co-ordinates and/or describing the extent of the areas which will be covered by the licences.

Coal

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he expects the United Kingdom will be self-sufficient in its coal needs in 1992.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Both the demand for coal and the share of that demand supplied by United Kingdom sources will depend upon the United Kingdom industry's ability to compete with other fuels and with imported coal. The Government have every confidence that the British coal industry will take the necessary measures to enable it to become fully competitive.

Equal Opportunities

Mr Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what action he has taken to remedy past inequalities in employment practices in his Department, in compliance with the codes of the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission, respectively.

Mr. Parkinson: The good practice set out in the codes published by the Commission for Racial Equality and the

Equal Opportunities Commission underpin the employment policies that operate within my Department. For example, recruitment advertisements are now placed with selected newspapers from the ethnic minority press as well as local newspapers; opportunities are available for female staff to attend women only development courses; and flexible working arrangements encourage those with domestic responsibilities to continue in paid employment.

Energy Pricing

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will ask the European Commission to investigate unfair competition in energy pricing in member states.

Mr. Parkinson: With the support of all member states of the Community, the Commission has taken an initiative to identify obstacles to a single energy market. They include energy pricing practices.

Pit Closures

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he will make it his policy to support economic development measures for north Nottinghamshire aimed at its recovery from the effects of pit closures.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The Government have established a wide range of measures aimed at providing employment opportunities in areas hit by closure. These include the enterprise initiative of the Department of Trade and Industry, the programmes of the Manpower Services Commission, the activities of British Coal Enterprise Ltd., the advisory and counselling services of the small firms service, and the encouragement of local enterprise agencies.

Coal Mining Subsidence

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will delay the date of publication of his Department's consultative document "Coal Mining Subsidence—Compensation".

Mr. Michael Spicer: The Department of Energy's consultation paper "Coal Mining Subsidence Compensation: Proposals for Legislation" was issued on Friday 29 April, as referred to in column *334* on 29 April.

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he will meet a deputation of local authority representatives from Nottinghamshire to discuss compensation for damage caused by coal mining subsidence.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I welcome the opportunity to learn the views of the local authorities in Nottinghamshire on coal mining subsidence compensation when they respond to the consultation document on the subject issued by my Department on 29 April.

North Sea Oil Production Platforms

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he has given further consideration to the abandonment policy for North sea oil production platforms; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Part I of the Petroleum Act 1987 provides a framework for regulating abandonment and the Government have also played an active part in the development of international guidelines and standards in the International Maritime Organisation. Abandonment of offshore installations on the United Kingdom continental shelf will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking account of all relevant factors including safety of navigation, fishing patterns, the protection of the marine environment, technical complexity and cost.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Cash Limits

Mr. Roger King: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether any change has been agreed in the 1988-89 cash limits for the Overseas Development Administration.

Mr. Chris Patten: Subject to parliamentary approval of the summer supplementary estimate, the cash limit for the overseas aid vote (class II, vote 5) will be increased from £1,221,114,000 to £1,223,114,000. This increase covers the higher level of contribution to the International Monetary Fund enhanced structural adjustment facility announced by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 14 December 1987, at column *371*. The increase will be charged to the reserve and will not therefore add to the planned total of public expenditure.

ENVIRONMENT

Ministerial Duties

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many meetings with United Kingdom Nirex Ltd. the Minister for Sport, the hon. Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan) has attended in the course of his official duties in the last year; and if he will list them.

Mr. Moynihan: I met the chairman of Nirex on 22 October 1987.

Pollution

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what guidelines he follows in assessing the economic availability of the best available technology in relation to point sources discharges into the North sea;

(2) if he will list those toxic substances that are likely to accumulate in living organisms and which should be controlled by emission standards based on the best available technology.

Mr. Moynihan: The principal criterion currently governing the setting of discharge consents is the need to protect the aquatic environment and safeguard legitimate uses of water, normally by reference to particular quality objectives or standards for receiving waters.

However, I announced on 18 November that the Government intend to introduce an additional requirement for industrial processes discharging significant quantities of certain dangerous substances to use the best available technology not entailing excessive cost in order to minimise inputs of those substances. Detailed proposals, including how such a requirement might be applied, and to which substances, will be included in a forthcoming consultation paper.

Water Authorities (Finance)

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the sums of free reserves available currently to each water authority over and above the estimated costs of fulfilling the recommendations of the Select Committee on Environment as stated in its report on river and estuary pollution; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: In the water authorities' accounts, the amounts shown in the balance sheet as "reserves" represent retained profit which has already been deployed to finance investment and do not therefore represent funds which are free to finance investment in later years. Details of the funding of the investment of each water authority are shown in the source and application of funds statement in their accounts which are laid before Parliament annually. My right hon. Friend expects to respond to the Select Committee's report shortly. This will take account of the financial implications of its recommendations.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list for each financial year for each water authority since their inception the amount owed to creditors at the end of each financial year *(a)* in real terms, measured against the retail price index and *(b)* as a cash sum; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: The information is shown in the tables below. The amounts of loan outstanding at the end of each accounting period is based upon water authorities' annual accounts and may also be found in the Water Authorities Association annual publication, "Waterfacts".

Loans outstanding
Water authority loans outstanding time series [Outturn prices]

£ million cash

As at 31 March	*1974*	*1975*	*1976*	*1977*	*1978*	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*
Loans outstanding														
Northumbrian	89	100	134	168	202	239	259	305	353	389	397	407	424	431
North West	234	359	399	450	486	522	566	652	691	730	811	851	920	985
Severn Trent	370	410	459	512	501	545	568	619	675	737	748	787	840	851
Yorkshire	180	196	235	270	285	314	347	381	415	442	469	507	537	553
Anglian	343	383	447	494	516	553	572	610	681	722	792	843	885	916
Thames	367	383	433	472	459	443	409	424	449	432	423	394	315	242
Southern	146	155	159	186	196	216	241	272	284	290	312	321	328	321
Wessex	105	115	127	146	151	157	167	173	180	196	213	226	250	265
South West	74	83	98	111	115	117	120	125	128	130	133	140	143	141
England Total	1,908	2,184	2,491	2,809	2,911	3,106	3,249	3,561	3,856	4,068	4,298	4,476	4,642	4,705

Water authority loans outstanding time series[1] [1987 prices]

memo: Index in use:	102·6	124·3	150·6	175·8	191·8	210·6	252·2	284·0	313·4	327·9	345·1	366·1	381·6	396·9
As at 31st March	*1974*	*1975*	*1976*	*1977*	*1978*	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*
Northumbrian	344	319	353	379	418	450	408	426	447	471	457	441	441	431
North West	905	1,146	1,052	1,016	1,006	984	891	911	875	884	933	923	957	985
Severn Trent	1,431	1,309	1,210	1,156	1,037	1,027	894	865	855	892	860	853	874	851
Yorkshire	696	626	619	610	590	592	546	532	526	535	539	550	559	553
Anglian	1,327	1,223	1,178	1,115	1,068	1,042	900	852	862	874	911	914	920	916
Thames	1,420	1,223	1,141	1,066	950	835	644	593	569	523	486	427	328	242
Southern	565	495	419	420	406	407	379	380	360	351	359	348	341	321
Wessex	406	367	335	330	312	296	263	242	228	237	245	245	260	265
South West	286	265	258	251	238	221	189	175	162	157	153	152	149	141
England total	7,381	6,974	6,565	6,342	6,024	5,854	5,113	4,977	4,883	4,924	4,943	4,853	4,828	4,705

[1] Repriced figures adjusted for inflation.

Notes:
Master time series constant prices.
Repricing to = 396·9 = 1987 prices.
Index in use = RPI.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list for each financial year for each water authority since its inception the capital investment for each both *(a)* in real terms measured against the retail prices index and *(b)* as a cash sum; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: The information requested is shown in the tables. Capital expenditure figures are drawn from water authority annual accounts. Real terms capital investment has been calculated with reference to the public works non-road index. This is an index specifically applied to water industry capital investment and as such is accepted as a more meaningful deflator of capital expenditure than the RPI.

Water authority capital investment time series
(1986-87 Prices DOE services only)

Repriced figures adjusted for inflation

Repricing to: = 114·8 = 1986-87 prices													
Memo: Index in use:	*42·6*	*51·5*	*55·0*	*58·5*	*66·4*	*83·4*	*103·7*	*104·6*	*102·9*	*102·5*	*105·1*	*111·0*	*114·8*
Year	*1974-75*	*1975-76*	*1976-77*	*1977-78*	*1978-79*	*1979-80*	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
Northumbrian	65·5	99·7	123·4	119·7	112·5	84·0	65·4	41·4	42·1	35·8	29·4	40·4	36·7
North West	148·3	129·3	147·4	131·9	116·3	115·9	102·4	97·1	120·8	147·9	160·3	169·3	185·0
Severn Trent	196·0	156·8	148·9	140·5	132·1	104·4	109·2	106·4	155·7	128·5	116·6	124·2	150·0
Yorkshire	96·8	106·1	97·3	95·8	93·7	77·7	84·5	81·0	79·5	86·6	101·8	96·8	123·9

Memo: Index in use:	*42·6*	*51·5*	*55·0*	*58·5*	*66·4*	*83·4*	*103·7*	*104·6*	*102·9*	*102·5*	*105·1*	*111·0*	*114·8*
Year	*1974-75*	*1975-76*	*1976-77*	*1977-78*	*1978-79*	*1979-80*	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
Anglian	185·5	177·3	145·5	110·9	103·2	85·1	88·7	102·8	100·8	126·7	101·6	113·5	128·0
Thames	143·7	157·2	156·8	121·5	105·8	97·2	87·1	87·7	105·6	125·8	111·0	114·7	130·6
Southern	66·9	71·6	72·2	60·4	62·2	63·3	52·2	55·0	55·9	65·3	62·1	65·4	67·0
Wessex	50·1	52·6	46·1	40·2	41·5	34·0	27·4	32·5	35·5	44·8	40·1	51·8	60·6
South West	47·2	39·5	38·0	35·5	28·9	25·5	23·3	23·3	28·3	33·1	42·8	39·6	39·6
England Total (DOE Services only)	999·9	990·0	975·6	856·4	796·2	687·1	640·3	626·9	724·2	794·6	768·6	815·9	921·4

Note: Constant price figures for investment have been derived by using the Public Works Non Roads (PWNR) deflator.

Water authority capital investment time series
(Outturn prices DOE services only)

£ million cash

Year	*1974-75*	*1975-76*	*1976-77*	*1977-78*	*1978-79*	*1979-80*	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
Capital expenditure													
Northumbrian	24·3	44·7	59·1	61·0	65·1	61·0	59·1	37·7	37·7	32·0	26·9	39·1	36·7
North West	55·0	58·0	70·6	67·2	67·3	84·2	92·5	88·5	108·3	132·1	146·7	163·7	185·0
Severn Trent	72·7	70·3	71·3	71·6	76·4	75·8	98·7	97·0	139·6	114·8	106·7	120·1	150·0
Yorkshire	35·9	47·6	46·6	48·8	54·2	56·4	76·4	73·8	71·3	77·4	93·2	93·6	123·9
Anglian	68·8	79·5	69·7	56·5	59·7	61·8	80·2	93·7	90·4	113·2	93·0	109·7	128·0
Thames	53·3	70·5	75·1	61·9	61·2	70·6	78·7	79·9	94·7	112·4	104·3	110·9	130·6
Southern	24·8	32·1	34·6	30·8	36·0	46·0	47·2	50·1	50·1	58·3	56·8	63·2	67·0
Wessex	18·6	23·6	22·1	20·5	24·0	24·7	24·8	29·6	31·8	40·0	36·7	50·1	60·6
South West	17·5	17·7	18·2	18·1	16·7	18·5	21·1	21·2	25·4	29·6	39·2	38·3	39·6
England Total[1]	370·9	444·0	467·3	436·4	460·6	499·0	578·7	571·5	649·3	709·8	703·5	788·7	921·4

[1] DOE services only.

Water Industry (Privatisation)

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what his Department estimates will be the result of privatisation on the debt burdens of the current water authorities; and what effect this will have on the Government's policy towards water authorities being self financing;

(2) what information his Department currently holds on the likely dividends to shareholders resulting from water privatisation;

(3) what his Department estimates will be the gross yield per annum of dividends to shareholders, assuming the whole water industry is privatised simultaneously, exempting those aspects of it which will be the responsibility of the National Rivers Authority;

(4) what his Department estimates will be the effect on overheads and administrative costs of the water industry as a result of *(a)* changes in executive salaries and *(b)* registration and servicing of shareholders; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: It would be premature to speculate about the magnitude of the sums involved in the questions raised by the hon. Member.

Rating Reform

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether the per capita redistribution proceeds of the classified business rate will be calculated only on the basis of those adults registered to pay the community charge in a local authority area; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: Our present intention is that the sums available from non-domestic rates should be distributed by reference to the best estimate of the registrable population making allowance for exempt persons and students, who will pay only 20 per cent. of the community charge. We intend to consult the local authority associations about these proposals.

Mr. Doran: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what will be the percentage increase or decrease in rate payments which will be paid by businesses and proprietors of commercial and industrial premises as a result of the introduction of the uniform business rate, in the following constituencies *(a)* Amber Valley, *(b)* Mid-Worcestershire, *(c)* West Lancashire, *(d)* Staffordshire, Moorlands, *(e)* Hendon, South, *(f)* Darlington and *(g)* Fylde.

Mr. Howard: If a national non-domestic rate had been in operation in 1987-88 at the then average level of 224·1p, general rates in the named constituency areas would have been changed as follows:

	1987-88 Per cent.
Amber Valley	−22
Mid Worcestershire	
Redditch	+11
Wychavon	+14
West Lancashire	− 1
Staffordshire Moorlands	+ 1
Hendon South	+21
Darlington	−17
Fylde	− 1

Liverpool (Visit)

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the Under-Secretary of State's visit to Liverpool.

Mr. Chope: I visited Liverpool on Monday 16 May for a meeting with the Merseyside residuary body. Discussions centred on the RB's progress towards wind up, scheduled for March 1989.

Bathing Water Survey

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, North East (Mrs. Hicks) on 5 May, *Official Report*, columns *571-77*, on what date he will place in the Library a detailed summary of the results of the bathing water survey.

Mr. Moynihan: Within a few weeks.

Barn Owls

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will provide estimates to show the change in numbers of barn owls in England and Wales over the last 20 years.

Mr. Moynihan: The only available figures for England and Wales are a survey in 1932 which showed a breeding population of just over 12,000 pairs and the Hawk Trust's barn owl survey, taken over the period 1982-85, which showed some 3,750 pairs.

Sporting Events (Violence)

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received on the implications for his initiatives to reduce violence at sporting events of the refusal of Torquay United FC to relocate its match against Swansea on 28 May.

Mr. Moynihan: A representative of Swansea City supporters club telephoned my officials on 24 May. We have made inquiries of the Football League and the police and my concerns have been made clear to them. However, it is for the Football League and the police to decide whether there is a case for relocating this match. I have been assured that the police are satisfied that they have made appropriate arrangements to deal with potential problems. They are aware of the possible problems and have prepared a contingency plan to cope with them. The situation will, however, continue to be monitored by the police and their policing arrangements will be reviewed in the light of any further information they receive.

Waste Disposal

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what assessment he has made of how many councils with waste disposal responsibility in England have terms of contract which will be affected by the recent court ruling in the case of Torfaen borough council *v.* ReChem plc; and what representations he has received about the implications of this judgment.

Mr. Moynihan: The judgment made on 16 September 1987 in the case Regina *v.* ReChem International Ltd. concerned the validity of a condition in a licence for waste disposal under part 1 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974. Under the 1974 Act, it is the responsibility of waste disposal authorities to issue such licences, and it is for each authority to satisfy itself that any conditions in the licence are valid and enforceable. Licences do not come before the Secretary of State except on appeal. I do not, therefore, have the information to assess how many licences may be affected by the ReChem case. I have received no representations about the implications of the judgment.

Residential Development

Mr. Speed: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the proportion of planning appeals he has allowed for residential development for schemes of *(a)* 100 houses and under and *(b)* over 100 houses (i) nationally, (ii) in the south-east planning region and (iii) in Kent, over the most recent convenient 12-month period.

Mr. Waldegrave: I will write to my hon. Friend.

BWB Freight Depots (Sale)

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what considerations were taken into account in deciding which bid was successful in the sale of the eight freight depots by British Waterways Board to Leggett Freightways; what conditions of sale were offered by the Leggett Freightways which enhanced the employment conditions of British Waterways Board employees over and above those provided by statute; and why the sale was spread over five accounting years.

Mr. Moynihan: In assessing bids, the British Waterways Board took into account all relevant considerations, including the financial basis of the bid, the nature of the firm's interest and the implications for BWB employees.

The bid from Leggett Freightways, as well as being the most financially advantageous for the board, provided the best prospects for the long-term future of the employees concerned. Their conditions of service on transfer will be unchanged in accordance with the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981. For pensions, which are not covered by the regulations, employees will initially remain in the BWB scheme. Leggett Freightways has undertaken to introduce within six months a scheme of its own which will provide comparable benefits at comparable levels of contribution.

The arrangements for payment of the purchase price over five years compare favourably on the basis of net present value with the terms offered in other bids.

ID Investment Development AG

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment pursuant to the answer of 20 April, *Official Report*, column *493*, regarding the conveyance of Heveningham Hall to ID Investment Development AG, what information he has as to the identity of the main shareholders in that company.

Mr. Moynihan: I will write to my hon. Friend.

Planning

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how many people are employed in planning in his Department;

(2) what is the total annual cost of the planning function at his Department;

(3) how many people are employed in regional planning in his Department;

(4) what is the total annual cost of regional planning in his Department.

Mr. Ridley: I will write to my hon. Friend.

SERPLAN

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how many people are employed at Serplan;.

(2) what is the cost per annum of Serplan.

Mr. Ridley: I will write to my hon. Friend.

Tenants (Milton Keynes)

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will allow a ballot of tenants in Milton Keynes corporation on the transfer of housing management functions back to the corporation.

Mrs. Roe: I will write to the hon. Member.

Racial Equality

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will introduce legislation to enable councils in Great Britain to refuse to contract work to companies and firms which are discovered to have poor records on racial equality in the work force.

Mr. Chope: I will write to the hon. Member.

Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee

Mr. Frank Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the current membership and affiliations of the Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee; and what criteria are used for making appointments to the Committee.

Mr. Moynihan: I will write to the hon. Member.

Cash Limits

Mr. Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has any changes to announce to his Department's cash limits or the running cost limit for 1988-89.

Mr. Ridley: The cash limit for Class X, Vote 5 (Department of the Environment: administration) has been reduced by £0·160 million from £123·597 million to £123·437 million. This results from the transfer of responsibility for payments to the Post Office for issuing game licences from my Department to the Home Office. The departmental running costs limit has also been reduced by £0·160 million from £155·222 million to £155·062 million.

The cash limit for Class X, Vote 6 (rate support grants, England) has been reduced by £400 million from £10,224·200 million to £9,824·200 million. The latest estimate of block grant payable in respect of 1988-89 is £8,938 million, £533 million less than provided in the settlement and hence in the original vote estimate. However, there are indications that this underclaim will reduce later in the year and in the light of this and other information I consider a reduction of £400 million to be appropriate.

The cash limit for Class X, Vote 9 (sale of shares in water services plcs etc.) has been reduced by £60,000 from £2,500,000 to £2,440,000. This is to provide for expenditure to be incurred by the Secretary of State for Wales on advice relating to the privatisation of the Welsh water authority.

London Docklands Development Corporation

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list in the *Official Report* the names of consultants appointed by the London Docklands development corporation in the last financial year, together with the nature of the contract, and indicating those cases where the auditors have found no evidence of formal competition.

Mr. Trippier *[pursuant to his reply, 2 November 1987, column 598.]*: The LDDC let contracts to 140 consultants in the 1986-87 financial year, at a total cost of £10·9 million. The external auditors, Messrs Ernst and Whinney, have not found any cases during their audit which fail to meet the guidelines on competition. The consultants appointed during 1986-87 are identified in a list which has been placed in the Library by the type of expertise they provided.

The LDDC also let contracts to 145 consultants in the financial year 1985-86, at a total cost of £7·9 million. The external auditors, Messrs Robson Rhodes, reported 40 cases where the full documentary evidence of the competitive process that had been carried out was not always available to those ratifying appointments. The LDDC has made it clear, however, that such evidence was always kept on file, and was available for inspection if requested. A list of these contracts has been placed in the Library.

Housing Defects

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if the Government have completed their consultations on the proposed new expenditure limits for grant eligible reinstatement works under the housing defects legislation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave *[pursuant to his answer, 5 May 1988, column 567.]*: The order made on 3 May (1988 No. 820), introducing the new grant-eligible expenditure limits for repairs under the housing defects legislation, contained certain errors. My right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for the Environment and for Wales have therefore made a second order (1988 No. 923) which ensures that the correct limits come into force, as intended, on Tuesday 31 May 1988. My officials are dealing with this in their letter to local authorities, home owners' groups and repairers.

Sporting Events

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many sports events the Minister with responsibility for Sport, the hon. Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan), has attended in the course of his official duties in the last year; and if he will list them.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 10 May 1988]*: Following are the principal events I have attended. This list does not include a wide range of local and school sporting activities also seen on official duties.

	Event
1987	
17 June	Boxing, Albert Hall
18 June	England v Pakistan (cricket, 2nd Test)
1 July	Boxing (world title fight), Albert Hall
3 July	Wimbledon Tennis Championships
4 July	Henley Royal Regatta
5 July	Wimbledon Tennis Championships (Men's Finals)
10 July	Peugeot Talbot Games (athletics), Crystal Palace
12 July	European Dressage Championships, Goodwood
12 July	London Youth Games
17 July	Cricket, Wakefield
23 July	National Schools Regatta, Solent
25 July	Junior International Championships (Women's Bowling), Coventry
26 July	Final stage of the Tour de France, Paris
31 July	ESCA v Presidents XI (cricket), Harrow
1 August	Stoke Mandeville World Wheelchair Games
2 August	Motorcycle Grand Prix, Donnington
3-4 August	Admirals Cup (sailing), Cowes
6 August	5th Cornhill Test (cricket), Oval
8 August	England v Rest of the World (football), Wembley
27 August	World Netball Tournament, Glasgow
28 August	World Rowing Championships, Copenhagen
3-7 September	World Athletics Championships, Rome
9 September	England v West Germany, Dusseldorf
12 September	South Coast Rowing Championships, Isle of Wight
13 September	2nd European Hockey Cup—Picketts Lock
16 September	Opening of 20th World Water Skiing Championships, Thorpe Park
19 September	World Board Sailing Championships, St. Austell, Cornwall
20 September	Chislehurst Fun Run
	Westminster Mile
	Baseball at the Oval
26 September	Rugby Union: Bristol *v.* Gloucester
27 September	Lewisham Lions Modern Pentathlon
	Sunday Times Fun Run—Hyde Park
3 October	Charlton *v.* Arsenal (football)
4 October	Opening of Charlton's Training Ground (football displays)
4 October	England *v.* Turkey (football), European Championships, Wembley
18 October	British Airways Masters—Badminton Tournament, Royal Albert Hall
	Serpentine Regatta—Hyde Park
20 October	World Open Squash Championships, NEC, Birmingham
24 October	Bruno *v.* Bugner Boxing, White Hart Lane
25 October	Brands Hatch, Motorcycle Meeting
26 October	WBC Boxing Tournament, Café Royal
28 October	WBC Boxing Conference, Cumberland Hotel
31 October	Tottenham *v.* Wimbledon
1 November	ILEA Fun Run, Crystal Palace
7 November	Final World Cup One Day Cricket—Calcutta
16 November	London Federation of Boys' Clubs Senior Boxing Championships Final, Grosvenor House Hotel
23 November	Lords & Commons Swimming Gala
24 November	Semi Final of Come Dancing—Blackpool
26 November	Metropolitan Police Five-a-side Youth Football Competition, Wembley
12 December	Cheltenham, Racing
	Nabisco Masters Doubles Tennis, Royal Albert Hall
13 December	BBC TV Sports Review 1987, Television Centre
20 December	Charlton *v.* Chelsea
28 December	Racing at Chepstow
1988	
1 January	Manchester United v Charlton Athletic
16 January	Luton v Derby County
23 January	Charlton v Liverpool
28 January	Benson and Hedges Snooker Quarter Final, Wembley
4 February	Inauguration of Girobank Trampoline League, Elephant and Castle
6 February	England v Wales, Twickenham
12-18 February	Winter Olympics, Calgary, Alberta Canada
20 February	Wales v Scotland, Cardiff
26 February	Penguin Swimathon '88, Queen Mother Sports Centre
27 February	Hartlepool v Crewe Alexandra
28 February	Multiple Sclerosis Society Cricket Match, Hampstead Cricket Club
6 March	Martini Challenge International Fencing Championships 1988, Seymour Leisure Centre, W1
12 March	England v USA, Athletics, RAF Cosford
15 and 17 March	Cheltenham Festival
19 March	International Ladies Hockey, England v Spain, Wembley
20 March	Ladies Hockey 1st XIV East—Ealing
23 March	Regional Disabled Swimming Championship, Ladywell Pool, Lewisham
23 March	England v Holland Football International, Wembley
26 March	Derby County v Arsenal
27 March	Mini Hockey Tournament, Crystal Palace
29 March	Professional Boxing, Wembley Arena
1 April	FC Berlin v Erfurt, East Berlin
2 April	Ice Show, East Berlin
3 April	Ladies Handball International, East Berlin
9 April	Grand National, Aintree
10 April	British Open Teams Gymnastics Centenary Championships, Bognor Regis
12-13 April	British National Skiing Championships, Alpe d'Huex, France and 100 gates of Slalom; Disabled Initiative
21 April	Wheelchair Bowls Match, Stoke Mandeville
23 April	Charlton Athletic v Newcastle
24 April	Littlewoods Cup Final, Arsenal v Luton, Wembley
30 April	Rugby League Silk Cut Challenge Cup Final, Halifax v Wigan, Wembley
2 May	Motor Racing, Silverstone
7 May	Badminton Three-Day Event
14 May	FA Cup Final, Liverpool v Wimbledon, Wembley
15 May	100 ends of bowls against disabled international team, Paddington
22 May	Cricket: Lords Taverners v Masters XI, Dulwich
23 May	Cricket: England v West Indies at Lords
24 May	Football, England v Colombia at Wembley

Americium-241

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he possesses further to that included in the 1987 annual report, to April 1987, of the radiochemical inspectorate, concerning the whereabouts of a consignment of Americium-241 which disappeared en route from the United States of America to Amersham International; what investigations have been undertaken by his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 23 May 1988]:* A full investigation was carried out by inspectors of Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution, who interviewed employees of the agencies concerned and arranged for an extensive physical search of the agencies' premises to be carried out. Despite those efforts, the radioactive source was not located. The freight handling agencies have been instructed to notify HMIP immediately if the package is found. Steps have been taken to ensure that the carriers

concerned are fully aware of the requirements of the Storage in Transit Exemption Order 1962, and I am considering whether any amendments to that Order are required.

SCOTLAND

Post-operative Deaths

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to announce funding for a confidential inquiry into post-operative deaths along the lines of the one recently carried out in England and Wales.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: This matter is currently receiving consideration.

Wage Rates

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the average hourly wage for *(a)* full-time female employees, *(b)* part-time female employees, *(c)* full-time male employees, and *(d)* part-time male employees, in Scotland since 1985, in cash and real terms.

Mr. Lang: The following information has been derived from the new earnings survey, which is conducted by the Department of Employment in April each year, and covers a 1 per cent. sample of employees who are members of PAYE schemes.

Average hourly earnings (excluding the effect of overtime) of adult employees[1] in Scotland

[2]*Pence per hour*

	Female full-time	*Female part-time*	*Male full-time*	*Male part-time*
Cash terms				
1985	314·0	257·5	438·2	n.a.
1986	343·8	272·0	471·6	n.a.
1987	364·8	289·5	505·3	n.a.
Real terms: at April 1987 [3]prices				
1985	337·3	276·6	470·7	n.a.
1986	358·3	283·5	491·6	n.a.
1987	364·8	289·5	505·3	n.a.

[1] Employees on adult rates, excluding those whose pay for the survey pay-period was affected by absence.
[2] All figures are subject to sampling errors.
[3] These estimates were made using the Retail Prices Index.
n.a. Not available.

Bathing Water

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to the reply on bathing water in Scotland on 5 May *Official Report*, column *536*, on what date he now expects to publish a full report for the 1986 and 1987 seasons.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Scottish Development Department expects to publish the report in June.

Rating Reform

Mr. Graham: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many inquiries his Department has received about the poll tax; and how long it is taking on average to answer each inquiry.

Mr. Lang: Since May last year, when the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Bill was enacted, my right hon. and learned Friend has received about 2,200 inquiries about the community charge, over half since the publication of the booklet "You and the Community Charge". The length of time taken to deal with each inquiry depends on its nature.

Technical, Vocational and Educational Initiative

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland to what extent the technical, vocational and educational initiative programme has been implemented in each education authority in Scotland; and whether it is optional or compulsory for pupils in each area to participate.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The following table shows the position as it will be from autumn 1988:

Stage of participation in TVEI	*Education authorities involved*	*Optional/Compulsory participation by pupils*
Pilot project (small numbers of secondary schools)	Tayside, Grampian, Highland, Western Isles, Strathclyde (Argyll and Bute, Glasgow, Ayr, Dumbarton and Lanark Divisions)	Optional
Preparatory Project (all secondary schools in Orkney; small numbers in other EAs)	Central, Orkney, Shetland	Optional in Central and Shetland; compulsory in Orkney because of small numbers involved.
Extension project (all secondary schools)	Lothian, Borders, Dumfries and Galloway, Fife, Strathclyde (Renfrew Division)	Compulsory

Ministerial Meetings

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will place in the Library copies of any minutes of all meetings which took place in 1981, 1982, and 1987, between the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State responsible for health and the Scottish Trades Union Congress.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: No.

Pre-court Diversion Schemes

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he is yet in a position to publish the findings of his Department's research into pre-court diversion schemes.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to her on 9 February 1988. The second report to which I referred has not yet been received.

Unemployed Young People

Mr. Graham: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people under the age of 18 years in Renfrew, West and Inverclyde are unemployed and have not been on any Government scheme.

Mr. Lang: The number of unemployed claimants under the age of 18 in the Renfrew, West and Inverclyde parliamentary constituency on 14 April 1988 (the latest date for which information is available) was 149. Details of those unemployed claimants who have not benefited from a Government training or employment scheme are not collected.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Discontinued Cases

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Attorney-General if he will list the number of cases discontinued, by area, by the Crown Prosecution Service; and if he will break them down by type of offence, for the last 12 months.

The Attorney-General: During the 12-month period ending 31 March 1988, a total of 109,580 defendants had the cases against them wholly discontinued by the Crown Prosecution Service, either under the formal provisions of section 23 of the Prosecution of Offences Act, 1985, (under which section proceedings may be discontinued at an early stage by written notice to the magistrates court and to the defendant, without any further court hearing) or by no evidence being offered at court. The table shows the figures for each area. Records of the figures broken down by type of offence are not maintained, and the information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

During the same 12-month period, a total of 57,760 cases were referred by the police to the Crown Prosecution Service for advice prior to any charges being made. In a significant proportion of these cases, the Crown Prosecution Service advised that no proceedings should be instituted.

Cases discontinued

Area	*April-June 1987*	*July-Sept 1987*	*Oct-Dec 1987*	*Jan-March 1988*	*Total*
Avon-Somerset	589	553	503	493	2,138
Bedfordshire-Hertfordshire	682	407	475	378	1,942
Cambridgeshire-Lincolnshire	374	432	480	497	1,783
Cheshire	376	384	440	554	1,754
Derbyshire	746	332	308	403	1,789
Devon-Cornwall	765	815	647	610	2,837
Dorset-Hampshire	918	933	1,086	1,176	4,113
Essex	757	631	587	933	2,908
Gloucestershire-Wiltshire	475	607	589	624	2,295
Humberside	144	195	301	379	1,019
Kent	1,134	945	695	1,024	3,798
Lancashire-Cumbria	1,017	1,143	1,085	1,135	4,380
Leicestershire-Northamptonshire	925	776	647	670	3,018
London Inner	1,522	1,682	1,934	2,070	7,208
London North	974	1,167	1,354	1,400	4,895
London South	1,280	1,365	1,539	1,565	5,749
Manchester	1,399	1,528	1,520	1,802	6,249
Merseyside	898	1,210	1,165	1,142	4,415
North Wales-Dyfed	460	562	587	640	2,249
North Yorkshire-Cleveland	443	547	666	734	2,390
Northumbria-Durham	982	1,335	1,133	1,209	4,659
Nottinghamshire	128	183	200	283	794
South Wales-Gwent	1,762	1,729	1,711	1,808	7,010
South Yorkshire	530	492	769	692	2,483
Staffordshire-Warwickshire	642	569	716	1,010	2,937
Suffolk-Norfolk	798	633	525	622	2,578
Sussex	1,202	1,071	1,113	1,236	4,622
Thames Valley	366	668	722	828	2,584
West Mercia	454	535	492	571	2,052
West Midlands	411	767	576	699	2,453
West Yorkshire	2,214	2,256	2,569	2,610	9,649
Grand total	25,367	26,452	27,134	29,797	108,750

Torfaen Borough Council (Court Case)

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Attorney-General on what date he received a letter from Torfaen borough council about the recent court decision in the case involving the council and ReChem plc; on what date an acknowledgement was sent; when he hopes to be able to send a substantive reply; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: The initial correspondence from the office of the solicitor to the borough of Torfaen was received on 26 January 1988 and was formally acknowledged on that day. The points of law raised by the ruling to which the hon. Member refers have since been considered by officials and are under consideration by me. I expect to reach my decision shortly, whereupon it will be communicated to the borough solicitor.

"Spycatcher"

Mr. Roger King: To ask the Attorney-General what action he is taking against bookshops found to be selling "Spycatcher".

The Attorney-General: The organised sale or distribution of "Spycatcher" is at risk of being a contempt of court. In my capacity as a law enforcement officer, I shall continue to direct the sending of letters warning bookshops found to be selling the book of the risk and requiring them to withdraw the book from sale and to undertake not to resume sale of the book unless or until permitted by law to do so. This week I have directed the sending of five such letters.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Car Park (Passes)

Mr. Higgins: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will state the number of current passes for the House of Commons car park which have been issued to each category of person entitled to such parking passes; and whether particular places are for the use only of hon. Members.

Mr. Wakeham: The information requested is as follows:

Category	*Permit holders*	*Current permits*
1.	Right hon. and hon. Members (Levels 1, 2 and 3)	606
2.	Officers of the House (Level 5)	112
3.	Members' Secretaries with over 15 years service (Marked bays on Level 3)	25
4.	Late night staff (Levels 4 and 5)	298
5.	Staff of the House with over 15 years service (Levels 4 and 5)	44
6.	Palace of Westminster photographic pass holders on Fridays and non-sitting days only (Levels 4 and 5)	474

The top three levels of the underground car park are reserved for the use of hon. Members; however the Services Committee has long recognised the convenience to hon. Members of being able to transfer their car parking permit to any Palace of Westminster photographic pass holder acting on their behalf.

Televising (Lighting)

Mr. Hanley: To ask the Lord President of the Council what plans he has for the holding of a lighting demonstration in the Chamber in connection with the proposed experiment in the televising of proceedings of the House.

Mr. Wakeham: Arrangements have been made for the BBC and ITN to hold a lighting demonstration in the Chamber at 10.30 am on Tuesday 14 June. All right hon. and hon. Members are invited to attend.

Further details are given in a letter from the chief political adviser, BBC, to the Clerk of the Select Committee on the Televising of Proceedings of the House. A copy has been placed in the Library. The text of the letter is as follows:

"This will confirm our discussions about the lighting demonstration for the televising of the Commons. We have agreed that this should take place on Tuesday, 14th June at 10.30 am.

The broadcasters (BBC and ITN) will arrange for a demonstration of the different types of lighting which would provide adequate pictures for television companies. We will also have in the Chamber a camera, a remote control mechanism and a possible "hide" for these.

As you will understand, it is not possible for such a demonstration to be mounted in anything other than a workmanlike way. The lighting will be mounted on scaffolding poles. Because we shall be demonstrating more than one lighting type, there will be more lights than would be needed for the final version. There will be no opportunity to make any concession to æsthetics. We can only give an indication of what options could be available. The final installation would be very different.

I am worried that, if these limitations are not understood, it might be thought that the broadcasters were contemplating some insensitive installation. This is not so and I wanted to emphasise this to the Committee at this point.

We will be in touch with the Serjeant-at-Arms and we will ask the PSA about the practical details for the work. The PSA will put in the scaffolding over the weekend and we will test out the lighting systems. The scaffolding will be left in on the Monday, and we shall put in the lights overnight Monday/Tuesday in preparation for the demonstration. We will then remove the lights for Tuesday's sitting. The PSA will be requested to remove the scaffolding on Tuesday night, so that by Wednesday, 15th, there should be no trace of us."

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

European Directives

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of the proposed European directives that he has vetoed in the Council of Ministers since 1979.

Mrs. Chalker: The Council secretariat does not keep records of votes on a national basis. The information requested is therefore not readily available and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Foreign Honours and Medals

Mr. Higgins: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether British nationals are permitted to receive and wear official foreign honours awarded later than five years after the end of the last war.

Mr. Mellor: The Foreign and Commonwealth Orders ('B') Regulations which govern the acceptance and wearing by persons not in the service of the Crown of orders, decorations and medals conferred by Heads or Governments of foreign states and by members of the Commonwealth overseas of which the Queen is not the Head of State stipulate inter alia that

"Permission will be not given in respect of Orders relating to services wholly rendered more than five years before the question of eligibility for permission is raised."

Similar rules apply to persons in the service of the Crown.

Mr. Higgins: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether British nationals are permitted to receive and wear foreign commemorative medals under military regulations A, "Awards of Medals".

Mr. Mellor: I shall write to my right hon. Friend as soon as possible, and place a copy in the Library of the House.

Disarmament

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is Her Majesty's Government's policy towards each of the recommendations of the United Nations Association for the forthcoming United Nations special session on disarmament, a copy of which has been forwarded to him.

Mr. Mellor: I assume that the recommendations referred to are those in the paper submitted by the United Nations Association to the chairman of the UNSSD III preparatory committee on 14 January. We share the UNA's belief that disarmament and security are indivisible. The United Kingdom is committed to the search for increased security at lower levels of armaments. We look to the United Nations special session for a balanced and constructive discussion of all aspects of arms control and disarmament. We support the United Nations as the leading forum for worldwide international co-operation. We seek to make the maximum use of the United Nations to promote the settlement of disputes, to preserve peace and to spread the rule of law. We have always supported the United Nation's peace-keeping efforts, and have supported the increased use of the secretary-general's "good offices".

Militarily significant, verifiable and politically binding confidence-building measures can contribute to breaking down barriers of mistrust and to reducing the risk of miscalculation, and as such are an essential pre-requisite for meaningful arms control. However, we see no value in purely declaratory measures.

We have warmly and publicly endorsed the central message of the Brundtland report that the way forward lies in sustainable development based on economic growth.

We are committed to the search for balanced, equitable and verifiable measures of arms control. Without such agreements, however, the Government do not believe that a case has been made for conversion which would require any Government action at present.

We played a full part at the conference on disarmament and development; we are committed to both disarmament and development each for its own sake. However there is no simple, automatic link between the two goals. In particular we do not believe that progress in one should depend on progress on the other. Our reservations about the final document were expressed in our closing statement at the conference.

On a United Nations verification agency I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) on 23 May.

Under chapter VII of the United Nations charter the Security Council is empowered to take measures (for example, arms embargoes) to maintan or restore international peace and security. The imposition of such measures is, of course, subject to agreement in the Security Council.

We believe that an arms sales register complied under the auspices of the United Nations could in principle establish a means of monitoring, in a universal and non-discriminatory manner, measures taken to restrain the accumulation of conventional arms. But to be effective such a register must be universal and not simply based on the production, import and export of arms of the western countries alone. We do not believe that the imposition of timetables on arms control negotiations is a useful of effective way of conducting them.

The Government are fully committed to implementation of article VI of the non-proliferation treaty. We have consistently urged and worked for constructive arms control negotiations. But we firmly believe that the first step towards nuclear disarmament must be effective bilateral negotiations between the superpowers, who possess 95 per cent. of the world's nuclear weapons. We therefore strongly support the United States—USSR arms control negotiations at Geneva whose objectives are wholly consistent with the obligations assumed under article VI.

Our policy towards a comprehensive test ban treaty was outlined in the reply of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to two questions by the hon. Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) on 30 November 1987.

An effective verifiable global ban on chemical weapons is a United Kingdom priority, and we are working hard at the Geneva negotiations to achieve this.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Research and Development

Mr. Blair: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) what was the level of his Department's support for research and development by region, for each financial year from 1979-80 to 1987-88 *(a)* as a percentage of the total budget and *(b)* in cash terms;

(2) what was the level of his Department's support for research and development for each of the counties of Cleveland, Cumbria, Durham, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear and East Sussex for each year from 1979-80 to 1987-88 in cash terms.

Mr. Butcher: This information is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Equal Opportunities

Mr. Janner: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what action he has taken to remedy past inequalities in employment practices in his Department, in compliance with the codes of the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission, respectively.

Mr. Butcher: The DTI agreed the adoption of policies on race relations and equality of opportunity for women with its departmental trade unions in 1984. These policies take account of the codes of practice issued under the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Equal Opportunity Act 1975. Policy statements were circulated to all staff in 1984. Copies of these have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses. All DTI staff have been made aware of their personal responsibility to ensure quality of opportunity. Guidance is given, in particular, to those who report on others performance; those who select for recruitment, training, promotion and allocation to duties; and to managers, about the need to guard against unfair discrimination. Some examples of action taken are:

Appointment of an equal opportunity officer in 1984.
An ethnic monitoring survey of all staff has been undertaken with a view to providing a database against which progress of various groups can be monitored.
Staff who face changes in domestic responsibilities may be helped to remain in, or return to, employment by special leave arrangements, part-time working and so on.
The Department provides a one-week women-only management course.
Grievance procedures are clearly laid down.

Carbadox and Olaquindox

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what information and at what level of disaggregation his Department holds of the volume of the compounds *(a)* Carbadox and *(b)* Olaquindox which is (i) produced and (ii) sold in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Atkins: This information is not available.

Regional Development Grant

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster at what level of hourly remuneration the threshold for jobs is to be regarded as being created for the purposes of regional development grant.

Mr. Atkins: In determining the number of jobs to be provided by a project for the purposes of regional development grant, the Secretary of State takes account of all the circumstances of the case, including whether the published criteria of the scheme are met; whether remuneration is by commission or salary/wages, or both; and the rates of pay. There is no particular threshold in relation to the rates of pay.

Pen Tops (Safety)

Mr. Janner: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he expects the British Standards Institute to develop a new safety standard for pen tops; at what stage is its investigation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Butcher: The British Standards Institution has set up a committee to develop a new standard. It held its first meeting in April and a further one will take place in June at which it is hoped to finalise a draft. This will then be circulated for public comment before an expected publication date in December. The standard will be considered for approval for the purpose of the general safety requirement provisions of the Consumer Protection Act 1987.

Airbus

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what rate of exchange between the pound

sterling and the United States dollar was assumed in deciding the launch aid provided by his Department towards the Airbus A330 and A340 projects.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Information on the rate of exchange assumed between sterling and the United States dollar, and indeed other aspects of the discussions with the Government on British Aerospace's application for launch aid for the A330/A340 programme, is commercially confidential.

Regional Enterprise Grant

Mr. Page: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what arrangements are being made for expenditure provision for regional enterprise grants for innovation in Scotland and Wales and for estimated receipts from the European regional development fund; and what consequential changes to his Department's cash limits for 1988-89 will be made.

Mr. Atkins: Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary revised and supplementary estimates, the cash limit, for Class V, Vote 2 will be reduced by £4,460,000 from £574,715,000 to £570,255,000 to cover transfers to the Welsh Office's Class XVII, Vote 2 and the Industry Department for Scotland's Class XVI, Vote 3 of provision for expenditure on regional enterprise grants for innovation projects, and to take account of latest estimates for receipts from the European regional development fund.

As a result, the cash limit for Class XVII Vote 2 will increase by £600,000 from £76,100,000 to £76,700,000 and the cash limit for Class XVI, Vote 3 will increase by £1,100,000 from £135,854,000 to £136,954,000.

No net increase to public expenditure results from these changes.

Departmental Cash Limit

Mr. Page: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether any changes will be made to his Department's cash limit for 1988-89 for Class V, Vote 8.

Mr. Maude: Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary revised estimates, the cash limit for Class V, Vote 8 (expenses related to the privatisation of the British Steel Corporation) will be reduced by £1,199,000 leaving a token provision of £1,000.

NATIONAL FINANCE

VAT

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects the outcome of the negotiations with the European Commission on the value added tax threshold.

Mr. Lilley: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Cambridgeshire, South-West (Sir A. Grant) at column *874* on 22 January.

Customs and Excise

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the financial and manpower savings in Her Majesty's Customs and Excise as a result of the implementation of the Customs 88 project.

Mr. Lilley: The Customs 88 changes were introduced throughout the European Community on 1 January 1988 with the aim of simplifying and facilitating European trade. They were not designed to achieve financial and manpower savings in customs administration and did not have that effect.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the Government's commitment to trade facilitation as an objective of Her Majesty's Customs and Excise service.

Mr. Lilley: The Government are fully committed to trade facilitation as an objective of Her Majesty's Customs and Excise and are satisfied that it is given due weight in the management of the Department's activities.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion as a percentage of Her Majesty's Customs and Excise financial and manpower resources is devoted to the fast clearance of international traffic, to preventive checks and to collection of dues and duties.

Mr. Lilley: The latest completed figures are for the year ended 31 March 1987 as published in the last report of the Commissioners of Customs and Excise. The figures are:

	Percentage cost of administration	*Percentage of manpower*
Customs duties including freight clearance and revenue collection work	16	14
CAP work	1½	1½
Preventive work	18	14

It is not expected that the figures for 1987-88 or for the current year 1988-89 will show significant variations from this, although the proportion of preventive work will reflect the increased manpower introduced last year and planned for this year. Fast clearance is not identified separately within the allocations set out in the table.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement as to the working priorities of Her Majesty's Customs and Excise, indicating the role of trade facilitation as part of its ongoing activities.

Mr. Lilley: The working priorities of Her Majesty's Customs and Excise are clearly set out in the board's management plan for 1988-89, a copy of which is in the Library of the House. Trade facilitation is a major consideration in determining the Department's activities, so long as it is consistent with the maintenance of effective customs controls and the necessary protection of revenues.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has made to use the resources saved in Her Majesty's Customs and Excise by ports and airports linking into the DTI system to help to speed up the clearance of goods through a port.

Mr. Lilley: Resource savings stemming from the introduction of direct trader input (DTI) facilities have been utilised to improve the effectiveness of existing controls and to accommodate increases in the volume of international trade.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of savings in Her Majesty's Customs and Excise budget as a result of major international ports and airports linking into DTI systems.

Mr. Lilley: In 1988-89, running costs savings in Customs and Excise arising from utilisation of direct trader input systems are estimated to be £5 million.

Overseas Investment

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the breakdown of the United Kingdom's net overseas investment since 1979 between the following geographical areas *(a)* The United States of America, *(b)* Japan, *(c)* Canada, *(d)* Australasia, *(e)* South America, *(f)* south-east Asia, *(g)* other EEC countries, *(h)* other European countries and *(i)* the rest of the world.

Mr. Major: Comprehensive information on the geographical distribution of overseas assets is not available. Data on direct investment relating to the end of 1984 may be found in *British Business* of 22 May 1987. Estimates of direct investment flows overseas to end of 1986 were published in *British Business* of 11 March 1988. The latest issue of the *Bank of England Quarterly Bulletin* contains information on the United Kingdom monetary sector's assets overseas as at the end of 1987.

National Savings

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any plans to privatise the management of national savings; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley: The Government have no such plans.

Income Tax

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many taxpayers there are in each of the income tax bands in each of the English regions, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland; and in each case what proportion of the total number of income tax payers in each region they represent.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The latest information available by region relates to 1985-86. In the table, married couples are counted as one unit, members of Her Majesty's forces and the Merchant Navy are excluded, and tax liability is measured before allowing for mortgage interest relief given at source. Estimates of the numbers with a marginal rate of 40 per cent. or higher, whilst shown to the nearest thousand, are in many cases based on small samples; where this means that the actual number may be more than about one third higher or lower than shown in the table, the numbers are shown in brackets. The corresponding percentages should also be treated with particular caution.

Taxpaying unit by marginal rate

Region	Thousands						As percentage of all taxpaying units					
	30 per cent.	40 per cent.	45 per cent.	50 per cent.	55 per cent.	60 per cent.	30 per cent.	40 per cent.	45 per cent.	50 per cent.	55 per cent.	60 per cent.
North	1,000	11	6	5	(2)	(3)	97·2	1·1	0·6	0·5	0·2	0·3
Yorkshire and Humberside	1,570	24	13	8	3	5	96·8	1·5	0·8	0·5	0·2	0·3
North West	2,070	36	21	10	4	5	96·5	1·7	1·0	0·5	0·2	0·2
East Midlands	1,310	16	11	6	(4)	4	96·9	1·2	0·8	0·5	0·3	0·3
West Midlands	1,700	19	(18)	(11)	6	4	96·8	1·1	1·0	0·6	0·2	0·3
East Anglia	660	(12)	8	5	(3)	(5)	95·3	1·8	1·2	0·7	0·4	0·7
South East	6,200	190	119	75	38	60	92·8	2·8	1·8	1·1	0·6	0·9
South West	1,490	31	14	13	5	(7)	95·6	2·0	0·9	0·8	0·3	0·4
Wales	800	13	7	3	(3)	2	96·6	1·5	0·8	0·4	0·4	0·2
Scotland	1,690	36	18	11	4	6	95·7	2·0	1·0	0·6	0·2	0·3
Northern Ireland	430	7	(6)	(2)	(1)	(1)	96·0	1·6	1·4	0·5	0·2	0·2

Hearing Aids

Mr. Madden: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will take steps to seek to exempt all hearing aids from value added tax.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 16 May 1988]:* Hearing aids supplied by a person on the register of dispensers of hearing aids or the register of persons employing such dispensers are at present exempt from value added tax. However, my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary recently tabled a new clause to the Finance Bill which, if approved by the House, will apply VAT at the standard rate to these supplies from 1 September 1988. This is to comply with a judgment of the European Court, published on 23 February, which ruled that the United Kingdom, in exempting from VAT certain goods supplied with medical care (including hearing aids), was in breach of its obligations under the EC sixth directive on VAT adopted in 1977. Hearing aids supplied free by the National Health Service will remain outside the scope of the tax.

Public Expenditure

Miss Lestor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total of public expenditure in 1987.

Mr. Major *[holding answer 24 May 1988]:* Information on public expenditure is generally recorded on a financial year basis and the latest estimate of outturn for the public expenditure planning total for 1987-88 is £146 billion, as published in table 5·1 of the Financial Statement and Budget Report 1988-89.

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* an analysis of the extent of charges by main public expenditure programme for the years 1979-80 to 1990-91, in a form consistent with the written answer of 30 March 1982, *Official Report*, columns 97-98, and with table 2.1 of Cm. 288-I.

Mr. Major *[holding answer 25 May 1988]:* The table shows for the years 1982-83 to 1990-91 for each of the Departments defined in table 2.1 of volume I of the 1988

public expenditure White Paper the income from charges which excludes receipts from council house sales, privatisation proceeds and other capital receipts. Figures on the same definition for the years 1979-80 to 1981-82 are not readily available.

Public Expenditure: Charges 1982-83 to 1990-91[1]

	1982-83 outturn	*1983-84 outturn*	*1984-85 outturn*	*1985-86 outturn*	*1986-87 outturn*	*1987-88 estimated outturn*	*1988-89 plans*	*1989-90 plans*	*1990-91 plans*
Department									
Defence	−1,002	−1,046	−782	−537	−698	−801	−705	723	−741
Foreign and Commonwealth Office[2]	−2	—	—	−1	−1	−1	—	—	—
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food[3]	−22	−41	−21	−20	−20	−23	−23	−24	−24
Trade and Industry[4]	−64	−74	−41	−50	−79	−94	−93	−103	−103
Energy	−74	−88	−72	−83	−221	−111	−26	−27	−28
Employment	−48	−32	−33	−32	−29	−36	−37	−38	−40
Transport	−171	−192	−214	−241	−239	−261	−338	−336	−345
DOE—Housing	−34	−45	−48	−56	−55	−58	−53	−53	−55
DOE—Other environmental services	−609	−594	−715	−775	−848	−797	−735	−763	−786
Home Office and Legal departments[5]	−242	−262	−328	−312	−386	−357	−356	−380	−394
Education and Science	−750	−902	−915	−999	−1,144	−1,321	−1,315	−1,354	−1,390
Arts and Libraries	−60	−68	−71	−79	−77	−87	−97	−100	−104
DHSS—Health and personal social services[6]	−695	−749	−793	−863	−948	−968	−1,120	−1,120	−1,170
Scotland	−293	−328	−320	−359	−378	−409	−416	−423	−431
Wales	−129	−144	−145	−164	−175	−186	−197	−202	−208
Northern Ireland	−66	−72	−72	−75	−81	−83	−81	−84	−87
Chancellor's departments	−31	−35	−31	−26	−31	−31	−30	−30	−30
Other departments[7]	−157	−754	−767	−794	−803	−777	−762	−828	−860
Total of departments	−4,449	−5,426	−5,368	−5,466	−6,213	−6,401	−6,384	−6,588	−6,796

[1] Figures in the table are consistent with Cm 288.
[2] Including Overseas Development Administration.
[3] Including Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce and Forestry Commission.
[4] Including Export Credits Guarantee Department.
[5] This group comprises the Home Office, Lord Chancellor's Department, Northern Ireland Court Service, the Crown Prosecution Service, the Serious Fraud Office and the Crown Office, Procurator Fiscal Service and the Lord Advocate's Department.
[6] Excludes direct credits which were not included under charges in Table 14.1 of Cm 288-II.
[7] Including Property Services Agency and Civil Superannuation.

BP Shares

Mr. Knox: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement about the partly paid BP shares purchased by the Bank of England.

Mr. Lawson: Under the terms of the BP share support scheme, which were announced on 29 October and which closed on 6 January, 38,576,002 partly paid BP shares were repurchased by the Bank of England. These shares could not be sold by the Bank, unless at a price in excess of 120p per share, before 30 April 1988. Now that this date has passed, I propose, subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary revised estimate, that the Treasury should purchase these shares from the issue department of the Bank, at the prevailing market price. Her Majesty's Government have no immediate plans to resell these shares though it is their intention to do so at some time in the future. A revised estimate will be presented shortly, and will provide for the costs of purchase and of paying the second instalment on the purchased shares.

THE ARTS

Liverpool

Mr. Parry: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will make a statement on his recent visit to Liverpool.

Mr. Luce: I visited Liverpool on 24 May to attend the official opening of the Tate gallery of the north. This splendid gallery and other developments in the Albert dock area demonstrate the contribution that the arts can make to urban regeneration.

Tate Gallery of the North

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts (1) what information he has on the cost of fully staffing *(a)* the reading room and *(b)* the community education van at the Tate gallery of the north on Merseyside;

(2) what information he has on the levels of staffing on 24 May at the Tate gallery of the north on Merseyside *(a)* in the gallery's reading room and *(b)* in the community education van;

(3) what information he has on the levels of staffing at the Tate gallery of the north on Merseyside *(a)* as originally proposed and *(b)* on 24 May.

Mr. Luce: There are 48 staff at the Tate gallery, Liverpool including 19 warders. The detailed deployment of staff at the gallery is for the curator to determine under the guidance of the director and trustees of the Tate gallery.

Libraries

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts whether he will list *(a)* the library authorities and *(b)* the services which have been contracted out.

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 26 May 1988]:* Published statistics do not contain this information and there are no

centrally held records. At present many library authorities contract out some support services such as cataloguing, jacketing and binding of books.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts whether he will publish a list of existing library co-operatives.

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 26 May 1988]:* No. There are many library co-operatives from the large regional library bureaux and the automation co-operatives to the small locally based schemes, and no complete and up-to-date list is readily available.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts which public library authorities are reluctant to use their existing powers either in full or in part, to charge for services, as referred to in paragraph 2.4 of the public libraries Green Paper; and whether he will list those services *(a)* not charged for and *(b)* not provided.

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 26 May 1988]:* No central records are kept and it is not possible to deduce from published statistics the full extent to which authorities use existing charging powers. However, advice which I have received and early indications from comments made on the Green Paper indicate that many authorities make only nominal use of these powers.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Police Manpower (Staffordshire)

Mr. Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to be able to respond to the request made in 1987 from the chief constable of Staffordshire for 50 additional police officers.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: My right hon. Friend informed the House on 18 May at columns *466-67* that he had approved 10 additional police posts for Staffordshire police. The police authority has been informed that the posts outstanding from its application for 50 posts will be considered when he next takes decisions on the allocations of police manpower.

Brownies Health Club

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to how many police officers were involved in a raid on Brownies health club in Streatham, London, SW16 on 5-6 May; what degree of force was used during the raid; whether policemen involved wore rubber gloves; and what was the cost of the operation.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that 41 police officers and five supporting civilian staff were involved in the operation, which was largely completed during a normal police shift. The cost of overtime, the only additional cost, amounted to about £100.

As to the use of force, the Commissioner tells me that no injuries were sustained during the operation either by his officers or by members of the public and that the only physical damage was to a lock at the entrance of the club. One of the civilian staff and four of the police officers are known to have worn protective gloves. The other officers were issued with disposable gloves for use if necessary, but no records were kept of actual use.

Prison Population

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of the prison population is of the West Indian ethnic group.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: According to the records held centrally, on 31 December 1987, about 10 per cent. of the population of prison department establishments in England and Wales were from the West Indian, Guyanese or African ethnic groups. The information is not reliable enough for a more detailed analysis.

Boundary Proposals (Welwyn Hatfield)

Mr. David Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has as to when the Local Government Boundary Commission for England is likely to complete its consideration of the draft scheme submitted by Welwyn Hatfield district council in September 1987 and to formulate its draft proposals.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The time of the work of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England is a matter for the commission. I understand, however, that the Commission hopes to publish its draft proposals for Welwyn Hatfield in the summer.

Immigration

Mr. Churchill: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimates exist within his Department of the numbers of immigrants likely to be admitted for settlement in the current and coming years; and if he will publish these estimates.

Mr. Renton: Projections of acceptances for settlement in the current and following year only are prepared within the Home Office, but are not published, because the uncertainties surrounding the timing of individual applications for, and grants of, settlement inevitably makes them highly speculative.

Firearms

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the chief constable of Thames Valley as to whether the firearms certificate of the late Michael Ryan was in the possession of the Thames Valley police for the purposes of a variation to the certificate at the time of his death; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to his question on 31 March 1988 at column *688*.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the chief constable of Thames Valley as to between what dates the firearms certificate of the late Michael Ryan was in the possession of the Thames Valley police for the purposes of a variation to the certificate; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the chief constable that the dates in question in respect of the variation applications made by Michael Ryan are as follows: Between 24 March 1987 and 30 April 1987, sometime after 15 June 1987 (only the date when the certificate was called for is known) and 6 July 1987; and between 17 July and 3 August 1987.

Alcohol (Prosecutions)

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many shopkeepers were prosecuted in 1987 in the Greater Manchester area for selling alcohol to people aged less than 18 years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The available information, which may be incomplete, shows that in 1986 there were 20 prosecutions in Greater Manchester under section 169(1) of the Licensing Act 1964. It is not possible to identify how many of those prosecuted were shopkeepers. 1987 data are not yet available.

Cash Limits

Mr. Wheeler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he intends to make any changes to the cash limits within his responsibility and to the Department's running cost limit for 1988-89.

Mr. Hurd: The cash limit on the Vote for Home Office administration, miscellaneous and community services and civil defence, England and Wales (Class XI, Vote 3) has been reduced by £2,740,000 from £412,908,000 to £410,168,000. This is because £2·9 million of expenditure expected to fall in 1988-89 was met from Supply Estimates provision in 1987-88. This reduction is partially offset by an increase of £160,000 arising from the transfer from the Department of the Environment of responsibility for the payments to the Post Office for issue of game licences. As a consequence of these changes, the Home Office running cost limit has also been reduced, by £240,000 from £808,039,000 to £807,799,000.

Untried Persons (Custody)

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many untried prisoners were held in custody on the most recent convenient date; and how many of these had been on remand in custody for more than three months, more than six months and more than 12 months, respectively.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 19 May 1988]:* On 31 March 1988, a total of 8,390 untried prisoners were held in prison department establishments in England and Wales. A further 1,310 prisoners were held in police cells, most of whom would have been on remand. The latest information on the length of time since initial remand in custody, relates to 30 June 1987 and is given in the table.

Estimated population[1] of untried prisoners in Prison Department establishments in England and Wales on 30 June 1987: by length of time since first remand into Prison Department establishment[2]

Length of time since first remand into Prison Department establishment[2]	*Estimated number of persons[3] [4]*
Up to three months	6,300
Over three up to six months	2,000
Over six up to 12 months	750
Over 12 months	100
All untried prisoners	[5]9,140

[1] Based on records held centrally which are approximate, detailed checking of individual cases, would involve disproportionate cost.

[2] Excludes any time spent in police cells, before being received on remand into a Prison Department establishment; includes any subsequent time which may have been spent on bail.

[3] Rounded estimates; the components do not add to the total, because they have been rounded independently.

[4] Provisional figures.

[5] Excludes 580 prisoners held in police cells, most of whom would have been on remand.

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis as to how many firearms have been seized by the Metropolitan police in the past five years; and how many firearms were stolen in the same area over the same time.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 20 May 1988]:* I understand from the Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis that separate information is not available on the numbers of weapons seized. The total numbers of firearms and shotguns surrendered or confiscated are published in the Commissioner's annual reports (page 140 of the issue for 1986), copies of which are in the Library. Over the five years 1982 to 1986 the total was 6,503. Over the same period the Metropolitan police recorded 941 offences of theft, burglary or handling stolen goods in which firearms or shotguns were misappropriated. The number of weapons involved will be higher since some offences involved more than one weapon.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Lough Neagh/Lough Beg

Mr. Clifford Forsythe: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he intends to designate Lough Neagh/Lough Beg as a special protection area under European Community directive 79/409 on the conservation of wild birds.

Mr. Needham: The Department may only declare sites to be special protection areas under European Community Directive 79/409 after they have been given protection as areas of special scientific interest under the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Northern Ireland) Order 1985. Lough Beg was declared an ASSI on 20 August 1987. As survey work to enable the drawing of boundaries for the proposed Lough Neagh ASSI will not commence until the summer of 1988, it is not possible, as yet, to state when the two loughs jointly will be declared as a special protection area.

Mr. Clifford Forsythe: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he will take to ensure that no deleterious effects, as a result of drainage operations, occur within the Lough Neagh/Lough Beg area designated under the convention of wetlands of international importance especially as a waterfowl habitat; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: Each proposal for new or improvement drainage works within the Lough Neagh/Lough Beg area is the subject of detailed consultation between the Departments of Agriculture and Environment for Northern Ireland. The primary objective of these consultations is the retention and protection of the important wetlands.

Mr. Clifford Forsythe: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the areas of special scientific

interest so far declared within the Lough Neagh/Lough Beg Ramsar site, giving the area and dates of declaration and confirmation in each case.

Mr. Needham: One area of special scientific interest has so far been declared within the Lough Neagh/Lough Beg Ramsar site. The area, which is known as the Lough Beg area of special scientific interest was declared on 20 August 1987. It was confirmed with slight modifications on 11 March 1988 and the confirmed area is 1,125 hectares.

Mr. Clifford Forsythe: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list all applications to the Department of Agriculture (NI) for drainage grant within, or likely to affect, areas of special scientific interest declared within the Lough Neagh-Lough Beg Ramsar site since the respective areas of special scientific interest declarations were made.

Mr. Needham: None.

Drainage (SSSIs)

Mr. Clifford Forsythe: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on co-ordination between the Department of Agriculture (NI) and the countryside and wildlife branch of the Department of the Environment (NI) in relation to the consideration of applications for grant aid for drainage work which may affect areas of special scientific interest.

Mr. Needham: Before submitting details of proposals for grant-aid on drainage works in areas of special scientific interest to the Department of Agriculture (NI) the landowner is required to consult with and obtain the consent of the countryside and wildlife branch of the Department of the Environment (NI). The Department of Agriculture (NI) will not accept proposals for grant-aid which have not obtained the consent of the Department of the Environment (NI).

Mr. Clifford Forsythe: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list, with dates, all notifications made to the Department of the Environment (NI) under article 25 of the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands Order 1985, of proposals to carry out drainage in areas of special scientific interest, indicating the response of the Department in each case.

Mr. Needham: Under article 25 of the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland has received the following notifications to carry out drainage in areas of special scientific interest. In each case the notifications relate to a specified portion of the area and not to the entire site:

Name of ASSI	*Date notification received*	*Nature of operation*	*Department's response*
Black Bog	6 May 1987	Drainage	Consent refused
Garry Bog	16 July 1987	Cleaning drains	Consent refused
Black Bog	22 July 1987	Maintenance of existing minor drains	Consent given
Black Bog	3 August 1987	Maintenance of existing minor drains	Consent given
Lough Beg	21 December 1987	Cleaning existing water outlets	Consent refused
Inner Belfast Lough	16 March 1988	Modification of the structure of water courses and construction and maintenance of ditches	Consent given
Black Bog	13 April 1988	Clearing streams and drains	Under consideration
Monawilkin	29 April 1988	Drainage	Under consideration

Equal Opportunities

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action he has taken to remedy past inequalities in employment practices in his Department, in compliance with the codes of the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission, respectively.

Mr. Stanley: The Government are fully committed to providing equality of employment opportunities for all sections of the community in the Northern Ireland Civil Service. They have established an equal opportunities unit which has to date published two reports, copies of which are in the Library. The reports give details of the measures taken or to be pursued in developing the monitoring system, implementing a programme of action and carrying out related research.

As for the home Civil Service element of the Northern Ireland Office, the Civil Service policy statements on equal opportunities have been circulated to staff, and equal opportunities policies continue to be rigorously implemented. Thirteen per cent. of staff in London come from the ethnic minority groups, and 56 per cent. are women.

Invalid Care Allowance

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many persons in Northern Ireland now qualify for invalid care allowance; and what was the number as at 1 April 1987, 1 April 1986 and 1 April 1985.

Mr. Needham: At 1 April 1988, the latest date for which information is available, 4,901 persons were in receipt of invalid care allowance. The corresponding figures for 1 April 1987, 1 April 1986 and 1 April 1985 were 2,137, 686 and 701 respectively.

NHS (Expenditure)

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will give, for each year since 1974-75 (i) total National Health Service expenditure, (ii) current expenditure on hospital and community health services, (iii) capital expenditure on hospital and community health services, (iv) expenditure on family practitioner services, (v) expenditure on centrally funded National Health Service services and (vi) expenditure on personal social services; if he will give each *(a)* in cash terms, *(b)* adjusted using the relevant pay and prices indicator and *(c)* adjusted using the gross domestic product deflator; and if he will place in the Library details of the methods used to make the adjustments.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 18 February 1988]:* Factors for inflation relevant to the health and personal social services are not maintained separately for Northern Ireland. Data collated by DHSS in London and their methodology will be used but are not yet available. I hope to be able to write to the hon. Member shortly.

Royal Ulster Constabulary (Inquiry)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the inquiry by the Northern Ireland Police Authority arising out of the Stalker-Sampson reports will be completed.

Mr. Tom King *[holding answer 25 May 1988]:* It is not possible to give an exact date but I understand that the Police Authority is giving the matter urgent consideration and will reach a decision as soon as possible.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) on what date Mr. Charles Kelly submitted his initial report on the Royal Ulster Constabulary on matters relating to the Stalker-Sampson inquiry;

(2) on what grounds Mr. Charles Kelly has been asked to reconsider details of his initial report on the Royal Ulster Constabulary relating to the Stalker-Sampson report;

(3) what disciplinary charges will be brought as a result of the initial report on the Royal Ulster Constabulary by Mr. Charles Kelly relating to the Stalker-Sampson inquiry;

(4) what further matters Mr. Charles Kelly was asked to investigate following the completion of his initial report on the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

Mr. Tom King *[holding answer 25 May 1988]:* Mr. Kelly has not yet submitted his report.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects the inquiry by Mr. Charles Kelly into the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the Stalker-Sampson inquiry to be completed.

Mr. Tom King *[holding answer 25 May 1988]:* Mr. Kelly is expected to complete his work within the next month.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Farm Woodland Scheme

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what he estimates will be the minimum broadleaf component under the proposed farm woodland scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: We are not proposing to lay down a minimum broadleaf component under this scheme since we believe it is better to encourage a reasonable proportion of broadleaf planting by incentives and advice.

The incentives are of two kinds. First, there will be longer annual payment periods for predominantly broadleaf woodland. Second, we have much enhanced the planting grants for both pure broadleaf planting and the broadleaf component of mixed woodland under the scheme as part of the forestry tax and grant changes announced in March.

Set-aside Scheme

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will give the total acreage of farmland which it is hoped will be taken out of production under the set-aside scheme and whether he proposes to take reserve powers to make the scheme compulsory; to be activated in the event that insufficient reductions are made by voluntary means.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how much land he expects to be taken out of agriculture through the voluntary set-aside scheme in each of the English regions, Wales and Scotland; and what proportion of land at present in use each figure represents.

Mr. MacGregor: I will not be in a position to estimate the area likely to be taken out of production until I have assessed the initial uptake of the United Kingdom scheme, details of which I shall announce as soon as our consideration of the recently decided Community regulations is completed. The relevant Community legislation provides that set-aside should be voluntary for individual farmers. The United Kingdom in common with all other EC Governments and the Commission is opposed to compulsory set-aside.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what sum he expects farmers to be paid per hectare of land which they take out of production under the voluntary European Community set-aside scheme.

Mr. MacGregor: I shall be making an announcement on this and other aspects of the United Kingdom set-aside scheme as soon as our consideration of the recently decided Community regulations is complete.

Feed Additives

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he made any attempt to prevent the adoption of the European Community Directive which reintroduced the compound Carbadox as an animal feed additive in the United Kindom.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Very strong representations were made, both to the European Commission and to other member states, on grounds of safety. Although other member states were not convinced by the Government's arguments, the text of the directive finally adopted allows the serious anxieties of the Government to be given due weight.

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received from the National Farmers' Union on the use of Carbadox and Olaquindox in animal foodstuffs.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I have received no such representations.

CAP (Reform)

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement about current proposals to reform the common agricultural policy.

Mr. MacGregor: Negotiations are continuing on the Commission's proposals for farm prices and related measures in 1988-89. The Government are seeking to ensure that the approach adopted on CAP reform at the recent European Council is carried forward in the price-fixing. We favour adjustments to support arrangements which will bring supply and demand into better balance and restore intervention to its original role as a safety net rather than an alternative market outlet.

New Zealand Butter

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his policy towards the import of New Zealand butter into the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The EC Commission has not yet made a proposal on the arrangements for the import of New Zealand butter from 1 January 1989, and so I have nothing to add to the reply that I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside (Mr. Colvin) on 3 March at column *679*.

Upland Soils (Radioactivity)

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether, in the light of the effects of the Chernobyl disaster, he will initiate within his Department research into the behaviour of radioactive isotopes in upland soils.

Mr. Donald Thompson: My Department has already initiated a full programme of research into the behaviour of radioactive isotopes deriving from the Chernobyl accident in upland soils of the United Kingdom. An updated list of current research projects is being placed in the Library of the House.

European Directives

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of the proposed European directives which he has vetoed in the Council of Ministers since 1979.

Mr. MacGregor: The Council secretariat does not keep records of votes on a national basis. The information requested is not, therefore, readily available and can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Hill Livestock Support Payments

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will consider changing his policy in order to pay the full hill livestock support payments in areas considered marginal under European Community rules as well as in hill areas.

Mr. Gummer: The rates of hill livestock compensatory allowances payable in both the "severely disadvantaged" and marginal "disadvantaged" areas of the United Kingdom are set taking account of the severity of the permanent natural handicap. They will be examined later this year as part of the regular autumn review of the economic conditions in the hills and uplands.

Agricultural Land

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what proportion of agricultural land in each of the European Community member states is in state or local authority ownership.

Mr. Gummer: In the United Kingdom an estimated 6 per cent. of agricultural land is owned by the public sector (the Crown, Government Departments, local authorities, statutory agencies and nationalised industries). I regret that comparable information for the other member states of the European Economic Community is not readily available.

Farming Incomes

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the percentage change in farming incomes in the United Kingdom after taking inflation into account in each year since 1979.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The percentage changes in United Kingdom farming incomes for the period 1979 to 1987, after removing the effect of inflation, are set out in the table.

	Per cent.
1979-80	−23
1980-81	16
1981-82	18
1982-83	−23
1983-84	39
1984-85	−51
1985-86	27
1986-87[1]	−6

[1] Forecast

Agricultural Holdings

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what has been the change in the average size of agricultural holdings in the United Kingdom, England, and each of the English regions since 1978, 1968, and 1958.

Mr. Gummer: The average sizes of agricultural holdings in terms of area of crops and grass per holding derived from the annual agricultural census for the years 1958, 1968, 1978, and 1987 are given in the table. The crops and grass area, which excludes rough grazings and woodland, is the only area measure available for all four years. Some of the apparent increase in average size is due to changes to the census threshold which have excluded an increasing number of smaller holdings from the census.

Average area of crops and grass (hectares per holding)

	1958	*1968*	*1978*	*1987*
United Kingdom	25·0	33·2	42·6	47·3
England	28·7	40·6	50·7	53·6

The average size for each of the English regions in 1978 and 1987 is given in the table. Because of changes in definition, data for comparable regions are not available for 1958 or 1968.

Average area of crops and grass (hectares per holding)

	1978	1987
Region		
North	56·6	60·2
Yorks & Humberside	51·9	53·9
East Midlands	61·7	68·0
East Anglia	64·5	72·5
South East	57·9	58·4
South West	43·6	45·9
West Midlands	44·4	46·7
North West	28·4	30·4
Total England	50·7	53·6

DEFENCE

Women Officers (Pregnancy Leave)

Mr. Kilfedder: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what leave is granted to women army officers during pregnancy.

Mr. Freeman: All women serving in the Army are compulsorily retired on pregnancy normally during the fourth month and are entitled to terminal leave on full pay of up to a maximum of four weeks.

Self-propelled Howitzer

Mr. Sean Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he now intends to place an order for new 155 mm self-propelled howitzers for the Army.

Mr. Freeman: We hope to make an announcement about the 155 mm self-propelled howitzer competition shortly.

Challenger Tank

Mr. Sean Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he intends to place an order for more Challenger tanks for the Army.

Mr. Freeman: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement to my hon. Friend the Member for Bridlington (Mr. Townend) on 12 January 1988 at col. *200*.

Marchwood Military Port

Mr. Sean Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the British registered merchant vessels that were employed to transport Army ordnance between Marchwood military port and overseas destinations in 1987.

Mr. Freeman: The RFAs Sir Lancelot, Sir Geraint, Sir Percivale, Sir Bedivere, Sir Tristram and Sir Caradoc and the Earl Granville and Tor Caledonia were employed in transporting Army ordnance between Marchwood military port and overseas destinations in 1987.

Mr. Sean Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many foreign vessels visited the Marchwood military port in 1987.

Mr. Freeman: Thirteen.

Mr. Sean Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the names and number of foreign-registered vessels that were employed to transport military ordnance between Marchwood military port and *(a)* United Kingdom and *(b)* overseas destinations in 1987, showing in each case which company the ship belonged to and in which country the ship was registered.

Mr. Freeman: The information requested is as follows:

(a) foreign registered vessels employed to transport military ordnance from Marchwood to United Kingdom destinations
Saint Magnus, owned by Mamoet Shipping, West German flag.
Condock 1, owned by Kustenshiffahrt Bauer and Hauschildr KG, West German flag.
Hamburg, owned by DFDS, Bahamian flag.
Mercandian Diplomat, owned by Mercandian line, Danish flag.
Gabriella Wehr, owned by Oscar Wehr, West German flag.

(b) foreign registered vessels employed to transport military ordnance from Marchwood to overseas destinations
Dancia Black, owned by Shipcraft AS, Danish flag.
Obotrita, owned by Peter Doehle Schiffahrt GMBH, West German flag.
Panther, owned by Mortensen and Lange, Danish flag.
Mercandian Sea, owned by Mercandian Line, Danish flag.
Dana Cimbria, owned by DFDS, Danish flag.
Surrey, owned by DFDS, Danish flag.
Felcia, owned by Shipcraft AS, Danish flag.

Mr. Sean Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the British-registered merchant vessels that were employed to transport ordnance between Marchwood military port and other United Kingdom destinations in 1987.

Mr. Freeman: The RFAs Sir Lancelot, Sir Geraint, Sir Percivale, Sir Bedivere, Sir Tristram, Sir Caradoc and Sir Galahad were employed to transport ordnance between Marchwood military port and other United Kingdom destinations in 1987.

BAOR (Mercedes-Benz Trucks)

Mr. Sean Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much has been spent by his Department in each of the last five years hiring Mercedes-Benz trucks for British Army of the Rhine work.

Mr. Freeman: The information requested is not available in respect of the occasional hire of trucks since central records of expenditure on vehicle hire do not distinguish between types of vehicle. A contract was placed in October 1987 involving the long-term lease of Mercedes tractors for transporting light armoured fighting vehicles in BAOR. Expenditure against this contract in the financial year 1987-88 was about £9,500.

Army Trucks

Mr. Sean Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he intends to place an order for new 4-tonne trucks for the British Army.

Mr. Freeman: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement on 22 February 1988 at column *103*. There has been no change in our position on the competition to choose a new 4-tonne vehicle design. The contract to provide some 2,000 of the existing 4-tonne model for the services over the next two years was placed with AWD Ltd. on 22 March.

Equal Opportunities

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what action he has taken to remedy past inequalities in employment practices in his Department, in compliance with the codes of the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission, respectively.

Mr. Freeman: The MOD is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all its employees and potential recruits. Examples of the initiatives which have been taken include positive action to encourage more applicants from the ethnic minorities; "women only" management training courses; and efforts to increase the number of part-time posts.

Northern Ireland Charities

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list those charities in Northern Ireland that have received help and funds from the armed forces.

Mr. Freeman: The armed forces in Northern Ireland, as elsewhere, make an enormous contribution to both local and national charities. Their contribution takes the form of donations raised by a wide variety of voluntary efforts, as well as actual help. Much of this work is done at a local unit level. No central record is kept and the information requested could not be obtained without disproportionate effort. However, as an illustration, I am advised that the nine battalions of the UDR raised over £130,000 in 1987 for a variety of service and civilian charities, both in the United Kingdom mainland and Northern Ireland. No donations to charities in Norther Ireland are made from official MOD funds.

Disabled Service Personnel

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how often, and under what circumstances, money is deducted from pensions of wounded and discharged service personnel to pay for cars or other forms of transport provided to help them to overcome their disabilities.

Mr. Freeman: The Ministry of Defence does not provide cars on invaliding. No deductions are therefore necessary.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how often and under what circumstances, letters to wounded service, or ex-service personnel are addressed "Dear Sir/Madam"; and who is responsible for the drafting of such letters.

Mr. Freeman: Personal letters to wounded service, or ex-service, personnel are not addressed "Dear Sir/Madam" but in the case of standard routine correspondence conducted using pre-printed stationery this form of address may be used.

Pensions

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will review the rate of pensions and the method of awarding them to wounded members of the armed forces who are invalided out.

Mr. Freeman: Such pensions and the methods of award are kept under regular review.

Injured Service Personnel

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many service personnel have been invalided out because of injuries in the last 10 years; and how often their welfare is followed up by the armed forces.

Mr. Freeman: The information requested is as follows:

	Number
1977	280
1978	276
1979	200
1980	168
1981	144
1982	123
1983	166
1984	231
1985	343
1986	297

Note: Figures for 1987 are not yet available.

In all cases of discharge caused by injury the armed forces automatically sets in train procedures laid down in the "After Care Guide" which has been designed as the result of long experience to follow up on the welfare of all ex-service personnel and the widows of those who die in service. I am sending a copy to the right hon. Member.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many complaints have been received in the last 10 years from wounded service personnel, or ex-service personnel about their treatment.

Mr. Freeman: I regret that the information requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on how many occasions in the last 10 years wounded service personnel have been ordered to wear civilian clothes on ceremonial or public occasions.

Mr. Freeman: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on how many occasions in the last 10 years wounded service personnel, or ex-service wounded personnel have been excluded from ceremonial occasions because of their disabilities.

Mr. Freeman: We are not aware of any such occasions and there is no MOD policy to exclude disabled or wounded service or ex-service personnel from such occasions. In respect of ex-service personnel every encouragement is given to them to attend especially through ex-service men's clubs and associations and the Royal British Legion.

Tornado Aircraft

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are the estimated annual cost of storage and maintenance for Royal Air Force Tornado aircraft currently stored at RAF St. Athan.

Mr. Freeman: Extra costs of some £60,000 per year are incurred for heating and lighting of the hangarage used.

Military Helicopters

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the minimum authorised separation distance

between military helicopters and civilian vehicles travelling on public roads; and what are the legislative provisions governing the proximity of military aircraft to civilian road traffic.

Mr. Freeman: Low-flying military helicopters are instructed to maintain a minimum height of 50 ft from the ground or 32·8 ft (10m) minimum separation distance from any upstanding object when flying. They may however be authorised to hover at levels down to a minumum separation distance of 9·8 ft (3m). There are no legislative provisions governing the proximity of military aircraft to civilian road traffic.

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the military helicopter units which were exercising in the Dalmally-Tyndrum area of Argyll on 5 May.

Mr. Freeman: According to available records the only military helicopter authorised to fly at low level in Scotland on 5 May was a naval Lynx operating from HMS Minerva.

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the incident involving a military helicopter and a civilian car on the A85 road between Dalmally and Tyndrum on 5 May.

Mr. Freeman: Following notification of the incident by Strathclyde civil police on 7 May, a full investigation was commissioned to establish whether a military helicopter was involved and if so, what the circumstances were.

Swimming Pool (Deal Barracks)

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will list each occasion that the swimming pool by Deal barracks has been made available to cross-Channel operators; to which operators it has been made available, in the last 12 months; and how much was charged for the pool's hire on each occasion.

Mr. Freeman: The P and O company is the only cross-Channel operator to have used the swimming pool belonging to the Royal Marines School of Music in the last 12 months. Details of charges were given in my reply to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) on 26 May 1988.

EMPLOYMENT

Mines and Quarries Act 1954

Mr. Illsley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what consultations there have been with the National Association of Colliery Overmen, Deputies and Shotfirers over the replacement of the Mines and Quarries Act 1954.

Mr. Nicholls: The Health and Safety Commission and Executive has consulted the National Association of Colliery Overmen, Deputies and Shotfirers on the renewal of mines and quarries legislation. This forms part of the extensive consultation programme which involves all interested parties within the mining and quarrying industries. In particular a series of meetings has been held with all the coal mining unions about the most advanced of the mining legislative packages, the proposed Mines (Safety of Exit) Regulations and approved code of practice.

Mr. Illsley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what consultations there have been with the National Union of Mineworkers on the replacement of the Mines and Quarries Act 1954.

Mr. Nicholls: The Health and Safety Commission and Executive has consulted the National Union of Mineworkers on the renewal of mines and quarries legislation. This forms part of the extensive consultation programme which involves all interested parties within the mining and quarrying industries. In particular a series of meetings has been held with all the coal mining unions about the most advanced of the mining legislative packages, the proposed Mines (Safety of Exit) Regulations and approved code of practice.

Mr. Illsley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when he intends to bring legislation before Parliament to replace the Mines and Quarries Act 1954.

Mr. Nicholls: The intention is to replace the Mines and Quarries Act 1954 with some 15 sets of regulations accompanied by codes of practice. The Health and Safety Commission is considering the first such set on safety of mines exits, and will shortly have before it proposals on quarries (explosives), with a view to submission to the Secretary of State for laying before Parliament. Further sets of regulations will follow. It is expected that the programme will be completed in the early 1990s.

Adult Training Scheme

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what arrangements he intends to make to ensure that participants on the adult training scheme who are paid up to £250 by their employer on leaving the scheme will not be subject to tax liability or benefit loss; and what would be the effect of an employer making a payment of more than £250.

Mr. Nicholls: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State recently announced that a training bonus will be payable to trainees who complete an action plan of over three months duration with an additional bonus for those who attain a vocational qualification or a credit towards one. Bonuses will be funded jointly by the Manpower Services Commission, training managers and employers until March 1991, and thereafter by contributions from employers and training managers. The maximum total payable under this scheme will be £200, and the bonus will be disregarded for the purpose of assessing entitlement to income support. As a payment relating exclusively to training undertaken it will not be liable to income tax.

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what arrangements he intends to make to ensure that participants on the adult training scheme are not subject to any benefit loss or tax liability as a result of receiving £10 to £12 per week additional to their benefit.

Mr. Nicholls: Participants in employment training will receive a training premium of £10 to £12 a week over and above their previous benefit entitlement. These payments will be disregarded for benefit purposes and will not be liable to income tax.

Job Release Scheme

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what provision is to be made for handicapped people working in sheltered workshops affected by the abolition of the job release scheme.

Mr. Lee: While we appreciate the particular problems of people with disabilities who are approaching retirement age it is for those organisations which provide employment in sheltered workshops to determine arrangements under which employees may retire from employment.

Parental Leave

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment, pursuant to the reply of 15 February, *Official Report*, column *471*, if he will list those member states of the EEC which have some form of statutory provision relating to parental leave, and which do not.

Mr. Nicholls: My current information is that all member states have some form of statutory provision with the exception of Ireland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment, pursuant to the reply of 15 February, *Official Report*, column *471*, what information he has on the fundamental variations in the range and scope of provisions for parental leave in those member states of the European Community with statutory provision.

Mr. Nicholls: I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my reply in the Library.

TVEI (Orkneys)

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what conditions, in terms of number of participant pupils, have been required of Orkney islands council in order to qualify for Manpower Services Commission funding for the technical, vocational and educational initiative programme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: The Government intend that all young people aged 14 to 18 in maintained schools and colleges should be given access to the wider and richer curriculum developed by the technical and vocational education initiative. I am pleased that Orkney education authority has indicated its wish to participate in the initiative from this autumn, and proposes that all students aged 14 will take part from the first year. I am informed that negotiations between the Training Commission (formerly the Manpower Services Commission) and the education authority are proceeding satisfactorily on this basis.

Sex Discrimination

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he will list the representations he has received in response to the consultation document "Restrictions on Employment of Young People and the Removal of Sex Discrimination in Legislation"; and if he will make them available in the Library.

Mr. Nicholls: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Barnsley, Central (Mr. Illsley) on Friday 20 May 1988, *Official Report*, column *613*.

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what action he is taking to implement the proposals contained in the consultation document "Restrictions on Employment of Young People and the Removal of Sex Discrimination in Legislation"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: I announced the Government's decision to denouce ILO convention No. 45 in my reply to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Bosworth (Mr. Tredinnick) on Thursday 26 May.

I am still considering with my colleagues the responses we have received on other matters covered by the consultation document. The Northern Ireland Office is currently consulting publicly on the equivalent Northern Ireland legislation and the closing date for responses to its consultation document is 3 June 1988.

Redundancy Payments (Equality)

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what action he is taking to provide for statutory redundancy payments to be payable to both women and men up to the age of 65 years, or to normal retiring age for the job where that is below 65 years, and on a non-discriminatory basis; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: On 29 October 1987 my hon. Friend the Minister of State announced his intention to increase the age limit up to which women can receive a statutory redundancy payment from 60 to 65 years as soon as legislative time was available.

Disabled People

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will provide statistics on the number of registered disabled persons employed *(a)* with Remploy and *(b)* in local authority sheltered provision for each of the standard regions in 1985, 1986 and 1987.

Mr. Lee *[holding answer 17 May 1988]:* Information is not available in the form requested. Information on the number of approved severely disabled workers employed in each Manpower Services Commission (MSC) region in the 1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987-88 financial years is set out in the tables.

MSC region	*Financial year 1985-86 (31 March 1986)*	*Financial year 1986-87 (31 March 1987)*	*Financial year 1987-88 (31 March 1988)*
(a) Remploy:			
South East	327	329	325
London	707	687	665
South West	536	521	516
West Midlands	656	672	646
East Midlands and Eastern	641	650	653

MSC region	Financial year 1985-86 (31 March 1986)	Financial year 1986-87 (31 March 1987)	Financial year 1987-88 (31 March 1988)
Yorkshire and Humberside	1,135	1,125	1,104
North West	1,600	1,644	1,647
Northern	944	909	920
Wales	1,463	1,504	1,492
Scotland	1,050	1,029	1,074
(b) Local Authority sheltered provision:			
South East	335	301	322
London	614	640	639
South West	972	1,034	1,072
West Midlands	[1]967	565	617
East Midlands and Eastern	—	672	758
Yorkshire and Humberside	520	556	567
North West	617	666	699
Northern	235	228	235
Wales	524	504	532
Scotland	707	754	833

[1] The figure of 967 occupied places relates to the whole of the former Midlands Region.

Scotch Derrick Cranes

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether all scotch derrick cranes in use have been checked following the fatal accidents at Nantergantick quarry by people who are competent and who either can check, or have caused a check on cast iron components; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls *[holding answer 26 May 1988]:* Following the accident the mines and quarries inspectorate carried out a comprehensive review of all scotch derrick cranes in use at quarries. The review included advice to owners on proper procedures to establish whether or not critical components were made of cast iron.

Mines and Quarries Inspectorate

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if individual inspectors in the mines and quarries inspectorate have the necessary legal knowledge and skills to enable them to institute and conduct prosecutions under the Health and Safety at Work Act etc. 1974.

Mr. Nicholls *[holding answer 26 May 1988]:* Inspectors of the mines and quarries inspectorate receive the appropriate training to institute, but not conduct, prosecutions under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The prosecutions are conducted by the solicitors branch of the Health and Safety Executive.

Underpaid Employees

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what were the main reasons for not prosecuting the 4,443 establishments which underpaid employees in 1987.

Mr. Nicholls: Four of the establishments were prosecuted for underpaying workers and four for failing to produce adequate records. Prosecution action was not considered appropriate in the other cases mainly because it is not the practice of the wages inspectorate to prosecute employers unless the offence is deliberate or repeated and the evidence considered adequate. The willingness of workers to give evidence in court if required is also a factor in deciding whether or not prosecution action is appropriate. In most cases underpayment is immediately put right and the inspectorate will take this into account when considering whether prosecution will serve any useful purpose.

Women's Pension Schemes

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) what percentage of female part-time waged workers is included in pension schemes in *(a)* nationalised industries and *(b)* local government;

(2) what percentage of female full-time waged workers is included in pension schemes in *(a)* nationalised industries and *(b)* local government.

Mr. Portillo: I have been asked to reply.

According to estimates produced from data collected for the 1987 survey of occupational pension schemes by the Government Actuary (as yet unpublished) the percentage of female part-time and full-time employees of nationalised industries and local government who were members of occupational pension schemes at the time are as follows:

	Part-time	Full-time
Nationalised industries	20	over 95
Local government	10	over 95

Note:

These figures take no account of changes since 1987 resulting from the Government's recent pensions reforms.

WALES

Electorate

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list in descending order, by electorate, the number of voters in each Welsh constituency in 1988-89.

Mr. Peter Walker: Parliamentary constituencies in Wales, listed in descending order of the total number of electors on the 1988 electoral register, are shown in the following table:

Parliamentary Constituency	Total electors 1988
WALES	2,180,269
Pembroke	71,637

Parliamentary Constituency	Total electors 1988
Vale of Glamorgan	67,681
Clwyd North West	67,384
Carmarthen	66,879
Delyn	65,022
Caerphilly	64,434
Ceredigion and Pembroke North	64,372
Llanelli	64,252
Wrexham	63,664
Pontypridd	61,011
Rhondda	60,835
Torfaen	60,780
Swansea West	60,767
Gower	59,977
Monmouth	59,690
Clwyd South West	59,556
Alyn and Deeside	59,494
Cardiff South and Penarth	59,165
Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney	58,495
Bridgend	58,355
Cardiff West	57,689
Swansea East	57,436
Blaenau Gwent	56,265
Newport West	55,933
Cardiff North	55,616
Neath	55,405
Cardiff Central	53,827
Conwy	53,468
Ynys Mon	53,201
Newport East	53,071
Aberavon	52,446
Ogmore	51,620
Islwyn	50,967
Brecon and Radnor	50,575
Cynon Valley	50,125
Caernarfon	46,587
Montgomery	40,472
Meirionnydd Nant Conwy	32,116

Source: Office of Population Censuses and Surveys.

Equal Opportunities

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what action he has taken to remedy past inequalities in employment practices in his Department, in compliance with the codes of the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission, respectively.

Mr. Peter Walker: My Department continues to be an equal opportunity employer. With regard to the code of the Commission for Racial Equality, it is carrying out ethnic monitoring and has approached organisations representing ethnic minority groups and schools with high ethnic populations in the Cardiff area in order to offer career talks and work experience placements and to inform them of local recruitment exercises so as to encourage applications from ethnic minority communities. As for the Equal Opportunities Commission's code, the Welsh Office has an annual review of progress in the field of equal opportunity; a flexi-time agreement; a job-sharing agreement; part-time working; advice to staff on sexual harassment; and detailed guidance about the options and benefits that are available to officers coping with changes in domestic commitments.

Farmers (Statistics)

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many farmers there are in each county in Wales at the latest convenient date.

Mr. Peter Walker: The information requested is as follows:

Farmers, by county: June 1987

	Whole-time	Part-time	Total
Clwyd	3,094	1,209	4,303
Dyfed	8,847	2,982	11,829
Gwent	1,615	794	2,409
Gwynedd	3,433	1,376	4,809
Mid Glamorgan	687	381	1,068
Powys	4,829	1,346	6,175
South Glamorgan	409	160	569
West Glamorgan	683	349	981
Wales	23,546	8,597	32,143

Note: The figures are for Main Holdings only, and include partners and directors where they too are engaged in farm work.

Farm Workers

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many farm workers are employed in Wales at the latest convenient date.

Mr. Peter Walker: The information requested is as follows:

Farm workers at June 1987

	Number
Salaried managers	289
Family workers:	
Male:	
Wholetime	2,838
Part-time	1,487
Female:	
Wholetime	545
Part-time	646
Hired workers:	
Male:	
Wholetime	3,229
Part-time	1,410
Female:	
Wholetime	253
Part-time	428
Seasonal or casual workers:	
Male	7,166
Female	1,674
Total farm workers	19,965

Note: These figures include an estimate of the number employed in minor holdings.

Language Assistants

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many language assistants went to which countries under the auspices of the exchange of language assistants scheme in the last year for which figures are available; how many came from which countries in exchange; and if any teach through the medium of Welsh.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The number of such appointments arranged by the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges for 1987-88 is set out in the following table. Language assistants are expected to teach through the medium of their own language, not those of the host countries.

Country	Language assistants abroad from Wales	Foreign language assistants in Wales
Austria	13	6
Belgium	—	1
Canada	1	—
Columbia	2	—
Federal Republic of Germany	29	27
France	62	[1] 61
German Democratic Republic	2	—
Italy	6	2
Spain	3	7
Switzerland	4	—
	122	104

[1] Including nationals of other francophone countries studying in France.

AIDS

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish in the *Official Report* for each health authority in Wales the number of persons suffering from AIDS; and if he will disaggregate the statistics by age and sex.

Mr. Grist: At the end of April 1988, 21 cases of AIDS in Wales had been reported to the communicable disease surveillance centre, of whom 15 had died.

Information on the number of AIDS cases is disaggregated by sex on a United Kingdom basis only. For reasons of medical confidentiality, the figures for Wales are not disaggregated by health authority, age of sex.

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is his Department's latest estimate of the number of people in Wales that are currently HIV positive.

Mr. Grist: At 31 March 1988, the number of known HIV antibody positive people in Wales was 102.

There are a number of unknown factors here and at present it is not possible to make an estimate of the number of people who are HIV antibody positive. However, a group of experts under the chairmanship of Sir David Cox is now considering forecasts for the numbers of people infected with HIV and with AIDS over a two-to-five-year period.

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many babies born in Wales were HIV positive at birth.

Mr. Grist: To the end of March 1988, the communicable disease surveillance centre had received no reports of HIV positive babies born in Wales.

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many babies have been born in Wales to mothers who are HIV positive.

Mr. Grist: This information is not known since pregnant women and babies are not routinely tested for HIV antibodies.

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many terminations of pregnancy in Wales have been carried out because the mother is HIV positive.

Mr. Grist: None of the notifications of termination of pregnancy carried out in Wales for the period 1 January 1983 to 30 September 1987 included a mention of either HIV positive condition or AIDS (ICD code 279.1). The information in respect of 1987 is provisional.

Carbadox and Olaquindox

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has received from *(a)* the National Farmers Union, *(b)* the Farmers Union of Wales and *(c)* any other organisation on the use of Carbadox and Olaquindox in animal foodstuffs in Wales.

Mr. Peter Walker: None.

Psychiatric Hospitals

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of those psychiatric hospitals caring for long-stay patients in each district, showing *(a)* those which have been approved for closure, *(b)* those which have been proposed for closure by their district health authority, *(c)* those which have been listed in district strategic plans as possible candidates for closure and *(d)* the number of patients in each hospital.

Mr. Grist: The details required are as follows:

Authority/Hospital	Approved for closure	DHA proposed for closure	Included in DHA Strategic Plan as possible candidate for closure	Number of patients in hospital at 5 April (Latest figures available)
Clwyd				
North Wales, Denbigh	—	—	Major run-down proposed.	504 (includes 56 patients at
Poole Park	—	—	1988-89	31 December 1986 at Poole Park
East Dyfed				
St. David's Carmarthen	—	—	Major run-down proposed.	366
Gwent				
Pen-y-Fal	—	—	1991-92	423
St. Cadics	—	—	Major run-down proposed.	273
Mid Glamorgan				
Parc	—	—	1992-93	494
Glanrhyd/Penyfai	—	—	—	329
Powys				
Mid Wales, Talgarth	—	—	—	263
South Glamorgan				
Whitchurch	—	—	—	424

Authority/Hospital	Approved for closure	DHA proposed for closure	Included in DHA Strategic Plan as possible candidate for closure	Number of patients in hospital at 5 April (Latest figures available)
Royal Hamadryad	—	—	All beds psycho-geriatric. Closure proposed for 1988-89 with all beds being transferred to St. David's Hospital.	49
West Glamorgan				
Cefn Coed	—	—	—	348
Garngoch	—	—	—	39

Wage Rates

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the average hourly wage for *(a)* full-time female employes, *(b)* part-time female employees, *(c)* full-time male employees, and *(d)* part-time male employees in Wales since 1985, in cash and real terms.

Mr. Peter Walker: Available data are as follows:

Average hourly earnings excluding effect of overtime[1]

(Pence)

	April 1985	April 1986	April 1987
(a) Current price terms			
Males			
Full-time employees	421·8	448·5	474·0
Part-time employees	n/a	n/a	n/a
Females			
Full-time employees	309·0	334·8	358·1
Part-time employees	243·6	263·7	282·9
(b) At constant (April 1987) prices[2]			
Males			
Full-time employees	453·1	467·5	474·0
Part-time employees	n/a	n/a	n/a
Females			
Full-time employees	331·9	349·0	358·1
Part-time employees	261·7	274·9	282·9

Source: New Earnings Survey.

[1] Based on the average hourly earnings of adults on adult rates excluding the effects of overtime whose pay for the survey pay-period was not affected by absence.

[2] These figures are recalculated using the Retail Price Index and April 1987 as the base.

"Western Mail" (Article)

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales who authorised the provision of quotations from an internal Welsh Office document to Roger Dobson of the *Western Mail* for use in his article of 17 March entitled "£900 million plan to breathe new life into South Wales".

Mr. Peter Walker: No such information was provided or authorised by the Welsh Office.

Valleys Initiative

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales on what date he first announced his intention to establish a valleys initiative.

Mr. Peter Walker: In the autumn of last year I indicated that I was considering the problems and opportunities present in the valleys and the options for action to deal with them, I have always made clear that I would have wide-ranging consultations before coming to conclusions on the programme for the coming years.

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list with dates those organisations and interests which he has consulted about his valleys initiative; which remain to be consulted; and when he intends to consult them.

Mr. Peter Walker: I have held discussions with a large number of organisations in recent months, and I have had specific meetings withe representatives of the following organisations on the dates shown:

	Organisation
Tuesday 19 April	Manpower Services Commission. Wales TUC.
Friday 22 April	Wales Tourist Board.
Wednesday 27 April	Confederation of British Industry (Wales).
Thursday 28 April	Gwent County Council. Lliw Valley Borough Council, Neath Borough Council, Port Talbot Borough Council, Swansea City Council, Dinefwr Borough Council, Llanelli Borough Council, Brecknock Borough Council.
Friday 29 April	Welsh Water Authority.
Tuesday 3 May	Taff Ely Borough Council, Cynon Valley Borough Council, Merthyr Tydfil Borough Council, Ogwr Borough Council, Rhymney Valley District Council, Rhondda Borough Council.
Thursday 5 May	Secondary Housing Association for Wales, Housing Corporation, Welsh Housing Association's Council. Blaenau Gwent Borough Council, Islwyn Borough Council, Torfaen Borough Council. West Glamorgan County Council. Neath Development Partnership, Port Talbot Co-operative Development Agency, Swansea Self Start, West Glamorgan Enterprise Trust.
Friday 6 May	Mid Glamorgan County Council. Dyfed County Council.
Thursday 12 May	Welsh Development Agency. British Coal (Enterprise), British Steel Corporation (Industry), Business in the Community.
Friday 13 May	Business in Taff Ely, Economic Development Partnership for the Rhymney Valley Ltd, Ogwr Partnership Trust, Merthyr—Aberdare Development Enterprise, Rhondda Enterprise Ltd. Mid Glamorgan District Health Authority, West Glamorgan District Health Authority, East Dyfed District Health Authority, Gwent District Health Authority, Gwent District Health Authority. Powys County Council.

	Organisation
Monday 16 May	Land Authority for Wales.

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what technical arrangements he is making to fulfil his intention, declared in reply to a supplementary question from the right hon. Member for Swansea, West, *Official Report*, 23 May, column 6, to make simultaneous announcements of his valleys initiative in the Chamber of the House and in the valleys.

Mr. Peter Walker: I shall ensure that on the day of the announcement statements are made both in the House and in the valleys.

Torfaen (RSG)

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will allow an expenditure disregard in the calculation of rate support grant for Torfaen borough council, in respect of that authority's expenditure for the monitoring of ReChem International Plc.

Mr. Grist: No. Expenditure disregards are relevant only in circumstances in which expenditure guidance has been issued in respect of a rate support grant settlement which includes targets and penalties. The settlements since 1986-87 do not include such arrangements.

EC Payments

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish a table showing, for each of the past five years, the total receipts by way of grants and other payments which have come to Wales from the European Economic Community budget.

Mr. Peter Walker: Details of identifiable EC grants and loans for the past five years are as follows:

£ million (commitments)

Sources	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*Total*
European Regional Development Fund—Quota[2]	47·3	65·6	56·9	59·5	53·8	283·1
European Regional Development Fund—Non Quota	—	7·3	—	1·0	—	8·3
European Investment Bank	23·1	13·2	47·1	28·9	[1]—	112·3
European Coal and Steel Community	44·6	19·8	36·2	14·6	[1]—	115·2
European Social Fund	24·5	1·5	3·3	4·9	[1]—	34·2
European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund[3]	57·4	60·4	53·2	67·3	[1]—	238·3
						791·4

[1]— Figures not yet available.
[2] Gross commitments
[3] EAGGF figures are based on identifiable receipts

Construction Industry

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many persons are employed in the construction industry in each of the Welsh counties; and what are the corresponding figures for each year since 1979.

Mr. Peter Walker: Data for the Welsh counties are available for 1978, 1981 and 1984 only and are as follows:

Construction—Employees in employment

Thousands

	June 1978[1]	*September 1981*[2]	*September 1984*[2]
Clwyd	8·0	5·4	5·7
Dyfed	7·0	6·1	4·9
Gwent	8·7	8·7	7·8
Gwynedd	6·9	4·8	3·4
Mid Glamorgan	10·7	8·0	8·6
Powys	2·2	1·3	1·6
South Glamorgan	10·9	10·1	8·3
West Glamorgan	11·0	8·2	6·5

Source: Censuses of Employment.
[1]Jobcentre based information; 1968 Standard Industrial Classification (SIC), Order XX; this differs from the 1980 SIC, for instance, in including open-cast coal mining operations.
[2]Ward-based information; 1980 SIC Division 5.
Note: Jobcentre and ward-based aggregates are not strictly comparable. The former are based on an amalgamation of Jobcentre areas which may not be coterminous with the county boundary and, unlike the ward-based aggregate, they include no allowance fo non response and duplication in census returns.

These figures do not include the self-employed, who constitute 20 per cent. of those employed in construction according to the 1981 census of population.

Sheepmeat

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what measures are being taken by his Department to ensure that Wales retains its present share of the sheepmeat sector in Europe on the implementation of the review of the common agriculture policy sheepmeat regime.

Mr. Peter Walker: During the review of the sheepmeat regime we will continue to resist changes which would discriminate against United Kingdom and Welsh interests and will seek to secure arrangements which would allow free but fair competition.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what measures he has taken to inform the European Commission of the views of the Welsh farming community concerning the imposition of a separate budgetary stabiliser for sheepmeat produced in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Peter Walker: Our opposition to a separate sheepmeat stabiliser for Great Britain was made clear to the Commission during the negotiations which produced the agreement at the European Council on 11-12 February 1988. In accepting the final terms of the agreement as a whole, a judgment had to be made on the overall benefits which could be achieved.

Green Pound

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has made to the European Commission concerning the views of the Welsh farming community on the devaluation of the green pound; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: My right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food—with whom I work in close collaboration on all matters of importance to agriculture—has made it clear to the Agriculture Council that some devaluation is justified in the current price fixing. He is therefore pressing the Commission to make satisfactory proposals.

Agricultural Research

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many people in Wales are employed in agricultural research in *(a)* the private sector and *(b)* the public sector.

Mr. Peter Walker: Comprehensive information on the number of people employed in Wales in agricultural research in the private sector and in the universities is not kept centrally.

At 1 May 1988, the Agricultural and Food Research Council's Welsh plant breeding station employed 224 people. Approximately 127 ADAS officers and support staff in Wales are also involved in agricultural research and development work as part of their duties.

Silage Pollution

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what measures his Department is taking to increase the awareness of farmers of the dangers of silage pollution; and what assistance his Department makes available to the industry to help the prevention of such pollution.

Mr. Peter Walker: My Department, with the help of ADAS, is continually bringing the dangers of pollution to the attention of farmers during individual farm visits, through articles in ADAS publications, and by exhibits at various demonstrations.

Farm capital grants under the agriculture improvement scheme are available for the handling, storage and treatment of agricultural effluents and waste.

Ewe Premium

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will estimate the total loss to Welsh sheep producers of the decision of the EEC sheepmeat management committee to set the 1987 ewe premium at £6·24 per ewe rather than the proposed £6·44.

Mr. Peter Walker: Some 4·7 million ewe are expected to qualify for 1987 sheep annual premium and the loss to Welsh producers as a consequence of the rate of premium being 20p less than originally anticipated will therefore be about £940,000.

Farming Income

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the percentage change in the value of farming incomes in Wales after taking inflation into account in each year since 1979.

Mr. Peter Walker: After taking account of inflation, as measured by the retail price index, the percentage change in the value of farming incomes in each year since 1979 is as follows:—

Year	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	[1] *1987*
Index of farming incomes (deflated by the RPI (1979 = 100))	100	92	115	139	68	94	46	69	81
Percentage change	—	−8	25	21	−51	38	−51	50	17

[1] Figures for 1987 are subject to revision.

Chernobyl Disaster (Compensation)

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has received concerning farmers in Wales affected by the Chernobyl disaster who fell ouside the compensation system; and what measures are being undertaken to compensate them.

Mr. Peter Walker: On 11 January 1988, the National Farmers Union in Wales presented to my Department 56 cases it considered to have been inadequately compensated by the direct losses scheme under the Chernobyl compensation arrangements. The evidence submitted by the union did not reveal any special problems or anomalies not already covered by the existing compensation arrangements. The union also confirmed that no new principles of compensation had been identified. I wrote to the chairman of the NFU in Wales on 23 March 1988 rejecting the 56 cases. I have no plans to extend the existing compensation arrangements, which I firmly believe are a fair and balanced response to producers' needs.

Rating Reform

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has received concerning the affects of the proposed community charge on farming families in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: The few representations I have received relate to ability to pay the community charge and the effect of a change in the use of buildings and land from agriculture which may make them subject to business rates. Farmers and other adults in their families, unless they are exempt, will like other adults be liable for the community charge and may be eligible for community charge benefits. If agricultural buildings and land are used for any other non-domestic purpose they will become liable for business rates under the new system, as they would under the present one. As with all non-domestic hereditaments, there will be transitional arrangements for occupiers who would otherwise face large rate increases.

Agricultural Holdings

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what has been the change in the average size of agricultural holdings in Wales since 1978, 1968, and 1958.

Mr. Peter Walker: The average area of main holdings in Wales for the years requested is as follows:

Hectares

	Average area per holding
1958	29·3
1968	38·1
1978	47·3
1987	50·0

Dairy Processing Industry

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many people are employed in the dairy processing industry in Wales; and what are the corresponding figures for 1978, 1968, and 1958.

Mr. Peter Walker: Available information is as follows:

Employees in employment (£ thousands)

	(SIC 1968) Minimum List Heading 215		*(SIC 1980) Activities 4130 and 4213*	
	1978	*1981*	*1981*	*1984*
Preparation of milk and milk products including ice-cream[1]	3·7	3·3	3·3	4·0

Source: Censuses of Employment.

[1] Under Standard Industrial Classification 1968, totals of employees in employment within the ice-cream industry were included in preparation of milk and milk products.

Due to inconsistencies in the industrial classification, comparable data for 1958 and 1968 are not available.

Mortality Rates

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what has been the mortality rate in Wales based on social classes 1 to 5 for the last 10 years for which figures are available.

Mr. Grist: Information in the form requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Nurses (Pay)

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if his Department will provide the finance to health authorities to cover the recent pay increase for nurses and for new nurses recruited to meet shortages on establishment.

Mr. Grist: The estimated additional cost of the review bodies' recommendations, which the Government have agreed to fund in full, relates to staff in post. It is a matter for local determination whether, within these and other discretionary resources available to health authorities, the numbers and grading of staff in post should be changed.

Engagements

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list his official engagements since 1 May.

Mr. Peter Walker: In addition to Cabinet, Cabinet Committee and other ministerial meetings I have, amongst others, met: the Italian ambassador, the Japanese ambassador and the governor of the Prefecture of Oita, and also met representatives of the following organisaticns:

Taff Ely Borough Council
Cynon Valley Borough Council
Merthyr Tydfil Borough Council
Ogwr Borough Council
Rhymney Valley District Council
Rhondda Borough Council
Blaenau Gwent Borough Council
Islwyn Borough Council
Torfaen Borough Council
Mid Glamorgan County Council
Dyfed County Council
Powys County Council
Neath Development Partnership
Port Talbot Co-operative Development Agency
Swansea Self Start
West Glamorgan Enterprise Trust
Business in Taff Ely
Economic Development
Partnership of the Rhymney Valley Ltd.
Ogwr Partnership Trust Ltd.
Merthyr-Aberdare Development Enterprise
Rhondda Enterprise Ltd.
Tate and Lyle plc
Chartered Trust
Rank Hovis McDougall
WINvest
MAFF Regional Panel
West Glamorgan County Council
Welsh Housing Association's Council
Secondary Housing Association for Wales
The Housing Corporation
British Coal (Enterprise) Ltd.
British Steel Corporation (Industry)
Business in the Community
Mid Glamorgan District Health Authority
Gwent District Health Authority
West Glamorgan District Health Authority
East Dyfed District Health Authority
Land Authority for Wales
St. David's College, Lampeter
Food From Britain
The Design Council
Royal College of Pathologists
Cardiff Bay Development Corporation
British Tourist Authority Board
Welsh Development Agency
Peat McLintoch.

I have addressed the:

Farmers' Union of Wales
The Institution of Gas Engineers
Business and Education Initiative Conference
National Association of Goldsmiths

launched:

Taste of Wales Ltd.
The Draft Mental Illness Strategy
The Welsh products Exhibition

and visited:

Llancaiach Fawr Elizabethan Manor
Pyrock Manufacturing Ltd.
Hitachi Consumer Products (UK) Ltd.
JR Freeman and Son Ltd
Otford Specialised Mouldings
Cardiff Business School
Coopers and Lybrand

Altogether, quite a busy month.

National Rivers Authority

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list those groups or organisations which

responded to the Government's consultation paper, proposing a national rivers authority, suggesting a separate authority for Wales.

Mr. Grist: The information requested is as follows:
Council for Wales of the National Farmers' Union;
Dee and Clwyd Local Consumer Advisory Committee;
Farmers Union of Wales;
Gwynedd Local Consumer Advisory Committee;
Usk Local Land Drainage Committee;
Welsh Consumer Council;
Welsh Office of the Association of District Councils;
Welsh Salmon and Trout Angling Association.

One individual who responded also suggested a separate authority for Wales.

Housing

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many houses in Wales, excluding the area covered in the valleys initiative, were built before 1919.

Mr. Grist [*holding answer 20 May 1988*]: In 1986 there were 324,000 dwellings built before 1919 in Wales, excluding the area covered by the valleys initiative.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Medical Accidents (Awards)

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many awards in excess of £100,000 for medical accidents caused through negligence were notified to his Department in 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986 and 1987; and if he will list the awards together with the health authority involved.

Mrs. Currie: The Department does not keep detailed statistics on such cases. However, health authorities are expected to keep the Department informed during negotiations for settlement or during the course of litigation. The Department's approval is required to write off (in health authorities' accounts) compensation payments in excess of £100,000 made under legal obligation although it may be several years between an initial notification and actual write-off. The following awards/settlements in excess of £100,000 for medical accidents caused through negligence were actually notified to the Department for write off purposes by health authorities in each of the financial years 1982-83 to 1987-88:

Year and Health Authority	*Amount of award/ settlement (£)*
1982-83	
—	—
1983-84	
Croydon	250,000
Swindon	534,000
1984-85	
Hounslow and Spelthorne	220,760
Islington	235,000
1985-86	
Bassetlaw	385,000
Grimsby	270,000
Solihull	250,000
Swindon	275,000
1986-87	
Bath	175,000
Cambridge	151,222
Central Birmingham	175,000
Central Manchester	207,000
East Berkshire	550,000
North Lincolnshire	130,000
Nottingham	115,000
Nottingham	375,000
Walsall	260,000
Wandsworth	600,000
West Surrey and North East Hampshire	150,498
1987-88	
Bloomsbury	430,000
Crewe	375,000
Torbay	350,000

Note: The figures shown represent the total amount of the award/settlement, excluding costs. They do not take account of the fact that the health authority's liability may have been reduced by a contribution from a medical defence organisation.

Electro-convulsive Therapy

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what regulations or guidelines are currently in force regarding the use of electro-convulsive therapy.

Mrs. Currie: In general electro-convulsive therapy (ECT) stands in the same position as any other treatment which may be offered or recommended in the clinical setting. Ethical and clinical standards are enforced by the professional organisations of practitioners such as the General Medical Council. For patients detained under section 58 of the Mental Health Act, however, regulation 16 specifies ECT as one of the treatments requiring consent or a second opinion. Administration of ECT for a detained patient under that section requires either the patient's informed consent or a second opinion from a doctor appointed by the Mental Health Act Commission that the treatment should be given.

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what comparisons his Department has made of the frequency of use of electro-convulsive therapy in Britain and in other countries.

Mrs. Currie: We have no information on the frequency of use of electro-convulsive therapy in other countries which would enable us to make comparisons with treatment in this country. The Department is, however, aware of two major studies of psychiatrists' attitudes and practice with regard to electro-convulsive therapy, one in the United Kingdom, one in the United States of America, references to which are contained in "Essentials of Postgraduate Psychiatry" by Hill, Murray and Thorley (Second Edition).

Hospital Beds (Waltham Forest)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, further to the answer of 5 May, *Official Report*, columns *547-49*, if he has the figures available for 1987 of the average number of available beds for *(a)* acute and *(b)* geriatric specialties in Waltham Forest district health authority.

Mrs. Currie: This information is not available in the form requested. The number of available bed days during the 1987-88 financial year, classified by ward type rather than consultant specialty, will be available later this year.

Blandford Fly

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what respresentations he has received on the hazards to health caused by the Blandford fly; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: No representations have been received about the unpleasant toxic bite of this fly, which I understand can cause painful swelling of the joints.

AIDS

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the number of recorded instances of persons infected with the AIDS virus within the Leicestershire health district.

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will provide the current figures per district health authority for England and Wales of patients registered as being infected by the AIDS virus.

Mr. Newton: I regret that this information is not held centrally. Figures on the latest number of reported cases of AIDS, by regional health authority are published monthly. Similar statistics on reported HIV antibody positive persons are published quarterly. Copies are available in the Library. The reports required under the AIDS (Control) Act 1987, the first of which will be submitted later this year, will contain figures on the number of positive results obtained from blood samples taken for the purposes of HIV antibody tests by facilities and services provided by district health authorities.

Departmental Efficiency (Blackpool)

Mr. Holt: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps are being taken to improve efficiency in his Department's headquarters in Blackpool.

Mr. Portillo: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to him on 8 March 1988 at column *163*.

Nursing Homes

Mr. Holt: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many additional nursing homes in the private sector have been opened in the past five years; and how many beds this represents.

Mrs. Currie: The number of private hospital homes and clinics registered in England has risen by 1,052 from 1,214 in 1982 to 2,266 in 1986, the latest date for which information is held centrally. Over the same period, the total available bed stock rose from 34,786 to 62,112, an increase of 27,326.

Tobacco (Health Warnings)

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he has received the response of the tobacco industry to the 1986 voluntary agreement on tobacco products' advertising and promotion, and health warnings; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The agreement commenced on 1 April 1986 and is due to run until 31 October 1989. There is no reason for the industry to respond to the agreement over and above their compliance with the terms. The working of the agreement is overseen by the committee for monitoring agreements on tobacco advertising and sponsorship whose first report was published on 23 March. Copies are available in the Library. The Government have indicated their intention to seek the renegotiation of the agreement to reflect current needs.

Children (Malignancy)

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what are the latest figures for the proportion of children newly diagnosed with malignancy who are expected to survive.

Mrs. Currie: The latest available information is shown in the table. It shows the percentage of children of each age groups which are expected to survive for five years after the date of diagnosis, based on cases newly diagnosed in 1981. It should be noted that survival is likely to vary considerably depending on the type and site of the cancer.

Relative[1] five-year survival rates (per cent.) for children newly diagnosed with malignancies in 1981, England and Wales.

	Age group	
	0-4	*5-14*
Males	63·0	62·0
Females	55·0	56·9

[1] Adjusted to take account of the probability of surviving five years in sex and age group at death rates for England and Wales.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish the figures in real and cash terms for expenditure on housing benefit in the last three financial years of the old scheme and the estimated expenditure for the current financial year.

Mr. Portillo: Expenditure on housing benefit in the last three financial years of the old scheme and estimated expenditure for the current financial year in real and cash terms is set out in the tables. Real expenditure is shown in 1988/89 prices. Estimated expenditure for the current financial year includes the changes announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to the House on 27 April 1988.

£ million

	1985-86	*1986-87*	*1987-88*	*[1]1988-89*
Table 1: Cash expenditure				
Housing benefit				
rent allowance and rebate	3,129	3,368	3,620	3,936
rate rebate	1,510	1,650	1,760	1,378
TOTAL	4,639	5,018	5,380	5,314
Table 2: Real expenditure (1988-89 prices)				
Housing benefit				
rent allowance and rebate	3,545	3,696	3,783	3,936
rate rebate	1,711	1,810	1,839	1,378
TOTAL	5,256	5,506	5,622	5,314

[1] Estimate.

Mr. Graham: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people in Renfrew district council and

Inverclyde district council are in receipt of less money due to the changes in housing benefits; and if he will show their previous and current entitlement.

Mr. Portillo: I regret that information relating to individual local authorities is not available.

Mr. Graham: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will visit the constituencies of Renfrew, West and Inverclyde in 1988 to meet those who have had their housing benefit cut due to the recent changes in benefits.

Mr. Portillo: We have no immediate plans to do so.

Mentally Ill Patients

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many mentally ill and mentally handicapped patients have moved from hospital care into residential care that is funded in full by supplementary benefit payments.

Mr. Portillo: I regret that the information requested is not available centrally.

Family Income Statistics

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many children in Scotland were living in families below supplementary benefit level, on supplementary benefit and with incomes up to 140 per cent. of supplementary benefit level, classified by employment status; whether they were in one or two-parent families in 1985 on the latest basis and on a basis comparable with 1979 and 1981; and what proportion these children made up of the total number of children;

(2) how many people in Scotland in 1985 were *(a)* below, *(b)* at and *(c)* up to 140 per cent. of the supplementary benefit level on the latest basis and on a basis comparable with 1979 and 1981; what percentage of the total population they represent in each case; what is his estimate of the number of childen living in such households in each case: and what percentage of total children they represent in each case.

Mr. Portillo: Separate analyses for Scotland, Wales and particular regions cannot be prepared on a reliable basis. Figures based on the methods of "Households Below Average Income: 1981-85" and "Low Income Families —1985" are available only for Great Britain as a whole. More detailed discussion of the reasons leading to this conclusion may be found in chapter 1, paragraph 14 and chapter 3, paragraph 11 of "Low Income Statistics—Report of a Technical Review: March 1988", copies of which are in the Library. The principal difficulty is that the family expenditure survey does not allow reliable estimates of those with low incomes to be made below the national level.

Carbadox and Olaquindox

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what evidence his Department holds about the role of Carbadox as a carcinogen in humans.

Mrs. Currie: The Department holds information from animal test data provided by the manufacturers, Pfizer Ltd.; also the following published scientific reports:

1. Bentin L, Preller E, and Kowalsi B. Antimicrob. Agents Chemotherap. *20*. 336-343, 1981.
2. Yoshimura H, Nakamura M, Koeda T, and Yoshikawa K. Mut. Res. *90:* 49-55, 1981.
3. Voogd C E, Van der Stel J J, and Jacobs J J J A A. Mut. Res. *78:* 233-242, 1980.
4. Negishi T, Tanaka K, and Hayatsu H. Chem. Pharm. Bul. *28:* 1347-1349, 1980.
5. Ohta T, Moriya M, Kaneda Y, Watanabe K, Miyazawa T, Sugiyama F, and Shirasu Y. Mut. Res. *77:* 21-30, 1980.
6. Shirasu Y, Moriya M, and Kato K. Mut. Res. *53:* 261, 1978. (Abstract).
7. Oud J L, Reutlinger A H H, and Branger J. Mut. Res. *68:* 179-182, 1979.
8. Cihak R, Srb V, and Vontorkava M. Mut. Res. *116:* 129-135, 1983.
9. Sykora and Vortel 1986. Natal study of the Carcinogenicity of Cyadox and Carbadox. Biol. Vet. Chem. (Praha) *22*, 53-62.

The Department holds sufficient evidence to establish that this compound is a mutagen and a carcinogen, both in laboratory tests and in living animals.

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what evidence his Department has that the compounds of Carbadox and Olaquindox are mutagens.

Mrs. Currie: The Department holds information from animal test data provided by the manufacturers, Pfizer and Bayer respectively, and the following published scientific reports:

1. Bentin L., Prellar E. and Kowalski B. (1981): Mutagenicity of quindoxin, its matabolites and two substituted Quinoxaline-di-N-oxides. Antimicrob. Agents and Chemother. *20* (3): 336-343.
2. Cihak R., Srb V. and Vontorkova M. (1983). Cytogenetic effects of quixoxaline-1,4-dioxide-type growth-promoting agents. I. Micro-nucleus test in rats. Mutat. Res. *116:* 129-135.
3. Cihak R. and Vontorkova M. (1983). Cytogenetic effects of quinoxaline-1,4-dioxide-type growth-promoting agents. II. Metaphase analysis in mice. Mutat. Res. *117:* 311-316.
4. Cihak R. and Vontorkova M. (1985). Cytogenetic effects of quinoxaline-1,4-dioxide-type growth-promoting agents. III. Transplacental micronucleas test in mice. Mutat. Res. *144* (2): 81-84.
5. English A. R. and Dunegan C. M. (1970). Quinoxaline-1,4-di-N-oxides. I. Inhibition of deoxyribonucleic acid synthesis in Escherichia coli by 2,3-dihydroxymethyl-quinoxaline-1,4-di-N-oxide (34481). Proc. Soc. Expl. Biol. Med. *133:* 398-400.
6. Suter W., Rosselet A. and Knussel F. (1978). Mode of action of quindoxin and substituted quinoxaline-di-N-oxides on Escherichia coli. Antimicrob. Agents and Chemotherap. *13* (5): 770-783.
7. Voogd C. E., van der Stel J. J. and Jacobs J. J. J. A. A. (1980). The Mutagenic action of quindoxin, carbadox, olaquindox and some other N-oxides on bacteria and yeast. Mutat. Res. *78:* 233-242, 1980.
8. Yoshimura H., Nakamura M. and Koeda T. (1981). Mutagenic activities of carbadox and olaquindox—growth promoters for pigs. Mutat. Res. *90:* 49-55.
9. Negishi T., Tanaka K., Hayatsu H. (1980). Mutagenicity of carbadox and several quinoxaline-1,4-dioxide derivative. Chem. Pharm. Bull. *28*, 1347-1349.
10. Windholz M., Budavari S., Blumetti R. F., Otterbein E. S. (Eds) (1983). The Merck Index, Merck and Co. Inc. Rahway, New Jersey.
11. Sykora A. and Vortel V. (1986). Natal Study of the Carcinogenicity of Cyadox and Carbadox. Biol. Vet. Chem. (Praha): *22*, pages 53-62.
12. Ohta T., Moriya M., Kaneda Y., Watanabe K., Miyazawa T., Sugiyama F., and Shirasu Y. Mut. Res. *77:* 21-30, 1980.
13. Shirasu Y., Moriya M., and Kato K. Mut. Res. *53:* 261, 1978.

14. Oud J. L., Reutlinger A. H. H. and Branger J. Mut. Res. *68:* 179-182, 1979.

The Department holds sufficient evidence to establish that these compounds are mutagens, both in laboratory tests and in living animals.

Glaucoma

Mr. Tom Arnold: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what arrangements he intends to make for identifying and advising close relatives of sufferers of glaucoma.

Mrs. Currie: Appropriate arrangements have still to be decided. We shall need to consult the medical profession and others before any scheme is finalised.

Electorate (Hertfordshire)

Mr. Robert B. Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will set out a table showing the 1988 electorate for each ward in the districts of *(a)* Stevenage, *(b)* Watford, *(c)* Welwyn Hatfield and *(d)* Hertsmere.

Mrs. Currie: The information requested is as follows:

District of Stevenage

Ward name	*Parliamentary electorate on the 1988 register*
Stevenage Parliamentary Constituency	
Symonds Green	5,414
Old Stevenage	5,311
Wellfield	1,700
St. Nicholas	3,867
Martins Wood	4,797
Pin Green	3,961
Mobbsbury	3,512
Chells	3,257
Bedwell Plash	3,996
Monkswood	2,474
Shephall	3,522
Bandley Hill	6,065
Roebuck	4,235
Longmeadow	5,129

(b) District of Watford

Ward name	*Parliamentary electorate on the 1988 register*
Watford Parliamentary Constituency	
Woodside	5,028
Stanborough	4,853
Meriden	5,646
Leggatts	4,306
Callowland	4,197
Tudor	4,964
Nascot	5,045
Central	4,715
Park	4,233
Vicarage	5,636
Holywell	4,360
Oxhey	4,810

(c) District of Welwyn Hatfield

Ward name	*Parliamentary Electorate on the 1988 register*
Welwyn Hatfield Parliamentary Constituency	
Welwyn West	3,021
Welwyn East	4,186
Handside	5,090
Peartree	5,004
Hollybush	4,341
Howlands	4,664
Sherrards	4,771
Haldens	8,924
Hatfield East	5,782
Hatfield West	5,343
Hatfield North	4,714
Hatfield Central	4,483
Brookmans Park and Little Heath	4,349
Welham Green and Redhall	5,522
Broxbourne Parliamentary Constituency	
Northaw	4,363

(d) District of Hertsmere

Ward name	*Parliamentary Electorate on the 1988 register*
Hertsmere Parliamentary Constituency	
Aldenham East	3,576
Aldenham West	3,560
Brookmeadow	3,050
Campions	1,984
Cowley	4,272
Elstree	4,123
Heath North	3,959
Heath South	3,759
Hillside	3,449
Kenilworth	3,044
Lyndhurst	3,346
Mill	3,482
Potters Bar Central	3,207
Potters Bar East	4,850
Potters Bar North	3,754
Potters Bar South	2,921
Potters Bar West	3,702
St. James East	3,185
St. James West	3,539
Shenley	1,558

Hospices

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) whether he has any information concerning the numbers of nursing staff currently employed by hospices;

(2) whether he has any information concerning the total size and percentage of total spending represented by nursing costs to hospices.

Mr. Newton: Most hospices are independent voluntary bodies and such information is therefore not collected centrally.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) whether he has any plans to take steps to assist hospices in meeting the cost of the new pay levels for nursing personnel;

(2) whether he gives any guidance to regional health authorities about assistance given to hospices to meet nursing costs; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) on 10 May at column *140*.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received concerning the problems faced by hospices in meeting the new pay levels for nursing personnel.

Mr. Newton: We have had representations from "Help the Hospices" and from a number of individual hospices through their local Members of Parliament.

Research Grants

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the current level of funding by his Department for research project grants targeted to the elderly and care in the community.

Mrs. Currie: In 1987-88 £2·3 million of the Department's research budget was spent on community care projects. £1 million of this was spent on research focusing particularly on the elderly, whilst the remaining sum supported research into community care affecting all age groups. Expenditure in 1988-89 is likely to be at a similar level.

Invalidity Pensions

Mr. Graham: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people living in the area of *(a)* Renfrew district council and *(b)* Inverclyde district council are receiving invalidity pensions.

Mr. Portillo: I regret that information is not available in the precise form requested. The Department's local offices at Johnstone, Paisley and Port Glasgow serve the area covered by Renfrew district council and the local offices at Greenock and Port Glasgow serve the area covered by Inverclyde district council, but their boundaries are not conterminous.

The numbers of people claiming sickness benefit or invalidity pension at these local offices as at 30 April 1988, the latest date for which information is available, is as follows:

	Number
Johnstone ILO	3,050
Paisley ILO	7,022
Port Glasgow ILO	1,868
Greenock ILO	4,152

I regret that separate records are not kept of the numbers of claimants in receipt of sickness benefit and invalidity pension.

The source of the above information is a 100 per cent. count of cases in action.

Pneumoconiosis

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the basis for estimation of pneumoconiosis damage for payment of miners' industrial injury benefit.

Mr. Scott: Where a claim is made for industrial injuries disablement benefit for the prescribed disease pneumoconiosis the extent of the disablement is assessed by a special medical board. The board takes into account the nature and extent of the symptoms as explained by the claimant to the board doctors, the physical signs found on clinical examination, the extent of the radiological changes of pneumoconiosis, the results of lung function tests, and any other medical evidence. The results of the tests are compared with the results expected of a normal healthy person of the same age, sex and height.

Other conditions which are present, particularly pulmonary tuberculosis, chronic bronchitis or emphysema may also be taken into account in assessing the overall disablement.

War Pensions

Mr. Graham: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people living in *(a)* Renfrew, West and *(b)* Inverclyde are receiving war pensions.

Mr. Portillo: This information is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Invalid Care and Mobility Allowance

Mr. Graham: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many people in the Renfrew, West and Inverclyde constituency are receiving invalid care allowance; and if he will also give the figures for Renfrew district council and Inverclyde district council areas;

(2) how many people in Renfrew district council and Inverclyde district council areas are receiving mobility allowance.

Mr. Portillo: I regret that this information is not available.

Southampton Office

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what are his plans for his Department's local office in Southampton over the next five years.

Mr. Portillo: At the present time the Department has no plans to change the location or boundaries of its office in Southampton.

Essex Hospitals

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many individual representations he has received in opposition to West Essex health authority plans for Princess Alexandra hospital, Harlow, and the corresponding downgrading of St. Margaret's hospital, Epping, and the Hertfordshire and Essex hospital, Bishop's Stortford.

Mrs. Currie: We have received five letters which have been referred by hon. Members together with several thousand letters direct from members of the public and a number of petitions about changes to services at St. Margaret's and the Herts and Essex hospitals proposed by West Essex health authority.

Abortions

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the range of fees charged by private clinics operating with a Department of Health and Social Security licence for terminations of pregnancy together with the range of gestational ages to which they apply.

Mr. Newton: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to him on 17 November 1987 at columns *524-5*. He may wish to approach individual approved places direct about the levels of their fees.

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list the number of private clinics licensed by his Department to conduct terminations of pregnancy from 1968 to the latest date for which figures are available;

(2) if he will list the private clinics licensed to conduct terminations of pregnancy which have had their licences revoked since 1968 together with the grounds for that withdrawal of the licence.

Mr. Newton: Our records show that in the period since 1968, 110 places have been approved under the Abortion Act 1967. Of these, 38 are no longer approved for the following reasons:

	Places
Approval ceased at proprietor's request or because of change of ownership	17
Approval withdrawn by DHSS because of a breach of the Assurances or mismanagement by the proprietors	21

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the number of applications by private clinics to conduct terminations of pregnancy which have been refused by his Department since 1968 together with the grounds for refusal.

Mr. Newton: Our records show six cases in which an application reached its final stages but was refused. In each case this was because the proprietor was considered unsuitable.

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the number of related prosecutions that have been brought following the revocation of a licence to terminate pregnancy against the proprietors of private clinics since 1968.

Mr. Newton: The information available indicates that of the prosecutions brought under the Abortion Act none has been directly related to the withdrawal of an approval.

Supplementary Benefit

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what has been the total level of supplementary benefits payments that have been made in respect of residential care for elderly people in each of the last three years.

Mr. Portillo: I refer the hon. Member to the reply to the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) on 29 April at column *336*.

Regional Health Authorities (Budgets)

Mr. Corbett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will list the total budgets for each regional health authority in the United Kingdom for the last 10 years.

Mr. Newton: For information on the total revenue and capital expenditure incurred by health authorities in England, including analyses by region (and for recent years to individual regional and district health authorities), I refer the hon. Member to the Department's annual booklet "Health Authorities' Annual Accounts—National Summary (England)"—copies of which are held in the Library.

Questions concerning health authorities in the other countries within the United Kingdom are matters for my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland and my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Wales and Northern Ireland.

Population Statistics

Mr. Corbett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will list the current population of each regional health authority in the United Kingdom.

Mrs. Currie: Estimates of resident populations in mid-1986 are listed in the table. Figures relating to mid-1987 will be available shortly.

	Thousands
	Number
England: Regional Health Authorities	
Northern	3,080·2
Yorkshire	3,601·4
Trent	4,633·8
East Anglian	1,991·6
North West Thames	3,488·1
North East Thames	3,760·8
South East Thames	3,618·6
South West Thames	2,964·5
Wessex	2,876·4
Oxford	2,476·3
South Western	3,177·5
West Midlands	5,181·2
Mersey	2,414·1
North Western	3,989·8
Wales	2,821·0
Scotland: Health Board Areas	
Borders	101·8
Central	271·8
Dumfries and Galloway	146·8
Fife	343·8
Grampian	502·9
Highland	200·8
Lothian	741·9
Tayside	392·3
Orkney Islands	19·3
Shetland Islands	23·6
Western Isles Islands Area	31·5
Strathclyde Health Areas	
Argyll and Clyde	445·3
Ayrshire and Arran	374·8
Greater Glasgow	959·8
Lanarkshire	564·6
Northern Ireland: Health and Personal Social Services Boards	
Eastern	642·1
Northern	379·0
Southern	288·9
Western	256·8

Mr. Speed: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what projections of population growth his Department are using for planning purposes over the next five years in the South East Thames region, and for each of the Kent health authorities.

Mrs. Currie: It is for the South East Thames regional health authority to plan services for that region making use of available population projections such as those published by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys.

Office of Population Censuses and Surveys

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether there is to be any change in the running cost limit of the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys.

Mrs. Currie: Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary supplementary estimate, the gross running cost limit for OPCS Class XX Vote 16 will be increased by £50,000 from £38,002,000 to £38,052,000 reflecting increased expenditure by OPCS on services provided to the Ministry of Defence. The MoD gross running cost limit for Class I Vote I will be correspondingly reduced by £50,000. There is no overall increase in gross running costs as a result of these changes.

Benefit Changes (Coventry)

Mr. Nellist: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish tables using the assumptions in his answer to the then hon. Member for Kensington (Sir B. Rhys Williams) of 4 February, *Official Report*, column 737, but using expenditure and benefit figures appropriate for families in Coventry for which he has sufficient data, and with an additional column showing the extent of the differences that will result from the changes in benefits in April.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 3 May 1988]:* The information requested is set out in the tables. It should be noted that the results are essentially hypothetical. They compare the post-reform position in April 1988 not with the actual pre-reform cash situation but with a hypothetical position which they might have been in, had the previous structure continued and been uprated on the assumptions in "Impact of the Reformed Structure of Income Related Benefits" (October 1987). Second, the comparisons are based on average local authority housing charges in Coventry but do not reflect the wide variety of rents and domestic rates that people actually pay. Finally the comparisons do not take account of the transitional cash protection arrangements announced on the 27 April.

More importantly the claimants in the examples are in the groups that may qualify for transitional protection under the arrangement announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on 27 April. The cash differences will, therefore, in those cases be significantly lower (£2·50).

Old benefit system at hypothetical rates April 1988
Coventry L.A.
Married couple with two children aged 4 and 6

Earnings	*Tax*	*National insurance*	*Family income supplement*	*Child benefit*	*Rent*	*Rent rebate*	*Rates*	*Rate rebate*	*Fares to work*	*FSM*	*FWM*	*Net weekly spending power*
60·00	0·00	3·00	28·70	14·50	22·44	18·88	10·79	7·27	5·85	2·55	1·83	91·65
70·00	0·00	4·90	23·70	14·50	22·44	17·63	10·79	6·87	5·85	2·55	1·83	93·10
80·00	1·22	5·60	18·70	14·50	22·44	16·38	10·79	6·47	5·85	2·55	1·83	94·53
90·00	3·92	6·30	13·70	14·50	22·44	15·13	10·79	6·07	5·85	2·55	1·83	94·48
100·00	6·62	7·00	8·70	14·50	22·44	13·88	10·79	5·67	5·85	2·55	1·83	94·43
110·00	9·32	9·90	3·70	14·50	22·44	12·36	10·79	5·10	5·85	2·55	1·83	91·74
120·00	12·02	10·80	0·00	14·50	22·44	10·28	10·79	4·28	5·85	2·55	0·00	89·71
130·00	14·72	11·70	0·00	14·50	22·44	6·98	10·79	2·98	5·85	2·55	0·00	91·51
140·00	17·42	12·60	0·00	14·50	22·44	3·68	10·79	1·68	5·85	2·55	0·00	93·31
150·00	20·12	13·50	0·00	14·50	22·44	0·00	10·79	0·00	5·85	2·55	0·00	94·35
160·00	22·82	14·40	0·00	14·50	22·44	0·00	10·79	0·00	5·85	0·00	0·00	98·20
170·00	25·52	15·30	0·00	14·50	22·44	0·00	10·79	0·00	5·85	0·00	0·00	104·60

New benefit system from April 1988
Coventry L.A.
Married couple with two children aged 4 and 6

Earnings	*Tax*	*National insurance*	*FC*	*Child benefit*	*Rent*	*Rent rebate*	*Rates*	*Rate rebate*	*Fares to work*	*Net weekly spending power*	*Difference between systems*
60·00	0·00	3·00	40·32	14·50	22·44	7·68	10·79	2·84	5·85	83·26	−8·39
70·00	0·00	4·90	34·65	14·50	22·44	6·10	10·79	2·36	5·85	83·63	−9·47
80·00	1·22	5·60	28·99	14·50	22·44	4·52	10·79	1·87	5·85	83·98	−10·55
90·00	3·92	6·30	24·37	14·50	22·44	3·23	10·79	1·47	5·85	84·27	−10·21
100·00	6·62	7·00	19·75	14·50	22·44	1·95	10·79	1·08	5·85	84·58	−9·85
110·00	9·32	9·90	16·67	14·50	22·44	1·09	10·79	0·81	5·85	84·77	−6·97
120·00	12·02	10·80	12·19	14·50	22·44	0·00	10·79	0·00	5·85	84·79	−4·92
130·00	14·72	11·70	7·71	14·50	22·44	0·00	10·79	0·00	5·85	86·71	−4·80
140·00	17·42	12·60	3·23	14·50	22·44	0·00	10·79	0·00	5·85	88·63	−4·68
150·00	20·12	13·50	0·00	14·50	22·44	0·00	10·79	0·00	5·85	91·80	−2·55
160·00	22·82	14·40	0·00	14·50	22·44	0·00	10·79	0·00	5·85	98·20	0·00
170·00	25·52	15·30	0·00	14·50	22·44	0·00	10·79	0·00	5·85	104·60	0·00

Old benefit system at hypothetical rates April 1988
Coventry L.A.
Married couple with three children aged 3, 8 and 11

Earnings	Tax	National insurance	Family income supplement	Child benefit	Rent	Rent rebate	Rates	Rate rebate	Fares to work	FSM	FWM	Net weekly spending power
60·00	0·00	3·00	32·90	21·75	22·44	19·91	10·79	7·60	5·85	5·10	1·83	107·01
70·00	0·00	4·90	30·50	21·75	22·44	18·01	10·79	6·99	5·85	5·10	1·83	110·20
80·00	1·22	5·60	25·50	21·75	22·44	16·76	10·79	6·59	5·85	5·10	1·83	111·63
90·00	3·92	6·30	20·50	21·75	22·44	15·51	10·79	6·19	5·85	5·10	1·83	111·58
100·00	6·62	7·00	15·50	21·75	22·44	14·26	10·79	5·79	5·85	5·10	1·83	111·53
110·00	9·32	9·90	10·50	21·75	22·44	12·87	10·79	5·30	5·85	5·10	1·83	109·05
120·00	12·02	10·80	5·50	21·75	22·44	11·22	10·79	4·65	5·85	5·10	1·83	108·15
130·00	14·72	11·70	0·50	21·75	22·44	9·57	10·79	4·00	5·85	5·10	1·83	107·25
140·00	17·42	12·60	0·00	21·75	22·44	6·44	10·79	2·77	5·85	5·10	0·00	106·96
150·00	20·12	13·50	0·00	21·75	22·44	3·14	10·79	1·47	5·85	5·10	0·00	108·76
160·00	22·82	14·40	0·00	21·75	22·44	0·00	10·79	0·00	5·85	5·10	0·00	110·55
170·00	25·52	15·30	0·00	21·75	22·44	0·00	10·79	0·00	5·85	0·00	0·00	111·85

New benefit system from April 1988
Coventry L.A.
Married couple with three children aged 3, 8 and 11

Earnings	Tax	National insurance	FC	Child benefit	Rent	Rent rebate	Rates	Rate rebate	Fares to work	Net weekly spending power	Difference between systems
60·00	0·00	3·00	51·72	21·75	22·44	6·02	10·79	2·33	5·85	99·74	−7·27
70·00	0·00	4·90	46·05	21·75	22·44	4·44	10·79	1·85	5·85	100·11	−10·09
80·00	1·22	5·60	40·39	21·75	22·44	2·86	10·79	1·36	5·85	100·46	−11·17
90·00	3·92	6·30	35·77	21·75	22·44	1·58	10·79	0·96	5·85	100·76	−10·82
100·00	6·62	7·00	31·15	21·75	22·44	0·00	10·79	0·57	5·85	100·77	−10·76
110·00	9·32	9·90	28·07	21·75	22·44	0·00	10·79	0·00	5·85	101·52	−7·53
120·00	12·02	10·80	23·59	21·75	22·44	0·00	10·79	0·00	5·85	103·44	−4·71
130·00	14·72	11·70	19·11	21·75	22·44	0·00	10·79	0·00	5·85	105·36	−1·89
140·00	17·42	12·60	14·63	21·75	22·44	0·00	10·79	0·00	5·85	107·28	0·32
150·00	20·12	13·50	10·15	21·75	22·44	0·00	10·79	0·00	5·85	109·20	0·44
160·00	22·82	14·40	5·67	21·75	22·44	0·00	10·79	0·00	5·85	111·12	0·57
170·00	25·52	15·30	1·19	21·75	22·44	0·00	10·79	0·00	5·85	113·04	1·19

Old benefit system at hypothetical rates April 1988
Coventry L.A.
Lone parent with two children aged 4 and 6

Earnings	Tax	National insurance	Family income supplement	Child benefit	Rent	Rent rebate	Rates	Rate rebate	Fares to work	FSM	FWM	Net weekly spending power
60.00	0·00	3·00	28·70	19·40	22·44	17·65	10·79	6·88	5·85	2·55	1·83	94·93
70·00	0·00	4·90	23·70	19·40	22·44	16·40	10·79	6·48	5·85	2·55	1·83	96·38
80·00	1·22	5·60	18·70	19·40	22·44	15·15	10·79	6·08	5·85	2·55	1·83	97·81
90·00	3·92	6·30	13·70	19·40	22·44	13·90	10·79	5·68	5·85	2·55	1·83	97·76
100·00	6·62	7·00	8·70	19·40	22·44	12·39	10·79	5·12	5·85	2·55	1·83	97·29
110·00	9·32	9·90	3·70	19·40	22·44	10·74	10·79	4·47	5·85	2·55	1·83	94·39
120·00	12·02	10·80	0·00	19·40	22·44	8·66	10·79	3·65	5·85	2·55	0·00	92·36

New benefit system from April 1988
Coventry L.A.
Lone parent with two children aged 4 and 6

Earnings	Tax	National insurance	FC	Child benefit	Rent	Rent rebate	Rates	Rate rebate	Fares to work	Net weekly spending power	Difference between systems
60·00	0·00	3·00	40·32	19·40	22·44	1·60	10·79	0·97	5·85	80·21	−14·72
70·00	0·00	4·90	34·65	19·40	22·44	0·00	10·79	0·00	5·85	80·07	−16·31
80·00	1·22	5·60	28·99	19·40	22·44	0·00	10·79	0·00	5·85	82·49	−15·32
90·00	3·92	6·30	24·37	19·40	22·44	0·00	10·79	0·00	5·85	84·47	−13·29
100.00	6·62	7·00	19·75	19·40	22·44	0·00	10·79	0·00	5·85	86·45	−10·84
110·00	9·32	9·90	16·67	19·40	22·44	0·00	10·79	0·00	5·85	87·77	−6·62
120·00	12·02	10·80	12·19	19·40	22·44	0·00	10·79	0·00	5·85	89·69	−2·67

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 7 June 1988

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Brush Ltd.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if Brush Ltd. of Loughborough has filed its accounts or completed an annual return at Companies house for the last financial year.

Mr. Maude: The Registrar of Companies informs me that there is no company registered in England and Wales with the name Brush Ltd. However, there are five companies with the prefix Brush which have their registered office in Loughborough. None of these is currently in default of filing annual returns or accounts. Copies of documents are available from the search rooms at Companies house, London and Cardiff.

Competition Policy

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what submissions he has made to the European Community review of competition policy.

Mr. Maude: The Government are participating fully in working party discussions of the European Commission proposal for a merger control regulation. Discussion has so far largely concentrated on clarification of the text of the proposed regulation.

Rural Development Areas

Sir Richard Body: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether in other parts of the EEC there are assisted areas comparable in nature to the rural development areas in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Atkins: The information available to me relates to systems of national regional aids which attract European Community financial support. These all include some rural areas, as do the assisted areas in Great Britain. I have no readily available information about additional rural areas which may attract some measure of national assistance. This could not be obtained without disproportionate expense and probably some difficulty of exact comparison with British rural development areas.

Local Manufacturing Investment

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what measures currently exist to stimulate local manufacturing investment through the restraining of imports from Japan and Taiwan.

Mr. Alan Clark: There are no such restraint measures on imports from Japan or Taiwan, except for some quantitative restrictions on certain textile and clothing imports from Taiwan. These restrictions form part of the Community arrangements for textiles and clothing to allow European industry to adjust to new competition from low-cost suppliers. There are, however, some informal, inter-industry voluntary arrangements with Japanese producers, details of which were given in the written answer of 30 March, *Official Report* columns *478-79*, to a question raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Darlington (Mr. Fallon).

Fab Fashions

Mr. Giles Radice: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what report he has received from the Official Receiver investigating the affairs of Fab Fashions; and what action he intends to take against Mr. Godfrey Barnard for auditing the accounts of a company of which he was a director.

Mr. Maude: Inquiries into these matters are continuing. It would therefore be inappropriate for me to comment further or speculate on the outcome of those inquiries at this time.

House of Fraser plc

Mr. Neil Hamilton: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the estimated cost to public funds so far of the current inquiry into House of Fraser plc.

Mr. Maude: The cost of the investigation up to and including 30 April 1988 totalled £1,032,747.

Mr. Neil Hamilton: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when inspectors were appointed to carry out the current inquiry into House of Fraser plc; and what is the earliest date on which he expects to receive their report.

Mr. Maude: Mr. Phillip Linnell Heslop QC and Mr. Hugh Graham Cazalet Aldous FCA were appointed on 9 April 1987 under the provisions of section 432(2) of the Companies Act 1985 to act as inspectors to investigate the affairs of House of Fraser Holdings plc. Mr. Heslop resigned his appointment on 13 May 1987 and was replaced by Mr. Henry Brooke QC on 15 May 1987. The inspectors are continuing their investigations but I am unable to say when a report will be received.

Cemetery Assets United Kingdom

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster who was the receiver in the case of Cemetery Assets United Kingdom.

Mr. Maude: The Registrar of Companies has no record of the appointment of a receiver to this company.

Mr. John Wyebrow

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on what occasions Mr. John Wyebrow has been employed by Her Majesty's Government in the capacity of receiver.

Mr. Maude: Records in a form which would enable any such appointments to be readily identified are not maintained by my Department.

Voluntary Restraint Arrangements

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the nature of Her Majesty's Government's support for those voluntary restraint arrangements which remain in effect.

Mr. Alan Clark: In the case of those voluntary restraint arrangements which are continuing, the Government have told the industries concerned that for the present they are prepared to accept that the arrangements are justified. The negotiation of the arrangements is a matter for those industries.

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on what date each of the voluntary restraint arrangements listed as remaining in effect in his answer of 30 March to the hon. Member for Darlington, *Official Report*, column 478, is known to have started.

Mr. Alan Clark: The inter-industry voluntary restraint arrangements covering footwear from Korea, special steels from Spain and cars and light commercial vehicles from Japan began in 1979. The arrangements for fork-lift trucks, machining centres and numerically controlled lathes with Japan began in 1983.

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) what assessment he has made of the net cost to the economy of the voluntary restraint arrangement on numerically controlled lathes as against any benefit to United Kingdom industry of its continuation;

(2) what assessment he has made of the balance between the net cost to the economy of the voluntary restraint arrangement on cars from Japan and the benefits to the United Kingdom motor industry of its continuation;

(3) what assessment he has made of whether the net cost to the economy of the voluntary restraint arrangement on commercial vehicles from Japan outweighs the benefit to United Kingdom industry of its continuation;

(4) what assessment he has made of whether the net cost to the economy of the voluntary restraint arrangement on fork-lift trucks from Japan outweighs the benefit to United Kingdom industry of its continuation;

(5) what assessment he has made of whether the net cost to the economy of the voluntary restraint arrangement on machining centres from Japan outweighs any benefit to United Kingdom industry of its continuation.

Mr. Alan Clark: I refer my hon. Friend to my written answer of 26 April, *Official Report*, column *92-93*, to a similar question by my hon. Friend the Member for Tatton (Mr. Hamilton). The Government have no plans to carry out such assessments for vehicles VRAs with Japan.

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will list those orderly marketing arrangements of which his Department is aware.

Mr. Alan Clark: I am not aware of any orderly marketing or similar arrangements between United Kingdom industries and third country suppliers affecting imports into the United Kingdom, other than those arrangements set out in the written answer to my hon. Friend on 30 March, *Official Report*, columns *478-479*.

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will place in the Library a copy of the document in which Her Majesty's Government set out their support for the voluntary restraint arrangement between the United Kingdom footwear industry and the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Alan Clark: No, I do not propose to make available correspondence about voluntary restraint arrangements which are continuing.

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster which of the voluntary restraint arrangements listed in his answer to the hon. Member for Darlington of 26 April, *Official Report*, columns 91-92, December 1987 have ended, and which remain in effect.

Mr. Alan Clark: The Government have told the industries concerned that the arrangements should end on 31 December 1987. This information has of course been made public.

European Single Market

Sir David Price: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what changes will be necessary in United Kingdom company legislation in order to satisfy the harmonisation requirements of the European Community for the achievement of the single market in 1992.

Mr. Maude: The European Community has been working for many years on a series of proposals from the Commission for harmonising company law. The first, second, third, fourth and sixth company law directives have been agreed by the Council of Ministers and implemented in United Kingdom legislation. Agreement has also been reached by the Council of Ministers on the seventh directive on consolidated accounts, the eight directive on qualification of auditors and the regulation for a European economic interest grouping; proposals for relevant changes in United Kingdom company legislation necessary to implement these will be brought forward at the earliest opportunity. A further seven proposals on company legislation were included in the Commission's 1985 White Paper "Completing the Internal Market" but the Government do not consider them all to be necessary for achievement of the single market by 1992. Negotiations have not been completed on any of these—indeed the Commission has not yet published all of its proposals. It is therefore not possible to say at this stage what legislative changes might be necessary if any of these was adopted.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what research has been undertaken by his Department into the effects of the completion of the single European market in 1992 on the economies of the regions of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Maude *[holding answer 27 May 1988]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Dr. Thomas) on 13 April at column *159*.

Companies Registration Office

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement about the current costs of running the Companies Registration Office and the charges made for services.

Mr. Maude: Provisional figures for 1987-88 shows that expenditure on a memorandum trading account basis at the companies registration offices amounted to £21 million. Fees and charges to cover these costs, together with a contribution towards the costs of running a system of registered companies, amounted to £28 million in the same period.

New Businesses

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many new businesses were

started up in the latest year for which figures are available *(a)* nationally and *(b)* in Ealing borough; in what broad areas of commerce; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: During 1986, 193,000 new businesses first registered for VAT in the United Kingdom, and 1,130 in the London borough of Ealing.

The table gives the analysis of broad trade categories:

	United Kingdom	*Ealing*
Agriculture	5,500	—
Production	19,600	105
Construction	28,200	174
Transport	8,600	55
Wholesaling	15,100	131
Retail	34,900	161
Finance and professional	16,800	100
Catering	19,400	65
Motor trades	8,800	45
Other services	36,000	294

Airbus

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what sterling-dollar exchange was assumed in assessing the likely rate of return on the £450 million launch aid to British Aerospace for the A330/340 projects; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I have nothing to add to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson) on 27 May at column *371*.

Research Establishments

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when the departmental review of all the research establishments of his Department announced in the White Paper "DTI—the department for Enterprise" (Cm 278) of January will be completed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke *[pursuant to the answer, 12 May 1988]:* In the White Paper, "DTI—the department for Enterprise", my right hon. and noble Friend and I announced our intention to review DTI's four research establishments (the national physical laboratory, the national engineering laboratory, the laboratory of the Government chemist and Warren Spring laboratory). The review has now been completed.

We have decided that in future the REs should concentrate on research that is required by Government, whether for statutory, regulatory or policy reasons. We wish to encourage technology transfer and non-research activities arising from this work so that the widest possible benefit can be drawn from it. Consistent with the focus on work for Government as customer, industrially relevant R&D and repayment work for industrial customers will each be limited in future to approximately 10 per cent. of the full cost of each RE. Additionally, each RE will be able, as at present, to spend on strategic research up to 10 per cent. of the full economic cost of such work carried out for DTI. Programmes of industrially relevant R&D will, in general, receive up to 50 per cent. support and will be carried out for groups of companies which have agreed to collaborate to share the benefits and the remaining cost of the work. These criteria are consistent with those announced in the White Paper for the support of extramural R&D.

WSL will in future concentrate more heavily on environmental engineering, largely for public sector customers, with a reduction in industrially relevant R&D.

To give greater flexibility and responsibility to the laboratories, we plan to consider establishing NPL, LGC and WSL as separate agencies, within the public sector, in line with the policy described in "Improving Management in Government: The Next Steps". This seems an appropriate structure for laboratories whose main task is to undertake research for public sector customers.

NPL, LGC and WSL would thus retain their identities, but the benefits of common services would be fully exploited within the new structure. Work will now be put in hand to develop the agency framework for these laboratories together with that for a fourth agency for the national weights and measures laboratory, and we hope that it will be possible to have them operational by April 1989.

Roughly three quarters of the work at NEL currently falls into the category of industrially relevant R&D. The principal beneficiary is industry, not Government, and strong signals from industry are needed in guiding the development and direction of the work. This "market pull" is more easily provided and understood when the R&D is carried out in an organisation whose progress depends directly on its success in providing services to industry.

We have therefore decided in the first instance to invite organisations which have experience of carrying out R&D to make proposals to DTI by 22 July to develop NEL within the private sector. In addition we would be happy to receive proposals from NEL staff.

We would wish to make suitable arrangements with any new owner for the continuation of the work that NEL does for Government on flow measurement, or to retain that work within DTI, as part of an agency. There will also need to be proper arrangements for the ownership of the assets of NEL. Finally, DTI would be prepared to continue to support industrially relevant R&D carried out at NEL by any new owner, subject to the normal criteria applied to extramural R&D.

We have taken steps to inform the staff of the REs and their trade union representatives in parallel with my announcement. There will be full consultations with the trade union side on the implications for staff.

WALES

Chernobyl

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what has been the total staff and administration cost to his Department of the Chernobyl accident.

Mr. Peter Walker: The main staff costs have been borne by my Agriculture Department and whilst precise figures are not available their associated staff costs (to the end of May 1988) are estimated to be around £1 million. It is not possible to quantify separately the staff and administration costs incurred on Chernobyl work by other divisions of the Welsh Office.

Some £385,000 has also been spent on purchasing sheep and other produce for testing, in meeting the costs of laboratory analysis to establish their levels of radioactivity, purchasing live monitoring equipment and for paint used in connection with the mark and release scheme.

Compensation to affected north Wales producers amounts to some £3·3 million.

Health Projects (Joint Funding)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish a table of the total of funds allocated to joint funding health projects in Wales showing how much came directly from his Department and how much from local authorities and area health authorities, for each year since 1979.

Mr. Grist *[holding answer 26 May 1988]:* The information is available in the form requested only at cash prices for the year in which a project was approved, in respect of commitment rather than expenditure and for projects approved from 1981-82 to date. The year-on-year commitments in each year for newly approved projects and continuing commitments on projects approved since 1981-82 are set out in the following table:

	Welsh Office £	*Health Authorities* £	*Local Authorities* £
1981-82	490,788	22,070	26,593
1982-83	806,058	248,696	175,381
1983-84	1,019,520	642,431	917,765
1984-85	1,304,154	889,007	894,609
1985-86	1,414,240	1,089,919	1,139,697
1986-87	1,957,441	1,379,747	1,854,967
1987-88	1,862,279	1,473,319	2,130,813
1988-89	2,303,767	1,816,921	2,813,395

Farm Woodland

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what measures he is taking to ensure Welsh farmers are fully aware of the opportunities involved in developing and managing farm woodland.

Mr. Peter Walker *[holding answer 27 May 1988]:* My Agricultural Development and Advisory Service staff and the Forestry Commission together offer an expert advisory service on farm woodlands. Advice is also available from the Countryside Commission, Nature Conservancy Council and the Agricultural Training Board through the "Coed Cymru—Welsh Wildwoods" initiative.

A series of joint ADAS/Forestry Commission displays and exhibitions have been provided at various sites and exhibitions over the past year. Further advice will be available in the publicity material and technical literature which we shall be issuing in the course of the next few months in connection with the new farm woodland scheme which will become operative in the autumn.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Language Assistants

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many language assistants went to which countries under the auspices of the exchange of language assistants scheme in the last year for which figures are available; and how many came from which countries in exchange.

Mrs. Rumbold: The language assistants scheme administered on behalf of my Department by the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges does not operate on the basis of exchanges but of individual appointments arranged with reciprocating countries. In 1987-88, the central bureau arranged for the following English appointments:—

Countries	*Outgoing*	*Incoming*
France[1]	1,126	1,699
Federal Republic of Germany	392	454
Spain	114	156
Austria	92	78
Italy	30	11
Switzerland	22	20
Canada (Quebec)	14	6
Mexico	12	7
Colombia	9	9
Belgium	8	12
Paraguay	3	3
Uruguay	3	3
German Democratic Republic	2	1
Senegal	2	7
Peru	2	4
Chile	1	2
Costa Rica	1	—
Algeria	—	7
Burkina Faso	—	5
Ivory Coast	—	1
Morocco	—	18
Nigeria	—	2
Tunisia	—	4

[1] Including nationals of other Francophone countries studying in France.

Advisory Council on Science and Technology

Mr. Frank Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the membership and affiliations of the Advisory Council on Science and Technology; and what criteria are used for making appointments to the council.

Mr. Jackson: Appointments to the Advisory Council on Science and Technology are a matter for my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister. I understand that the initial members of ACOST from July 1987 are as follows. Those whose membership of the predecessor body, the Advisory Council on Applied Research and Development was transferred over are asterisked.

Member	*Affiliation*
*Sir Francis Tombs, FEng *(Chairman)*	Chairman, Rolls-Royce plc.
*Mr. Andrew Bain, FRSE	Group Economic Adviser, Midland Bank plc.
Sir John Collyear, FEng	Chairman, Technology Requirements Board
*Professor Gordon Edge	Chief Executive, Scientific Generics Ltd.
*Mr. Anthony Gill, BSc, FEng	Chairman, Lucas Industries plc.
*Mr. Eric Hammond, OBE	General Secretary, Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunications and Plumbing Union
*Mr. Terry Harrison	Chairman, Northern Engineering Industries plc.
*Dr. Graham Hills, FRSC, FRSE	Principal and Vice Chancellor, University of Strathclyde
Professor Leonard Maunder, OBE, FEng	Department of Mechanical Engineering, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne
*Mr. David McMurtry	Chairman, Renishaw plc

Member	Affiliation
*Professor Stan Metcalfe	Department of Economics, Manchester University
*Dr. Dennis Oliver, CBE, FEng	Business Consultant
*Professor Sir David Phillips, FRS	Chairman of Advisory Board for the Research Councils
Professor Keith Peters, FRCP	Royal Postgraduate Medical School, Hammersmith
Sir George Porter, FRS	President of the Royal Society
*Dr. Charles Reece, FRSC	Director of Research and Technology, Imperial Chemical Industries plc.
*Dr. Alan Rudge, OBE, FEng, FRSA	Director of Research and Technology, British Telecom plc
*Dr. David Smith	Business Consultant
*Professor Desmond Smith, FRS, FRSE	Department of Physics, Heriot Watt University
Professor Sir Peter Swinnerton-Dyer, FRS	Chairman, University Grants Committee

Mr. Hammond has since resigned because of pressure of work. Mr. Gill and Professor Smith have completed their present term of appointment. New members will be announced shortly.

There are three ex-officio members: the chairmen of the Department of Trade and Industry's technology requirement board, of the Advisory Board for the Research Councils and of the University Grants Committee. All other members are appointed in their personal capacity and are chosen for their eminence and experience in science, technology and industry.

City Technology Colleges

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) if he will make it his policy to make public at the earliest possible stage the possible reopening as a city technology college of a school for which his permission for closure has been sought; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will make it his policy not to seek to establish a city technology college based on a school subject to closure proposals before him for determination; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: Any plans to convert existing schools into CTCs require the publication of statutory proposals which will be decided on their merits. Should potential sponsors wish to approach local authorities to school governors with a view to seeking to establish city technology colleges, they are free to do so. It is for sponsors to make public at a time appropriate to them their plans to establish a CTC.

Under-fives

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what arrangements have been made by his Department for funding groups for the under-fives, currently funded by the community programme, after September 1988; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: The community programme is funded by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Employment. I understand that the under-fives groups currently assisted by it operate in the field of child care rather than education and are therefore unlikely to be eligible for grant from my Department.

A-levels

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he intends to publish the Higginson report on GCE A-levels; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Wales, and I are publishing today the report of the committee chaired by Dr. Higginson on GCE advanced levels. We are grateful to Dr. Higginson and his colleagues for the considerable time and energies that they have devoted to its preparation. We broadly welcome the general principles for A-levels set out by the committee in chapter 2 of its report and, in particular, its endorsement of A-levels as demanding, single-subject examinations for able candidates of all kinds and all backgrounds. We have reservations, however, on the committee's detailed proposals for streamlining syllabuses by reducing their factual content. The report indicates widespread support for increased breadth of study for 16 to 18-year-olds undertaking A-level courses in full-time education. It recommends that such students should, if possible, study five subjects, some at A-level and some at GCE advanced supplementary level and, to allow for study of more subjects, that A-level syllabuses should be streamlined, and students should devote more of their timetables to examination studies.

The Government endorse the general aim of broadening A-level students' programmes of study but do not accept the committee's proposals for achieving that objective through a five-subject programme incorporating leaner A-level syllabuses. The education service already has a substantial agenda for reform: we want the new School Examinations and Assessment Council in particular to concentrate on the tasks of introducing assessment and testing arrangements for the national curriculum and of the establishment, monitoring and review of GCSE.

We see AS-levels as the key to achieving greater breadth, and hence we welcome the committee's backing for a continuing role for these new examinations, both in securing breadth of study and in supplementing main areas of study. Following the introduction of AS-levels last year, A-level students, by choosing a mix of A and AS-level syllabuses, are already able to put together broader and more balanced programmes of study. The Government will continue to monitor closely the introduction and take-up of AS-levels and will consider, in the light of progress, whether further steps are needed to secure the necessary broadening of post-16 education.

Assessment and Testing

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he is now able to publish the supplementary advice from the task group on assessment and testing and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: When my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales and I published in January the report of the task group on assessment and testing, I asked the group to give further advice on the administrative and

other arrangements needed to support its recommendations, on the application of the framework it proposed to the full range of national curriculum core and other foundation subjects, and on any modifications it might suggest in the light of comment on its report. It has submitted that advice, and we are publishing it today.

The recommendations of the group have been well received. The Government have therefore decided, in the light of the responses to TGAT's recommendations, and to the interim reports of the mathematics and science working groups, and to consultations on the national curriculum, to adopt the following main principles as the basis for a national system of assessment and testing related to the national curriculum attainment targets:

(a) attainment targets will be set which establish what children should normally be expected to know, understand and be able to do at the ages of seven, 11, 14 and 16; these will enable the progress of each child to be measured against national standards.

(b) pupils' performance in relation to attainment targets should be assessed and reported on at ages seven, 11, 14, and 16. Attainment targets should be grouped for this purpose to make the assessment and reporting manageable.

(c) different levels of attainment and overall pupil progress demonstrated by tests and assessment should be registered on a 10-point scale covering all the years of compulsory schooling.

(d) assessment should be by a combination of national external tests and assessment by teachers. At age 16 the GCSE will be the main form of assessment, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

(e) the results of tests and other assessments should be used both formatively to help better teaching and to inform decisions about next steps for a pupil, and summatively at ages seven, 11, 14 and 16 to inform parents about their child's progress.

(f) detailed results of assessments of individual pupils should be given in full to parents, and the Government attaches great importance to the principle that these reports should be simple and clear. Individuals' results should not be published, but aggregated results at the ages of 11, 14 and 16 should be so that the wider public can make informed judgments about attainment in a school or LEA. There should be no legal requirement for schools to publish such results for seven-year-olds, though it is strongly recommended that schools should do so.

(g) in order to safeguard standards, assessments made by teachers should be compared with the results of the national tests and with the judgments of other teachers.

We expect these principles to inform the consultations which will take place later this year on the recommendations of the national curriculum mathematics and science working groups, and likewise to inform the thinking of the working groups on English and on design and technology which we announced last month.

There is a considerable amount of work to be done on the detail of cost-effective arrangements needed to support such a system. The suggestions made by the task group on assessment and testing in its third supplementary report on the moderation system appear complicated and costly; whilst the Government recognise that the issues involved are complex, the support arrangements adopted must be sufficiently simple to enable good progress to be made in introducing the national assessment system. We shall be discussing the issues with the School Examinations and Assessment Council and the National Curriculum Council and also with the local education authorities, the examining groups and other appropriate organisations. We shall also set in hand work on the development of in-service training for teachers, and on the development and piloting of national tests, starting with an examination of available tests to see whether they can appropriately be used.

As I have already informed the House, our intention is that the first cohort of pupils in primary schools should begin work in autumn 1989 on national curriculum attainment targets and programmes of study for the three core subjects of mathematics, science and English and if possible on technology which is closely linked with science in the primary phase. We also expect first-year pupils in secondary school—11 to 12-year-olds—to start work on attainment targets and programmes of study for mathematics and science in autumn 1989. These subjects will be introduced in Wales on a similar timetable. In addition, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales expects to introduce Welsh for the early years of both primary and secondary schools in autumn 1990. We shall give priority to developing assessment and testing arrangements for these subjects and age groups with first results expected for seven-year-olds in 1991 and 14-year-olds in 1992. However, the arrangements will be tried out in schools before there is any formal public reporting of results. We therefore expect that the first results of assessment and testing for seven-year-olds will be available to parents and for publication in the summer of 1992, and for 14-year-olds in the summer of 1993. Assessment in other subjects and for other age groups will be brought in progressively thereafter.

Cash Limits

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will give details of any revised cash limits for his Department's votes.

Mr. Kenneth Baker *[pursuant to his reply, 27 May, column 341]:* Part of the answer was omitted from the *Official Report;* the full text is as follows:

Subject to parliamentary approval to the necessary Supplementary Estimate, cash limits for the following votes will be revised as follows:

Vote	*Current cash limit* £	*Increase/ decrease* £	*Revised cash limit* £
Class XII, Vote 1	463,655,000	16,366,000	480,021,000
Class XII, Vote 3	[1]1,843,563,000	−53,000	1,843,510,000

[1] As announced on 22 April *(Official Report,* column 577) the cash limit for class XII, vote 3 was increased by £3,100,000.

Of these changes, £1,900,000 will be charged to the Reserve and £14,436,000 is contained within the planned provision for programmes. There will therefore be no increase in the planned total of expenditure.

Additional provision is sought for class XII, vote 1 as follows:

£53,000 to enable the Cranfield Institute of Technology to participate in the programme for manufacturing

systems engineering courses. This increase to be offset by a matching reduction in provision on class XII, vote 3.

£11,413,000 for costs associated with the establishment, subject to the passage of the Education Reform Bill, of the National Curriculum Council; the Schools Examination and Assessment Council; the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council and the Education Assets Board.

£1,900,000 for my Department's donation to public services charities to offset the effects of the understatement of the retail price index for centrally administered public service pensions, as foreshadowed by my right hon. friend the Paymaster General's announcement to the House of Commons on 3 May 1988 (*Official Report*, 4 May, column 400). This increase will be charged to the Reserve, so will not add to the public expenditure planning total.

£3,000,000 for grants to Inner London boroughs, subject to the passage of the Education Reform Bill, to assist with transitional costs of taking on local education authority responsibilities.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Racial Disadvantage Budget

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what were his Department's estimates for expenditure for the racial disadvantage budget for the years 1985-86 to 1988-89, respectively; and what grants have been given out of that budget to assist organisations or projects working to reduce racial disadvantage during each of the years since the grant was established;

(2) what steps he has taken to ensure that the grants available out of the racial disadvantage budgets are adequately publicised;

(3) what measures are taken to ensure the accountability to his Department in respect of grants under the racial disadvantage budget.

Mr. John Patten: Supply estimate provision and grants given in each of the years since this subhead was established were as follows:

		£
1985-86		
Supply estimates provision[1]		250,000
Grants		
Deptford Enterprise Agency		40,000
North London Business Development Agency		40,000
Black Business in Birmingham		17,048
Business in the Community		5,000
	Total	102,048
1986-87		
Supply estimates provision[1]		260,000
Grants		
Deptford Enterprise Agency		50,000
North London Business Development Agency		50,000
Black Business in Birmingham		50,000
Bristol Black Business Association		20,000
Business in the Community		5,000
	Total	175,000
1987-88		
Supply estimates provision		1,170,000
Grants—Voluntary Services Unit		
National Federation of Self Help Organisations		30,000
Leicester Racial Awareness Consortium		29,338
Community Roots		28,065
Manchester Council for Voluntary Service		14,950
Urban Trust		13,533
National Council for Voluntary Organisations		9,500
Confederation of Indian Organisations		6,250
Other Grants		
Project Fullemploy		89,926
British Black Business Association		42,000
Black Business in Birmingham		37,500
Harlesden People's Community Council Bus Garage Project		26,748
Wandsworth Enterprise Agency		20,000
Opportunities Industrialisation Centre (UK) Ltd.		15,000
Tower Hamlets Association for Racial Equality		15,000
Tower Hamlets Enterprise Outreach Service		13,402
Deptford Enterprise Agency		10,000
North London Business Development Agency		10,000
	Total	411,212

[1] Ethnic minority business initiative only.

In the first two years, grants were restricted to projects under the Home Office ethnic minority business initiative: since 1987 grants have also been made to voluntary organisations which work to relieve racial disadvantage and which fall within the normal grants criteria of the voluntary services unit and to other organisations, national or local, for strategic work in relation to racial disadvantage. Many proposals and projects take some time to develop to the point where grant can be given, and the portfolio of grants given under the subhead is building up slower than had originally been hoped.

The criteria for VSU grants are publicised through a leaflet which is made available to enquirers and are further described in handbooks on the availability of government grants. The ethnic minority business initiative, under which grants are also available, have been widely publicised. The availability of some grants for other strategic purposes has not been given general publicity but relevant Home Office contacts in other Government Departments (including city action teams and task forces), the Commission for Racial Equality, voluntary organisations and charitable trusts know of it and encourage relevant organisations known to them to apply.

Grants are given on formal conditions which include the timely provision of audited accounts and annual reports, and of copies of any publications, and which reserve the right of the Home Office and National Audit Office to examine books and records and of the Comptroller Auditor General to examine the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the use of the grant. According to circumstances, indicators of performance are also sought and monitored.

Equal Opportunities

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action he has taken to remedy past inequalities in employment practices in his Department, in compliance with the codes of the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission, respectively.

Mr. Hurd: We use data collected on the ethnic origins and sex of staff to help identify disparities in recruitment and promotion. Steps taken to promote greater equality include the use of part-time work, job sharing, flexible working hours, and arrangements for special leave to

make it easier for those with domestic responsibilities to continue to work; attendance by a number of female staff at women's management development courses run by the civil service college; contacts with ethnic minority communities; and the placing of advertisements in the ethnic and local press.

All our management training courses, and those for members of recruitment and promotion boards, address equal opportunities and we are currently exploring, with OMCS, what further contribution training might make to progress in this area.

Westminster Bridge (Parking)

Mr. Higgins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to why the Metropolitan police are not enforcing parking restrictions on Westminster bridge.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I am advised by the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that the parking restrictions imposed on Westminster bridge by the highway authority allow vehicles to stop to set down or pick up passengers, and that the Metropolitan police take suitable enforcement action if parking offences come to light.

Petrol Stations (Alcohol)

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many petrol stations are licensed to sell alcohol in *(a)* Dyfed, *(b)* Wales and *(c)* the United Kingdom.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to my hon. Friend the Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton) on 27 April columns *158-162*. The available figures relate to England and Wales only.

Police

Mr. Cran: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to his answer of 19 May, *Official Report*, column 541, when he next intends to take a decision on the allocation of police manpower.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: It is too soon to say.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many uniformed police posts were civilianised in the financial years 1980-81 to 1987-88 *(a)* nationally and *(b)* in the area of the Northumbria police authority.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information available does not cover the period requested. It is estimated that some 3,300 police officers, both uniform and plain clothes, have been redeployed in England and Wales as a result of civilianisation in the period 1983-84 until the end of December 1987. I understand that in Northumbria, between 1982-83 and 1987-88, 115 police officers were released in this way.

England v Scotland Football Match

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of those arrested at the England v Scotland football match on Saturday 21 May at Wembley stadium, were arrested *(a)* in the immediate vicinity of the ground before the kick-off, *(b)* within the ground before, during and after the match and *(c)* in the immediate vicinity of the ground after the match; what was the nature of the charges brought in respect of the persons arrested in categories *(a)*, *(b)* and *(c)* above; and how many persons were charged in respect of each category.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: In category *(a)* 48 were arrested, of whom 21 were charged; in category *(b)* 27 were arrested, of whom 11 were charged; and in category *(c)* 37 were arrested, of whom 26 were charged. The charges related mainly to a variety of public order offences.

Political Asylum

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if, for each week from 10 January to the nearest available date, he will indicate *(a)* how many people arrived in the United Kingdom and claimed political asylum and *(b)* of which countries they were nationals; and how many of them were (i) refused leave to enter and removed from the United Kingdom, (ii) refused leave to enter and detained, (iii) refused leave to enter and granted temporary admission and (iv) granted temporary admission pending a decision.

Mr. Renton: For the period commencing week ending 16 January 1988 and finishing week ending 28 May 1988, the numbers of persons seeking asylum on arrival in the United Kingdom each week, are listed, by nationality, in the table. The available statistics refer only to the London airports and the Dover seaports.

There is no central record separating asylum seekers refused leave to enter, detained, granted temporary admission and removal from other passengers in these categories and the rest of the information requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Weekly arrival numbers of asylum applicants commencing week ending 16 January 1988 until week ending 28 May 1988

Week ending	*Asylum applicants on arrival*	*Afghanistan*	*Angola*	*Bangladesh*	*Bolivia*	*Chile*	*Colombia*	*Ethiopia*	*Ghana*	*Hungary*
16 January 1988	37	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—
23 January 1988	33	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
30 January 1988	18	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
6 February 1988	25	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
13 February 1988	34	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
20 February 1988	26	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
27 February 1988	23	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
5 March 1988	14	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
12 March 1988	13	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2
19 March 1988	40	2	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—
26 March 1988	44	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Week ending	Asylum applicants on arrival	Afghanistan	Angola	Bangladesh	Bolivia	Chile	Colombia	Ethiopia	Ghana	Hungary
2 April 1988	30	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
9 April 1988	14	—	—	1	—	—	3	—	2	—
16 April 1988	14	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
23 April 1988	53	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
30 April 1988	40	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—
7 May 1988	36	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
14 May 1988	32	1	4	—	—	—	1	2	1	—
21 May 1988	16	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—
28 May 1988	20	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	562	8	4	1	1	3	11	5	7	2

Weekly arrival numbers of asylum applicants commencing week ending 16 January 1988 until week ending 28 May 1988

Week ending	Asylum applicants on arrival	Iran	Iraq	Lebanon	Pakistan	Peru	Seychelles	Sierra Leone	Somalia	South Africa
16 January 1988	37	—	1	—	3	—	1	—	—	—
23 January 1988	33	7	2	1	—	—	1	—	2	—
30 January 1988	18	3	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
6 February 1988	25	2	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—
13 February 1988	34	2	—	1	2	—	—	—	2	—
20 February 1988	26	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
27 February 1988	23	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
5 March 1988	14	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
12 March 1988	13	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
19 March 1988	40	1	1	—	—	2	2	—	—	1
26 March 1988	44	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2 April 1988	30	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
9 April 1988	14	4	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
16 April 1988	14	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
23 April 1988	53	6	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—
30 April 1988	40	1	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—
7 May 1988	36	13	2	3	—	—	4	—	—	—
14 May 1988	32	1	—	—	—	1	—	4	2	—
21 May 1988	16	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
28 May 1988	20	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	562	51	6	6	7	3	16	4	7	1

Weekly arrival numbers of asylum applicants commencing week ending 16 January 1988 until week ending 28 May 1988

Week ending	Asylum applicants on arrival	Sri Lanka	Sudan	Surinam	Turkey	Uganda	USSR	Zaire	Zimbabwe	Nationality doubtful
16 January 1988	37	4	—	—	16	8	—	—	—	1
23 January 1988	33	12	—	—	6	1	—	—	—	1
30 January 1988	18	5	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	6
6 February 1988	25	11	—	—	8	2	—	—	—	—
13 February 1988	34	4	—	—	14	8	—	—	1	—
20 February 1988	26	6	—	—	13	2	—	—	—	—
27 February 1988	23	9	—	—	6	4	—	—	—	1
5 March 1988	14	7	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	2
12 March 1988	13	5	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	1
19 March 1988	40	5	—	—	10	12	—	—	—	2
26 March 1988	44	11	—	1	25	1	—	—	—	6
2 April 1988	30	9	—	—	13	—	—	—	—	1
9 April 1988	14	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
16 April 1988	14	7	—	—	4	1	—	—	—	—
23 April 1988	53	—	—	—	6	36	—	—	—	2
30 April 1988	40	13	—	—	10	9	—	—	—	2
7 May 1988	36	5	—	—	—	8	—	—	—	—
14 May 1988	32	9	—	—	1	4	1	—	—	—
21 May 1988	16	5	1	—	—	4	—	3	—	—
28 May 1988	20	5	—	—	10	4	—	—	—	—
Totals	562	135	1	1	147	105	1	3	1	25

Advanced College of Business and Cultural Studies

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers and immigration officers were involved in the operation on 8 May in connection with the Advanced College of Business and Cultural Studies; how many people and of what nationalities were both interviewed and detained in the operation, for how long and where; what was the immigration status of those who were arrested but not

charged and for how long they were under arrest; and with regard to what breaches of immigration control people were interviewed or charged as a result of the operation.

Mr. Renton: Sixty-six immigration officers and 104 police officers were involved in the operation on 8 May concerning the Advanced College of Business and Cultural Studies.

Sixty-three persons were arrested of whom sixty-one were identified as being apparently in breach of immigration control. Two persons, both Ghanaian, were found not to be offenders and were released after being detained for less than six hours. The remainder have been identified as follows:

Twenty-nine illegal entrants (twenty-six Ghanaians, two Nigerians, one Sierra Leonean)
Twenty-two served with notices of intention to deport (nineteen Ghanaians, two Nigerians and one Ivory Coast National)
One subject of a current deportation order (Nigerian)
One charged with overstaying (Ghanaian).
Two charged with working in breach of their conditions (Ghanaians)
Two found to be offenders but not charged (Ghanaians).

Inquiries into the immigration status of the remaining four persons (Ghanaians) are continuing. Nineteen of the twenty-nine illegal entrants detected have been removed, and four persons served with a notice of intention to deport have left the United Kingdom.

Periods spent detained following arrest were as follows:

	Number
Six hours or less	17
6 to 15 hours	9
15 to 20 hours	12
1 day	1
More than one day	24

Of the 13 offenders still detained, three are illegal entrants (two Ghanaians, one Nigerian), nine have been served with a notice of intention to deport (all Ghanaians) and one is subject of a current deportation order (Nigerian).

Colleges (Immigration Rules)

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many operations have been mounted over the last year by his Department on colleges whose bona fides under the immigration rules were suspect; at which colleges and on which dates such operations took place; how many *(a)* staff and proprietors and *(b)* students at such colleges were detained in connection with suspected or alleged immigration offences; and how many were charged with such offences.

Mr. Renton: Two operations related to educational establishments have taken place during the last year. The first involved the London School of International Business and took place on 12 February 1988. The proprietor and one other person were arrested and subsequently charged with various offences. No students or alleged students were detained during the operation. The second involved the Advanced College of Business and Cultural Studies and took place on 4 May. Three persons, believed to be the proprietor and two members of staff, were arrested and subsequently released on police bail. No students or alleged students were detained on that day, but on 8 May 63 persons who claimed to be students at the college were arrested. Of these, three have been charged with various immigration offences. Of the remainder, 29 were found to be illegal entrants, 22 were issued with notices of intention to deport, one was found to be the subject of a deportation order, two were found to be offenders but not charged, two were found not to be offenders and four are the subject of further inquiries.

Clapham Way (Police Raid)

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of those arrested on 14 April in the raid on a house in Clapham way were *(a)* interviewed in connection with immigration offences and *(b)* detained in connection with such offences; and with regard to what suspected or alleged breaches of immigration control these people were interviewed or charged.

Mr. Renton: Nine persons were interviewed by immigration officers in respect of their immigration status. Five of these persons were found to be lawfully in the United Kingdom and the police were informed accordingly. The remaining four persons were found to be illegal entrants and were detained under the Immigration Act prior to their removal.

Students (Immigration Rules)

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what changes he is contemplating in the immigration rules governing those seeking entry to the United Kingdom as students or seeking variations of leave in order to remain in the United Kingdom as students; what is the aim of such changes; and with which organisations he has discussed the case for them.

Mr. Renton: Consideration is being given to possible changes in the immigration rules so as to ensure that only those pursuing genuine educational courses are treated as students. We are in regular communication with the United Kingdom Council for Overseas Student Affairs on immigration issues affecting overseas students generally, and we have received representations from that body expressing concern about bogus educational establishments. There have been no discussions yet on the specific question of possible changes.

Mr. Charles Ferrier

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report on the escape of Mr. Charles Ferrier from Verne prison, Weymouth, on Monday 23 May; and if he will make a statement on the circumstances in which it took place.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Detailed inquiries are being made into the circumstances of the escape of this prisoner, who was recaptured in Weymouth on 25 May. I will write to the hon. Member when the results are available.

Armley Prison

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what representations he has received concerning overcrowding at Her Majesty's prison, Armley, in Leeds; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what plans he has to relieve the overcrowding at Armley prison, Leeds; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I refer the hon. Member to the reply which I gave to a question from the hon. Member for Don Valley (Mr. Redmond) on 22 April 1988 at columns 592-93. My right hon. Friend has received no recent representations concerning overcrowding at the prison.

Litter-related Offences

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if the Government have any plans to seek to increase the penalties for litter-related offences; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Under the Litter Act 1983 a person convicted of leaving litter in an open place may be fined up to £400. We have no plans to increase this. The Government have, however, given their full support to the Tidy Britain Group, which has initiated a programme of experimental projects designed to examine ways of dealing with the problem of litter.

Leicestershire Constabulary

Mr. Latham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what are the reasons for his decision not to allocate any further police manpower to the Leicestershire constabulary, following the official request from the chief constable; and whether he will now reconsider his decision.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Increases for provincial forces are granted under a phased programme for which total demand far exceeds the number of additional posts available. My right hon. Friend after careful review of the requests received was unable to meet the request from Leicestershire.

I appreciate the disappointment which was caused to Leicestershire and to other authorities whose applications were not met. The police authority has been informed that its application will be considered again, together with the applications of other forces, when my right hon. Friend next takes decisions on the allocations of posts to be approved under the programme.

Guildford and Woolwich Pub Bombings

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to announce the outcome of the inquiry he authorised into the case of the four persons convicted of the Guildford and Woolwich pub bombings; and what is the reason for the delay.

Mr. John Patten: My right hon. Friend will announce his decision on whether to intervene in this case as soon as he has considered fully the police report on the new statements that have been put forward, together with the other material which has been brought to his attention. He hopes to complete this in the not too distant future.

Downing Street (Hon. Members' Access)

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to remove all restrictions on the number of hon. Members who can go into Downing street at any one time; if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to when the present instructions were given to the police on duty there on this matter; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I regret that restrictions placed on the number of right hon. and hon. Members who wished to enter Downing street on 26 May to present a petition were the result of a misunderstanding by the police officers on duty there. Fresh instructions have been issued by the police to make it clear that, as hitherto, no restrictions should be placed on the number of hon. Members who need to enter Downing street in the course of their parliamentary duties.

Dogs (Spiked Collars)

Miss Fookes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will seek to ban the use of spiked collars for dogs.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We have no plans to do so. Where the use of such a collar caused an animal unnecessary suffering, a prosecution could be brought under the Protection of Animals Act 1911.

Government Data Network

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will introduce legislation to provide that the Government data network is not used routinely for the purpose of collecting the personal data relating to individuals who are of interest to the security services; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: We see no need to do so. The Government data network is a means of transmitting, not of collecting, data.

Computer Network

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will establish a committee to inquire into the implications of the advent of the Government data network, the enhanced police national computer network and the community charge for the Data Protection Act; whether he will call for a special report from the Data Protection Registrar concerning these issues; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: No.

Prisons and Prisoners (Definitions)

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to his answer of 29 April, *Official Report*, column 286, regarding the definitions of prisons and prisoners in different Council of Europe countries, what information he has as to which institutions in Council of Europe countries are comparable to prisons run by the prison department in the United Kingdom but which are not classified as prisons in the Council of Europe's prison statistics.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information available in the comparability of the statistics published by the Council of Europe was given in a recent article in the Home Office research bulletin, "International Comparisons of Prison Populations" by Patrick Collier and Roger Tarling, (issue number 23, 1987, pages 48-54).

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Equal Opportunities

Mr. Janner: To ask the Attorney-General what action the Lord Chancellor has taken to remedy past inequalities in employment practices in his Department, in compliance with the codes of the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission, respectively.

The Attorney-General: The Lord Chancellor's Department has agreed policies on race relations and equality of opportunities for women which comply with the appropriate code of practice. The policy statements were circulated to all staff in 1984. The Department has recently sent a copy of the first of a series of leaflets on equal opportunities to each member of staff. A second leaflet on sexual harassment will be issued. Specific guidance on equal opportunities is given at relevant training courses and there is compulsory training on equal opportunities for all managers.

Other examples of action taken are: the provision of women-only training and a career break scheme; advertising part-time working and job-share opportunities for staff; a survey of the ethnic origin of all staff; participation in feature articles to publicise career opportunities in the Department; participation in the schools liaison scheme and the use of inner city job centres to fill vacancies.

NHS (Lottery)

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Attorney-General what discussions have taken place between the Crown Prosecution Service and the organisers of the proposed lottery for the National Health Service; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: The National Health Lottery scheme was first referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions by the Gaming Board of Great Britain on 16 May on the basis that the proposed scheme appeared to contravene the Lotteries and Amusements Act 1976. The Director obtained counsel's opinion and formed the view that the operation of the scheme would result in the commission of offences under the 1976 Act. Letters were written on 23 and 24 May to the company responsible for running the lottery, the latter indicating that the Director would request police inquiries if the lottery draw took place, and on 26 May to the company's solicitors stating which provisions of the 1976 Act the Director considered would be contravened. There has been no meeting between the Director's staff and the company, or its solicitors, to discuss the proposed lottery.

Crown Prosecution Service

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Attorney-General what steps he intends to take in the light of the divisional court ruling of 23 May, to ensure that each case is screened by a legally qualified person employed by the Crown Prosecution Service.

The Attorney-General: The divisional court ruling of 23 May is currently the subject of an appeal. Meanwhile the Director of Public Prosecutions has issued a circular to all chief Crown prosecutors advising them of the terms of the court's declaration and stating that those terms must be complied with.

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Attorney-General, pursuant to the answer of 21 April, *Official Report*, columns *507-8*, as to the number of legally qualified persons employed by the Crown Prosecution Service in its Crown court sections, what steps he intends to take to ensure that in those cases where additional or new evidence comes to light after committal proceedings the case will be reviewed by a legally qualified person.

The Attorney-General: Where additional or new evidence or information comes to light after committal, particularly where doubt is cast on the initial decision to proceed, it is the normal practice for the material to be considered by the Crown prosecutor, and, if necessary, for the advice of counsel to be sought. In any event, the material will be included as an additional enclosure in the brief to counsel.

Paragraph 10 of the code for Crown prosecutors stresses that even when proceedings are under way the Crown prosecutor should continue to exercise a reviewing function. The function is a continuing one, as it is important that cases should be kept under continuous review, not least because the emergence of new evidence or information may sometimes cast doubt on the propriety of the initial decision to proceed.

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Attorney-General whether in the light of the divisional court ruling of 23 May, he will state the duties and responsibilities of counsel instructed by the Crown Prosecution Service to appear on behalf of the Crown in a criminal matter in the Crown court.

The Attorney-General: The divisional court ruling of 23 May is currently the subject of an appeal. Meanwhile the Director of Public Prosecutions has issued a circular to all chief Crown prosecutors advising them of the terms of the court's declaration and stating that those terms must be complied with. The duties and responsibilities of counsel conducting a case in the Crown court remain as before the decision and are conveniently set out in the report of the committee chaired by the hon. Mr. Justice Farquharson.

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Attorney-General whether he intends to take any further steps to encourage legally qualified staff to remain within the Crown Prosecution Service where they have reached the grade of a senior Crown prosecutor.

The Attorney-General: The retention of experienced staff within the Crown Prosecution Service is of the greatest importance. With the Director of Public Prosecutions I shall encourage senior Crown prosecutors to take advantage of the new pay offer which includes substantial salary increases at the senior Crown prosecutor grade with additional special salary awards for consistently high performance. These will make career prospects in the service more attractive. In the development of the service careful heed will be taken of the 1987 study of internal communications, as well as of the views of senior Crown prosecutors themselves as to how the attraction of the role of an experienced lawyer in the service may be enhanced.

Daniel Morgan

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Attorney-General if the Director of Public Prosecutions has completed his

deliberations following the verdict of unlawful killing at the inquest into the death of Daniel Morgan in March 1987 at Southwark coroner's court in April 1988; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: At the conclusion of the inquest into the death of Daniel Morgan at Southwark coroner's court on 21 April 1988 the Crown Prosecution Service requested a full transcript of the shorthand note of the proceedings. This transcript has not yet been received and consequently a final decision has not been reached by the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Juries

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Attorney-General what steps are taken to ensure that all those called for jury service can understand the language in which evidence will be given in court.

The Attorney-General: The Juries Act 1974 requires jurors to be summoned from amongst all those on the electoral register who are not disqualified by age. However, the jury summons form both explains to the summoned person that excusal may be sought on the grounds of insufficient understanding of English and warns that they may be discharged from duty if there is doubt as to their competence. Though the summons and the accompanying leaflet are printed in English, material is available in Welsh and five major Asian languages. In those comparatively rare cases in which evidence is given in a language other than English, interpreters are used.

Discontinuance of Cases

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Attorney-General whether he will authorise suitably qualified barristers or solicitor agents in appropriate cases in the magistrates' courts to authorise discontinuance or the offering of no evidence where appropriate or to accept pleas to lesser charges; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: The provisions of the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985 do not allow the Director to delegate powers to discontinue proceedings to barristers or solicitors in private practice instructed on behalf of the Crown Prosecution Service.

The withdrawal of cases, or the offering of no evidence where appropriate, or the acceptance of pleas to lesser charges than those originally preferred, are matters upon which barrister and solicitors instructed on behalf of the service are instructed to consult with a CPS officer unless there are compelling and urgent reasons for not doing so.

The policy, practice and procedures of the CPS are kept under a constant review with a view to improving fairness, efficiency and effectiveness. At present there are no plans for the alteration of instructions given to barristers or solicitors instructed on behalf of the service.

Civil Justice Review

Mr. Ashby: To ask the Attorney-General when it is expected that the report of the civil justice review will be published.

The Attorney-General: The report of the review body on civil justice has been laid before Parliament today. It contains wide-ranging recommendations, put forward by an independent advisory committee working with a team of officials. A further announcement will be made when the Government have considered all the proposals.

TRANSPORT

Bexley Bus Service

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received on the Bexley bus service since Easter.

Mr. David Mitchell: I have received one letter from the London Regional Passengers' Committee. The operation of the Bexley bus service is a matter for the management of London Regional Transport.

Casualty Rates

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the casualty rate per mile travelled, or nearest appropriate indicator, for *(a)* private vehicle drivers, *(b)* private vehicle passengers aged over 18 years, *(c)* private vehicle passengers aged under 18 years but over five years, *(d)* private vehicle passengers aged five years and under, *(e)* motor cyclists, *(f)* motor cycle pillion passengers aged over 18 years, *(g)* motor cycle pillion passengers aged under 18 years, *(h)* cyclists aged over 18 years, *(i)* cyclists under 18 years but over 11 years, *(j)* cyclists aged 11 years and under, and *(k)* commercial lorry drivers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The casualty rates for drivers and riders of pedal cycles, motor cycles, private vehicles and goods vehicles are given in the table:

Total driver-rider casualty rates: Great Britain 1986
Rate per 100 million vehicle kilometres

	Rate
Pedal cyclists	618
Motor cycle riders	888
Private vehicle drivers	37·3
Goods vehicle drivers	18·0

Age-specific driver and rider casualty rates cannot be calculated because total annual mileage is only available by type of vehicle and cannot be subdivided by the age of the driver or rider. The total number of casualties for each of the requested road user types is as follows:

Total casualties: by age and road user type: Great Britain 1986

Type of road user	*Age of casualty* 0-5	6-17	18 or more	[1]*Total*
Private vehicle driver	—	2,361	88,115	91,156
Private vehicle passengers	3,839	13,575	49,579	68,022
Motor cycle riders[2]	—	11,147	36,257	47,922
Motor cycle passengers[2]	3	1,022	3,282	4,358
Goods vehicle drivers[3]	—	115	8,284	8,480

Type of road user	*Age of casualty* 0-11	12-17	18 or more	*Total*
Pedal cyclists	3,043	8,345	14,388	26,129

[1] Includes age not known and age unreported.
[2] Includes mopeds, scooters and motor cycle combinations.
[3] Includes light goods vehicles and heavy goods vehicles.

Miss Lynda Lee-Potter

Mr. Snape: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will appoint Miss Lynda Lee-Potter as a member of the British Railways Board.

Mr. David Mitchell: No, there are currently no suitable vacancies.

Carlisle-Settle Railway

Mr. Martlew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what bus services will be available for the present passengers on the Carlisle-Settle line when the service is withdrawn.

Mr. David Mitchell: I will want to consider that issue in the the light of the further report on hardship which I have asked the TUCCs to submit.

Mr. Martlew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make available the details of British Rail's current and estimated revenue and operating costs on the Carlisle to Settle line.

Mr. David Mitchell: British Rail estimates that the gross cost of running the line in 1987-88 will have been £2·7 million and revenue about £1 million. Its estimates of costs and revenues in the future if the line stayed open were set out in its financial case for closure, a copy of which was placed in the Library of the House on 25 February 1987. I have now asked BR to update those figures.

Mr. Martlew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport why the capital and revenue contributions of the joint local authorities to the running of the Carlisle-Settle railway were not included in the list of public and private bodies in the *Official Report* of 16 May, columns *683-84*.

Mr. David Mitchell: The local authority contributions had already received wide publicity. But I did refer to them in my reply to the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) and my hon. Friend the Member for Skipton and Ripon (Mr. Curry) on 16 May, *Official Report*, column *677*.

Dual Carriageways

Mr. Warren: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what are the average annual daily traffic flows required by his Department to justify dual carriageways on trunk roads; and if he will list the dates and numbers by which this figure has been increased during the last 40 years.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The justification for trunk road schemes is based on a comprehensive appraisal of costs and benefits, not simply on traffic flows. The Department produces guidelines on carriageway standards in relation to traffic flows only for the purpose of establishing which options should be appraised. Dual carriageway standard will be considered for a rural trunk road if the forecast average annual daily traffic flow in the design year, 15 years after the road opens, is in the range 11,000-46,000 vehicles.

The guidelines reflect the costs and benefits of the different carriageway widths during both normal operating conditions and maintenance. They also take account of the performance of modern vehicles and road design. Earlier figures were not produced in the same way and are not properly comparable.

Rail Passengers

Mr. Martlew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has as to the proportion of British Rail's passengers on *(a)* the provincial sector lines in central Wales, *(b)* the Fort William to Mallaig lines and *(c)* the Carlisle to Settle line who travel for leisure purposes.

Mr. David Mitchell: So far as *(a)* and *(b)* are concerned, no information, because these lines have not been proposed for closure. So far as the Settle-Carlisle line is concerned, a Cumbria county council survey showed that over 60 per cent. of passengers travelled simply for the pleasure of the line, and that 80 per cent. were travelling for leisure purposes generally.

Private Railways

Mr. Martlew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the average length of time taken for a private concern to be granted statutory authorisation to operate a railway after receipt of the application.

Mr. David Mitchell: There is no meaningful "average" time. That depends on the procedure adopted, the complexity of the case, the objections received, and the speed with which the applicants themselves respond to correspondence.

A33

Sir David Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many accidents have taken place in each of the last three years on the A33 road between the Chilworth roundabout and the start of the M3 at Bar End; and how many have been fatal.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The information is available as follows:

Year	*Personal injury accidents*	*Accidents involving fatalities*
July 1984 to June 1985	67	2
July 1985 to June 1986	74	3
July 1986 to June 1987	73	1
July 1987 to March 1988	47	1

Sir David Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will authorise the necessary work to commence on the upgrading of the Chandler's Ford bypass in the borough of Eastleigh (A33) to motorway standards.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I hope to let a contract for the Compton-Bassett section of the M3 motorway at about the end of the year.

M1 and M6 (Roadworks)

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects *(a)* the M1 and *(b)* the M6 will be free from major road works; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Not soon.

This year's major maintenance work on the M1 and M6 is due to be completed by the end of November. The volume of traffic on these motorways is high. A continuous programme of maintenance is necessary to keep the roads in good condition. Most major works take place between April and November. We plan and phase work to minimise disruption to road users.

It may be helpful to explain the arithmetic of motorway renewal. As on average 5 per cent. (about 20 route miles) of M1, M6 are renewed each year, the hon. Member may experience major road works for some time.

Motorways (Overtaking)

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what further steps he proposes to take in order to inform motorists that the middle and fast lanes on the motorways are for overtaking purposes only; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: One and a half million leaflets about motorway driving and safety are currently being distributed to motorists. Like all other driver guidance, these emphasise the importance of good lane discipline.

Dartford Tunnel

Mr. McCrindle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he next proposes to meet the general manager of the Dartford tunnel joint committee; and if on that occasion he will discuss the case for escorting tankers through the tunnel in view of the delay this occasions to other traffic.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State expects to meet the general manager next on 2 August. Officials have already discussed this subject with him.

The Dartford tunnel joint committee decided on 3 June to increase from four to six the maximum number of vehicles carrying hazardous goods in escorted convoys in order to cut the number of convoys and the consequent delays to other traffic. The change will come into effect on 1 July. Other improvements have been made recently, including the construction of a new marshalling area for these vehicles on the Essex side.

Mr. McCrindle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the tunnels in the United Kingdom where tankers are escorted other than the Dartford tunnel.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The authorities responsible for the Mersey tunnels and the Tyne tunnel operate procedures similar to those which apply at Dartford.

Dartford-Thurrock Bridge

Mr. McCrindle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the current state of progress on the proposed Dartford to Thurrock bridge.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Dartford River Crossing Limited plans to begin construction of the bridge on 1 August if the Dartford-Thurrock Crossing Bill receives Royal Assent by 30 June. The bridge is expected to be complete by early 1991.

Rolling Stock and Locomotives

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the answer of 25 April, *Official Report*, column *71*, what allowance as regards the maximum height and size of a passengers seated comfortably, was made by BR in the specifications for Sprinters submitted to his Department; whether there has been any variations in these figures for the super Sprinters; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: This is entirely a matter for British Rail's judgment.

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the answer of 25 April, *Official Report*. column *71*, what data or measurements of interior noise levels were included by BR in the specifications for class 155 units submitted to his Department; and what change these figures represented in comparison with current Inter-City rolling stock.

Mr. David Mitchell: None. These are entirely matters for British Rail.

Perivale Underpass

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to improve the drainage arrangements for the Perivale underpass; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The severe storms in West London flooded the underpass on Sunday 8 May 1988. Our agents, the London borough of Ealing, is investigating whether any improvements to the drainage system are required.

ENERGY

Electricity Industry

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on progress in the privatisation of the electricity supply industry.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Discussions with the industry are continuing satisfactorily and our aim is to introduce legislation at the earliest opportunity.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Industry Matters Scheme

Sir John Biggs-Davison: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement about the Industry Matters scheme.

Mr. Viggers: The work of encouraging a better understanding of the importance of industry, begun during Industry Year 1986, is being carried forward in Northern Ireland by an independent company limited by guarantee, Industry Matters (NI) Ltd. The company is involved in a wide range of projects designed to create and develop links between industry and education at all levels, and has also launched an initiative to promote the concept of total quality throughout Northern Ireland industry. Industry Matters' costs are met by contributions from the

private sector matched by the Department of Economic Development on a pound-for-pound basis up to a limit of £50,000 in any one financial year.

Fair Employment

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many *(a)* Protestants and *(b)* Roman Catholics are employed at present by the Housing Executive in the grades or salary bands (i) PO2 and above, (ii) PO1 and (iii) P/T and 1-4, in each of the six housing areas or regions and in Belfast functional departments;

(2) how many *(a)* Protestants and *(b)* Roman Catholics are employed at present by the Housing Executive in the grades of director and assistant director within the central directorates of development; planning; finance; housing; and personnel and management services;

(3) how many *(a)* Protestants and *(b)* Roman Catholics are employed at present by the Housing Executive in the grades or salary bands PO2 and above in the department of the chief executive and in the departments of information and corporate planning.

Mr. Needham: These are matters for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, but I understand that the information requested is not currently available.

A report conducted by the Fair Employment Agency in October 1985 into the religious composition of the non-manual staff of the NIHE concluded that equality of opportunity was being provided. Following a recommendation of the FEA, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive is currently undertaking a survey of its staff which is intended to provide a profile of its religious composition. It is anticipated that the report of this survey will be available by the end of the year.

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* Protestants and *(b)* Roman Catholics employed by the Housing Executive in October 1985 have been transferred to different duties, or have resigned their employment, or have been dismissed in the grades or salary bands (i) PO2 and above, (ii) PO1 and (iii) P/T, 1-4, and what were the respective affiliations of their replacements in post in each case.

Mr. Needham: This is a matter for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive but I understand from the chief executive that the information requested is not available.

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Catholic managers at grade or salary bands SOI and above have instituted grievance proceedings, or complaints to the Fair Employment Agency, or the Commissioner for Complaints, or have concluded or are pursuing legal proceedings against the House Executive in consequence of their failure to obtain promotion, or the loss or downgrading of their posts since the Fair Employment Agency report was published in October 1985; and what has been the total cost to the Housing Executive of defending such actions and making compensatory or out-of-court settlements.

Mr. Needham: This is a matter for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive but I understand from the chief executive that the information cannot be provided in the form requested. Details of cases raised by existing members of staff since October 1985 are as follows:

Case and means of raising case	*Costs* £
A—One individual	
In-house grievance procedure relating to failure to obtain promotion.	130
Finding:—No grievance to answer	
B—One individual	
Complaint to the Fair Employment Agency relating to failure to obtain promotion.	Not yet determined
Case continuing.	
C—Two individuals	
Legal proceedings relating to contract of employment case.	6,000 compensation, 9,433 legal costs
Settled out of court.	
Legal proceedings relating to contract of employment.	2,918 to date
Case continuing.	

These figures do not include in-house administration expenses relating to the investigations. These costs are not readily available and could only be determined at disproportionate cost.

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish the full list of organisations of which membership by its employees is proscribed by the Housing Executive on grounds of conflict of interest in any duties involving the planning or maintenance of housing, the planning or apportionment of financial expenditure, the management of tenant-occupied housing, or the recruitment, selection, management and training of employees.

Mr. Needham: This is a matter for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, but I understand from the chief executive that the Executive does not maintain a list of organisations of which employees may not hold membership.

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Roman Catholic personnel or training staff have instituted actions against the Housing Executive since May 1983, through industrial tribunals or the civil courts on grounds of wrongful dismissal or breach of contract; in how many cases compensatory payments were made in preference to reinstatement; and what were the total legal costs involved in defending these actions on behalf of the Housing Executive and in paying compensation.

Mr. Needham: This is a matter for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, but I understand from the chief executive that four officers in the personnel/training section have initiated action against the Executive since May 1983 through a tribunal or civil court.

The Executive is unable to comment on the religious affiliation of the individuals concerned.

The Executive made a compensatory payment in lieu of re-engagement in one of these cases, as directed by the industrial tribunal.

The total costs involved including the compensatory payment amount to £51,644·75 to date.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many complaints by year under the Fair Employment Act (Northern Ireland) Act 1976 have been discontinued by virtue of section 42 of the Act listing the employing body in each case.

Mr. Viggers *[holding answer 20 May 1988]:* It is not the practice to release the names of parties in individual complaints. The following table shows by year the number of requests for the issue of a certificate under section 42 of the Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act 1976.

Year	*Number*
1977-78	3
1978-79	1
1979-80	Nil
1980-81	1
	2
1981-82	3
	1
1982-83	1
1983-84	Nil
1984-85	3
1985-86	1
	1
	1
1986-87	0
1987-88	4
	1

Two of these cases are now the subject of judicial review.

Orange Parades

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Orangemen's parades take place in Northern Ireland each year; and what is the cost of policing them.

Mr. Stanley: The information is not available in the form requested and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

However, in his annual report for 1987, the Chief Constable reported that 1,863 Loyalist parades and 249 Republican parades had taken place during the year and involved a substantial monetary cost.

Local Enterprise Development Unit

Sir John Biggs-Davison: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will state the number of new jobs produced by the work of the Local Enterprise Development Unit.

Mr. Viggers: In the year ended March 1988, the Local Enterprise Development Unit entered into contracts with companies to assist 4,570 jobs. Of this total, 523 related to the development of existing jobs and 4,047 to proposals for the creation of new employment. These results bring the overall total of jobs assisted since the unit's inception in 1971 to 35,271.

Language Assistants

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many language assistants went to which countries under the auspices of the exchange of languages assistants scheme in the last year for which figures are available; and how many come from which countries in each exchange.

Dr. Mawhinney: The figures for the current academic year are as follows:

Countries	*From Northern Ireland*	*To Northern Ireland*
France	61	65
Morocco	—	2
Canada	1	2
Ivory Coast	—	1
Switzerland	1	—
Federal Republic of Germany	8	15
German Democratic Republic	1	—
Austria	1	3
Spain	11	16
Mexico	1	1
Italy	4	3

Further Education (Staff)

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the estimated cost of the investigations by *(a)* the Fair Employment Agency and *(b)* the Northern Ireland Commissioner for complaints into the 40 cases of complaints about selection and promotion of staff in further education colleges during the past five years.

Mr. Viggers: The Fair Employment Agency estimates the total cost of its 12 completed investigations at £24,000. Two further cases are pending and are expected to cost some £4,000.

The office of the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Complaints does not hold information in a form which would enable it to provide a meaningful estimate of the cost of investigation of individual complaints.

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, pursuant to his answer of 12 April, *Official Report*, column *51*, whether he has revised the guidelines to the five education and library boards during the past five years about the criteria for the selection and promotion of staff in further education colleges; and if he will make a statement.

Dr. Mawhinney: The selection and promotion of lecturing staff in further education colleges are matters for the management committees of the colleges and education and library boards operating within schemes approved by the Department of Education. There has been no recent revision of these schemes.

Primary Schools

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland at what stage are the proposed schemes for new primary schools at *(a)* Ballyharry and *(b)* Ballyhalbert; and what are the anticipated dates for the acceptance of the first pupils at these schools.

Dr. Mawhinney: The information is as follows:

(a) Ballyharry: the scheme is now 40 per cent. complete.

(b) Ballyhalbert: the scheme commenced on 23 May 1988.

Both schools are expected to accept pupils in September 1989.

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish the names of all primary schools which have been closed during the past five years; what was the number of pupils at each school at the date of the final decision to close the school; and whether each school listed is controlled or maintained.

Dr. Mawhinney: Details of the primary school closures since 1983 are as follows:

Controlled	*Enrolment*
Ballymiscaw	22
Woodvale	40
Robert Bell	57
Throne	27
Malone	52
Agnew Balzani	22
Ballyhome	16
Ladyhill	23
Seacon	12
Derrykeigan	10
Maxwells Walls	24
Ringsend	7
John Stewart Memorial	21
Ballymontena	25
Kirkhills	21
Blagh	11
Ballystockart	29
Ballytrim	21
Annadorn	13
Castlerobin	23
Milford	16
Ballynahatty	22
Douglas	25
Calkhill	20
Balteagh	13
Mayne	17
Riddle Memorial	132
Porters Memorial	38
Aughagash	22
Ballyoran	221
Voluntary	
Star of the Sea Boys, Belfast	90
St. Anthony's, Belfast	75
St. Teresa's, Tullyorier	15
Cabra	40
St. Columb's Infants, Londonderry	32
Ballyphillip Boys'	171

In addition, primary school amalgamations involving closures since 1983 are as follows:

	Enrolment
Controlled	
Hazelbank	25
Mullindrean	30
Upper Buckna	30
Ardmillan	92
Ballydrain	19
Ballymacashon	28
Killinchy	47
Lisbarnet	36
Magheraberry	80
Soldierstown	19
Wastelands	26
Ballynewry	33
Mullabrack	28
Markethill	173
Cladymore	64
Sion Mills	273
Urney	12
Voluntary	
St. Malachy's Girls', Belfast	171
St. Colman's Boys', Belfast	158

Note: The above amalgamations involved the closure of the schools bracketed together and the erection of a new school on a new site.

Crumlin Road Prison

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he has any plans to improve the sanitary arrangements for prisoners in Her Majesty's prison, Crumlin road, Belfast; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Stanley: There are currently no firm plans to improve the sanitary arrangements at HM prison, Crumlin road, but a survey is being carried out with a view to drawing up a plan to upgrade certain aspects of the building, which may include the sanitation.

Prisoners

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people are currently serving prison sentences in Northern Ireland; what percentage of these are serving sentences for terrorist and related offences; and what percentage of the terrorist offences category are (i) republican and (ii) loyalist.

Mr. Stanley: On 15 May there were 1,442 persons serving prison sentences in Northern Ireland. Of these 72·1 per cent. were serving sentences for scheduled offences as defined in the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978. An unknown number of these offences would however have been treated as non-scheduled at court after being certified out by the Attorney-General. Of the persons serving sentences for scheduled offences, based on their believed paramilitary affiliations, 44·7 per cent. are classified as Republican and 33·3 per cent. as Loyalist. These figures do not reflect those prisoners currently held on remand or awaiting trial, nor those persons ordered to be detained in a young offenders centre.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many female prisoners are currently serving sentences in Northern Ireland; and what percentage are serving sentences for terrorist offences.

Mr. Stanley: On 15 May there were 19 women serving prison sentences in Northern Ireland. Of these 14 (73·7 per cent.) were serving sentences for scheduled offences as defined in the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978. Some of these offences might however have been treated as non-scheduled at court after being certified out by the Attorney-General. These figures do not reflect those prisoners currently held on remand or awaiting trial, nor those persons ordered to be detained in a young offenders centre.

De Lorean Motor Cars Ltd

Mr. Latham: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much money owing to public funds as a result of the collapse of De Lorean Motor Cars Ltd has so far been recovered; how much is still outstanding or unaccounted for; and what has been the cost to public funds to date in fees and other related administrative expenses.

Mr. Viggers: Of the £77 million public funds invested in De Lorean Motor Cars Ltd, the total amount recovered to date by the joint receivers, Sir Kenneth Cork and Mr. Christopher Hughes of Cork Gully, is £12·6 million. That amount included an award in specie of £1·8 million in respect of property at Dunmurry and a total of £3·54

million paid to Government Departments as preferential creditors. £53·7 million of the Government's claim against the company, which excludes share capital of £17·8 million but includes interest and royalties due, remains outstanding. At 29 February 1988 the fees, expenses and costs incurred so far in the receivership and various legal actions amounted to £3·9 million.

Belfast-Dublin Road, Newry (Parking)

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State Northern Ireland how many prosecutions have been brought during the period 1 June 1987 to 1 June 1988 in respect of illegal parking on the Belfast-Dublin road, Newry, in the vicinity of the customs station.

Mr. Stanley: Records of parking offences are not maintained on a road by road basis and this information could not therefore be provided except at disproportionate cost.

Newtown Hamilton (Security System)

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans there are to change the security barrier system currently in operation at Newtown Hamilton, County Armagh.

Mr. Stanley: I understand from the RUC that there are no plans to remove the security barriers at present, although the situation is under review.

Milk Quota

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many farmers in Northern Ireland exceeded their allocated milk quota during the year 1 May 1987 to 31 April 1988.

Mr. Viggers: It is not possible at this stage to state precisely how many milk producers in Northern Ireland exceeded their quota during the year 1 April 1987 to 31 March 1988. A number of quota adjustments still require to be made but it is estimated that approximately 4,000 producers may have exceeded their quota. As a result of temporary reallocation of unused quota, the number who have to pay levy could be significantly lower.

Prison Service

Mr. Neil Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress he is making in improving the cost-effectiveness of the Northern Ireland prison service.

Mr. Tom King: The Government are continually seeking to improve the cost-effectiveness of the Northern Ireland prison service, as is the case with the provision of other public services. Progress has already been made but a particular source of concern for some time has been the increasing cost of housing special category prisoners in three compounds in the old part of Maze prison, even though their numbers have fallen. Accordingly, on Sunday 5 June the remaining 90 special category prisoners were transferred from three compounds in the old part of Maze to two cell blocks in the prison. The prisoners will continue to be held separately from other inmates, and to be treated as special category. Arrangements have been made to reproduce the previous regime to the extent that this is practicable in the different accommodation.

The closure of the remaining compounds will result in more cost-effective use of prison accommodation. The transfer will also result in more contact between staff and these prisoners than was possible in the compounds; most of the men are serving indeterminate sentences, and the new situation should enable a better assessment to be made of their suitability for release into the community on licence.

I have therefore agreed that the case of each special category prisoner serving a sentence of life imprisonment or detention at the Secretary of State's pleasure should be reviewed by the Life Sentence Review Board within about six months. The board will review the cases in accordance with the normal criteria which it applies to all prisoners serving indeterminate sentences. The prisoners concerned are being informed of this review, and will have the normal opportunity to make their own written representations to the board.

Artificial Insemination Service

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether firms or individuals proposing to operate an artificial insemination service for animals require his approval.

Mr. Viggers: No. A licence is required from the Department of Agriculture.

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Strangford of 11 May, whether the licensing of the artificial insemination services to AI Services (NI) Society Ltd. gives this firm a monopoly for artificial insemination services in Northern Ireland;

(2) pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Strangford of 11 May, whether other private persons or firms can undertake an artificial insemination service in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Viggers *[holding answer 27 May 1988]:* AI Services (Northern Ireland) Society Ltd. will be the only organisation authorised to undertake the artificial insemination of cattle on farms in Northern Ireland through a technician service.

Other private persons or firms can be licensed by the Department of Agriculture to sell semen to cattle producers who will continue to be free to buy semen from other sources other than AI Services and to perform artificial insemination on their own cows under licence from the Department of Agriculture.

European Charter on Local Self-Government

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has had from individuals and organisations in Northern Ireland concerning ratification of the European charter on local self-government; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 18 April 1988]:* I have received two representations concerning the ratification of the European charter of local self-government; these came from the hon. Member for South Down (Mr. McGrady) and the Association of Local Authorities of Northern Ireland.

North Eastern Library and Education Board

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he will place in the Library a copy of the Fair Employment Agency's report on the North Eastern Library and Education Board.

Mr. Viggers *[holding answer 24 May 1988]:* When the report is published by the Fair Employment Agency, a copy will be placed in the Library in the normal way.

Milk Quotas

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many milk producers were contracted into the Community non-marketing premium schemes during the base year for the calculation of milk quotas.

Mr. Viggers *[holding answer 25 May 1988]:* In Northern Ireland, 801 producers were contracted out of production under the EC non-marketing of milk and dairy herd conversion premium schemes during at least part of 1983, the base year used for the calculation of primary milk quotas.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Southern Africa

Mr. Watts: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how he decides which political leaders in southern Africa to consult about developments in southern Africa.

Mrs. Chalker: Our policy is to maintain contact with a wide range of political opinion in southern Africa.

Iran (Arms Sales)

Sir Russell Johnston: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received from the United States Government concerning the alleged sale of arms to Iran; and what response he has sent.

Mr. Mellor: We have received no representations from the United States Government on this matter, and we have no reason to think that they hold the views attributed to them in a recent press article.

Gulf War

Sir Russell Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government are taking all steps open to them to prevent the direct or indirect supply of weapons from the United Kingdom to either of the protagonists in the Gulf War.

Mr. Mellor: Yes. Exports of defence-related equipment to Iran or Iraq continue to be subject to the guidelines announced in the House on 29 October 1985. These are strictly applied.

Kampuchea

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many United Kingdom citizens are working for relief agencies inside Kampuchea; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: We have no firm information. The British working in the refugee camps along the Thai-Cambodian border appear to outnumber the few who are working in Cambodia.

Transylvania (Hungarian Minority)

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has made any representations to the Romanian Government on the subject of the alleged persecution of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: The Romanian authorities are aware of the concern in the United Kingdom about human rights in Romania. We have raised these issues in ministerial contacts. In a speech at the CSCE follow-up meeting in Vienna on 15 April, I drew attention in particular to religious rights and those of national minorities in Romania. We hope that the Vienna meeting will result in improved respect for the rights of national minorities, in Romania as elsewhere.

Southern Africa (Defence Capability)

Mr. Steel: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is his policy on supporting the defence capability of Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference states; and if there are any plans to increase the level of support.

Mrs. Chalker: We wish to encourage stability in the region and, to that end, give civil aid, military training assistance and limited non-lethal defence equipment to SADCC states to encourage their independent development. We will continue to do so.

Amritsar (Representations)

Mr. Bidwell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what requests he has received from Indians resident in the United Kingdom asking him to make representations to the Indian Government on recent events in Amritsar.

Mr. Eggar: We have received 24 identical written requests from the International Sikh Youth Federation and a number of Sikh temples. In addition the federation sent a telemessage. We have also received similar requests from four of the temples under cover of letters from hon. Members. We have had no other requests.

Entry Clearance Fees

Mr. Lord: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether any changes are proposed to entry clearance fees.

Mr. Eggar: Revised fees have been introduced along with a new category of entry clearance (double entry), with effect from 1 June 1988. the charges were approved by the Privy Council on 25 May. The principal fees will be as follows:

	£	(£)
Single entry clearance	20	(no change)
Double entry clearance	30	(new category)
Multi entry clearance	44	(40)
Settlement and other long term entry clearances	60	(50)

The last fee has been non-refundable since 1 January 1986. All entry clearance fees will be non-refundable from 1 June 1988. From the same date fees will be charged on a per capita, not per passport, basis.

Mrs. Susan Donnelly

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will instruct Her Majesty's consul in Johannesburg to stay in regular contact with British passport holder Mrs. Susan Donnelly (nèe Wescott); if he will press the South African authorities for an explanation of the circumstances of her arrest and what charges are to be laid against her and how soon; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: As my hon. and learned Friend the Minister of State told the hon. Member on 23 May 1988, consular access has already been obtained to Mrs. Donnelly. Consular officials are also in regular touch with the local police authorities, who are holding Mrs. Donnelly under the provisions of South Africa's Internal Security Act. Our officials will continue to monitor her case and do all that they properly can to assist her.

Gibraltar (Shooting)

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what precise information was available to his Department in the period prior to the shooting of three Irish Republican Army members in Gibraltar on 6 March regarding the nature and scope of any alleged terrorist attack which they were suspected of preparing; what were the sources and timing of that information and what action was taken as a result; whether any civilian employees of Her Majesty's Government were involved at any stage in the operation to locate and apprehend the terrorists; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: The hon. Member is clearly referring to intelligence matters on which it is not our practice to comment.

Departmental Officials (Language Qualifications)

Mr. Holland: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many of his officials at administrative grade are qualified, respectively, at *(a)* O-level, *(b)* A or S-level, *(c)* diploma and *(d)* university degree level in (i) French and (ii) another European Community language; and what procedures are operated by his Department to ensure that documents of the European Communities placed before the House are properly translated.

Mrs. Chalker: For diplomatic service staff the information on language qualifications is as follows:

(i)*(a)* 1,383; (i)*(b)* 914; (i)*(c)* 367; (i)*(d)* 313; (ii)*(a)* 1,733; (ii)*(b)* 757; (ii)*(c)* 495; (ii)*(d)* 304.

Information on the language qualifications of ODA staff is not held in the same way as information for diplomatic service officers. But my hon. Friend the Minister for Overseas Development will write to the hon. Member when the information that is available has been assembled.

The Commission is responsible for the translation of Community documents. To check all translations in London would not be operationally feasible and would greatly delay the depositing of documents in Parliament.

Arms Control Panel

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when was the last meeting of the Ministers' panel on disarmament arms control and non-proliferation; and what is its composition.

Mr. Mellor: The advisory panel on disarmament last met in April 1987. Since 1983 its composition has varied from one meeting to another, according to the agenda. It was established in 1964 to enable Ministers to discuss arms control issues with politicians, academics and non-governmental organisations. In recent years this dialogue has been continued and expanded through a number of increasingly specialised groupings.

BBC (External Services)

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to increase the allocation of resources to the external services of the British Broadcasting Corporation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: None. The grants-in-aid for the BBC external services for 1988-89, 1989-90 and 1990-91 were set out in the 1987 public expenditure survey at the level necessary to carry out the prescribed broadcasting output and sustain the 1981 audibility improvement programme.

Derrick Gregory

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he is making to the Government of Malaysia to commute the death penalty on Derrick Gregory.

Mr. Eggar: We are considering the content and timing of a plea for clemency on humanitarian grounds, which might be submitted by the British High Commissioner in Kuala Lumpur to the Malaysian Government in support of a petition which Mr. Gregory's lawyer is preparing.

Turkey

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of Turkey concerning the European conventions on the repatriation of prisoners and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: Both the United Kingdom and Turkey are parties to the Council of Europe convention on the transfer of sentenced persons. The convention came into force for Turkey on 1 January 1988. There have been no discussions between our Governments on the operation of the convention, but there has been direct contact between the Home Office and the Turkish Ministry of Justice about individuals who have expressed an interest in transfer, under the terms of the convention, to serve the remainder of their sentences in their home countries. These exchanges are continuing.

Chile (Exiles)

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what actions have been taken by Her Majesty's ambassador to Chile in respect of *(a)* the detention of former United Kingdom resident Jamie Caro and *(b)* the safety of other returning exiles.

Mr. Eggar: Sri Caro is a Chilean citizen. We have therefore no consular standing to intervene on his behalf. We are, however, aware of the practical difficulties faced by some Chileans now returning to their own country. Her Majesty's ambassador is in regular touch with returnees from the United Kingdom, who seem to find this helpful. He has discussed some of the returnees' practical difficulties with the Chilean authorities. We do not, however, believe that returning exiles are in any greater physical danger than others in Chile.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Statistics

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* showing information available to him for Brazil, China, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, the United States of America and the United Kingdom on *(a)* the total population, *(b)* the per capita gross national product in constant 1987 United States dollars, *(c)* the average annual rate of growth for the period 1970 to 1987, *(d)* the percentage of the population under 15 years of age and *(e)* the size of the population under 15 years of age.

Mr. Chris Patten: Available information on question (c) and for the latest available year on questions *(a)*, *(b)*,*(d)* and *(e)* is in the table.

	Population (millions) 1986	*GNP per capita (dollars) 1986*	*AGR GNP per capita per cent. 1973-86*	*Percentage of Population 15 years old 1985*	*Population 15 years old (000s) 1985*
Brazil	138·4	1,840	1·6	36·4	49,366
China	1,054·8	280	5·9	29·7	315,050
Ethiopia	43·6	120	−0·5	44·8	19,528
India	780·2	270	2·2	36·8	279,370
Kenya	21·2	300	0·2	52·5	10,820
Nigeria	103·7	620	−2·7	48·3	45,940
Sri Lanka	16·1	400	3·3	34·5	5,596
USA	241·15	17,450	1·4	21·9	52,083
United Kingdom	56·56	8,890	1·2	19·5	10,942

Note: AGR = Annual Growth Rate

Sources: Population, GNP per capita and AGR GNP per capita:
Social indicators of Development 1987 (World Bank & International Finance Corporation 1987)
Recent Social and Economic Indicators 1987 (World Bank 1987)
Population less than 15 years old, percentage and totals:
World Demographic Estimates and Projection, 1950-2025 (United Nations 1988)

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish as a table in the *Official Report*, for all African countries for the years 1960, 1970, 1980 and the latest year for which figures are available, information available to him on the percentage of infant mortality rates, the percentage of children in school with boys and girls listed separately, and the female percentage of the illiterate population.

Mr. Chris Patten: Information for the years in question is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Available information is as follows:

Primary School Enrolment Rates

	1965		*1973*		*Most recent estimate*	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
Algeria	81	53	109	75	106	83
Angola	—	—	—	—	—	—
Benin	48	21	51	22	92	43
Botswana	59	71	65	79	104	28
Burkina Faso	16	8	10	1	20	4
Burundi	36	15	42	20	36	4
Cameroon	114	75	108	87	116	97
Cape Verde	—	—	—	—	—	—
Central African Republic	84	28	88	41	98	51
Chad	56	13	51	18	55	21
Comoros	36	12	64	29	107	76
Congo, People Republic	134	94	—	—	—	—
Cote d'Ivoire	80	41	71	45	64	19
Djibouti	—	—	—	—	—	—
Egypt	90	6	85	57	94	72
Equatorial Guinea	79	52	69	11	—	—
Ethiopia	16	6	32	15	29	12

	1965		1973		Most recent estimate	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Gabon	146	122	105	100	124	121
Gambia	29	12	44	21	91	55
Ghana	82	57	80	62	75	59
Guinea	44	19	40	20	44	20
Guinea-Bissau	38	13	90	39	84	40
Kenya	69	40	103	87	101	94
Lesotho	74	114	87	123	97	126
Liberia	59	23	80	45	95	57
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	11	44	—	—	—	—
Madagascar	70	59	103	88	125	118
Malawi	55	32	67	44	73	52
Mali	32	16	32	17	30	18
Mauritania	19	6	24	13	45	29
Mauritius	105	97	108	106	105	106
Morocco	78	35	78	45	97	62
Mozambique	48	26	104	70	94	71
Namibia	—	—	—	—	—	—
Niger	15	7	25	14	34	19
Nigeria	39	24	47	27	103	81
Reunion	—	—	—	—	—	—
Rwanda	64	43	61	51	64	60
St. Helena	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sao Tome and Principe	—	—	—	—	—	—
Senegal	52	29	48	34	66	44
Seychelles	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sierra Leone	37	21	47	30	—	—
Somalia	16	4	76	42	32	18
South Africa	91	88	105	105	—	—
Sudan	37	21	59	34	57	41
Swaziland	76	71	100	97	112	110
Tanzania	40	25	62	44	91	84
Togo	78	32	130	68	118	75
Tunisia	116	65	116	78	127	105
Uganda	83	50	53	35	65	49
Western Sahara	—	—	—	—	—	—
Zaire	95	45	104	72	112	84
Zambia	59	46	105	88	105	95
Zimbabwe	128	92	79	67	135	127

Secondary School Enrolment Rates

	1965		1973		Most Recent Estimate	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Algeria	10	5	26	14	54	39
Angola	—	—	—	—	—	—
Benin	5	2	6	3	32	12
Botswana	5	3	16	16	26	30
Burkina Faso	2	1	2	1	5	3
Burundi	2	1	3	1	5	3
Cameroon	8	2	23	8	29	18
Cape Verde	—	—	9	8	12	9
Central African Republic	4	1	7	2	24	8
Chad	3	0	6	1	11	2
Comoros	5	1	5	2	30	15
Congo, People Republic	15	5	—	—	—	—
Cote d'Ivoire	10	2	13	4	27	11
Djibouti	—	—	—	—	—	—
Egypt	37	15	54	31	70	46
Equatorial Guinea	11	4	20	4	—	—

	1965		1973		Most Recent Estimate	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Ethiopia	3	1	9	4	14	8
Gabon	16	5	22	12	30	20
Gambia	8	4	15	5	29	13
Ghana	19	7	45	28	45	27
Guinea	9	2	20	7	20	7
Guinea-Bissau	2	2	5	2	19	4
Kenya	6	2	16	9	22	16
Lesotho	4	4	12	14	17	26
Liberia	8	3	25	8	33	13
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	24	4	—	—	—	—
Madagascar	10	5	14	10	43	30
Malawi	3	1	5	2	6	3
Mali	5	2	11	3	10	4
Mauritania	2	0	7	1	19	6
Mauritius	34	18	42	35	54	48
Morocco	16	4	21	12	37	25
Mozambique	3	2	4	2	8	4
Namibia	—	—	—	—	—	—
Niger	1	0	3	1	—	—
Nigeria	7	3	12	6	—	—
Reunion	—	—	—	—	—	—
Rwanda	31	1	3	1	3	1
St. Helena	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sao Tome and Principe	—	—	—	—	—	—
Senegal	10	3	14	6	17	8
Seychelles	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sierra Leone	8	3	16	7	—	—
Somalia	4	1	9	3	23	12
South Africa	16	14	20	19	—	—
Sudan	6	2	19	8	23	16
Swaziland	9	7	35	29	44	43
Tanzania	3	1	4	2	4	2
Togo	8	2	29	9	32	10
Tunisia	23	9	21	28	32	27
Uganda	6	2	6	2	10	5
Western Sahara	—	—	—	—	—	—
Zaire	8	2	23	8	81	33
Zambia	11	3	20	10	22	12
Zimbabwe	8	5	10	7	46	31

Infant Mortality Rate (/1,000 births)

	1950-55	1960-65	1970-75	1980-85
Algeria	185	160	132	88
Angola	231	200	173	149
Benin	210	176	151	120
Botswana	130	115	95	76
Burkina Faso	234	207	162	150
Burundi	172	145	135	124
Cameroon	190	154	119	103
Cape Verde	165	135	103	75
Central African Republic	197	178	148	142
Chad	211	189	166	143
Comoros	140	124	106	88
Congo, People Republic	170	131	90	81
Cote d'Ivoire	216	188	153	110
Djibouti	—	—	—	—
Egypt	200	175	150	100
Equatorial Guinea	204	183	160	137
Ethiopia	190	170	155	155
Gabon	194	163	132	112
Gambia	207	204	192	174
Ghana	148	127	110	98
Guinea	225	202	181	159
Guinea-Bissau	204	183	163	143
Kenya	150	118	98	80
Lesotho	160	145	130	111
Liberia	194	176	155	132
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	185	150	117	97
Madagascar	126	104	84	67
Malawi	212	204	191	163
Mali	213	208	203	180
Mauritania	204	176	157	137
Mauritius	99	61	55	28
Morocco	180	155	122	97
Mozambique	177	173	168	153
Namibia	168	150	134	116

	1950-55	1960-65	1970-75	1980-85
Niger	207	186	166	146
Nigeria	207	185	148	114
Reunion	141	87	41	13
Rwanda	160	142	140	132
St. Helena	—	—	—	—
Sao Tome and Principe	—	—	—	—
Senegal	191	176	162	142
Seychelles	—	—	—	—
Sierra Leone	226	224	203	180
Somalia	190	170	155	155
South Africa	152	130	110	83
Sudan	185	165	145	118
Swaziland	160	150	144	129
Tanzania	160	143	130	115
Togo	204	170	121	102
Tunisia	175	155	120	85
Uganda	160	125	116	112
Western Sahara	—	—	—	—
Zaire	157	146	127	107
Zambia	150	130	100	88
Zimbabwe	120	106	93	80

Notes:
1. School enrolment rate—percentage of the school-age children as defined by each country and reported to UNESCO. Most countries consider the primary school age to be 6 to 11 years and for secondary 12 to 17 years.
2. Most recent estimates are generally for 1986.

Source:
1. Social Indicators of Development 1987—The World Bank and International Finance Corporation.
2. World Demographic Estimates and Projections, 1950-2025—United Nations 1988.

Nicaragua

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what aid the United Kingdom gave to Nicaragua in the latest year for which figures are available; and if he will publish a table showing how the aid was used in individual projects.

Mr. Chris Patten: The United Kingdom has given both bilateral and multilateral aid to Nicaragua. In 1986, bilateral aid was £86,000 of which £82,000 was for disaster relief and the remainder for technical co-operation. In 1987, bilateral aid was nil. The latest figures for multilateral aid to Nicaragua attributable to the United Kingdom are for 1985 when £2·9 million was contributed through all agencies of which £2·3 million was provided through the European Community. In that year, our bilateral aid was £116,000.

In addition to these amounts, we have co-financed with British voluntary agencies a number of small development projects in Nicaragua.

Latin America

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* showing for all countries in Latin America, information available to him for the latest year for which figures are available on the proportions of the male and female population who were economically active and the proportions of the female population economically active in the years 1960, 1970 and 1980.

Mr. Chris Patten: The information is as follows:

	Activity Rates (per cent.) Females			Activity Rates (per cent.) 1985	
	1960	1970	1980	Males	Females
Argentina	16·81	19·48	19·53	52·06	19·41
Bolivia	13·99	13·85	13·85	48·01	14·85
Brazil	11·25	14·33	19·63	53·41	19·88
Chile	14·2	13·87	18·27	51·68	19·67
Colombia	11·84	12·7	13·94	49·63	14·29
Costa Rica	9·75	11·14	14·67	53·99	15·21
Dominican Republic	5·94	5·98	7·06	51·15	8·22
Ecuador	10·69	10·12	11·63	48·59	11·74
El Salvador	11·02	13·56	16·53	49·23	16·62
Guatemala	7·83	8·05	7·95	47·67	8·66
Haiti	51·52	46·42	38·14	49·65	36·23
Honduras	7·92	8·53	9·2	49·17	10·31
Jamaica	30·69	31·56	39·5	51·25	42·53
Mexico	9·12	10·08	17·32	48·1	17·89
Nicaragua	11·24	11·88	12·84	46·49	14·23
Panama	14·28	17·35	17·94	50·14	18·98
Paraguay	13·92	13·67	13·7	52·72	13·78
Peru	13·47	11·97	15·16	47·4	15·35
Trinidad and Tobago	17·84	19·41	20·91	53·54	22·55
Uruguay	19·53	20·7	22·81	54·95	23·27
Venezuela	11·55	12·18	17·18	49·18	18·3

NOTE: The activity rate is the ratio of the economically active population (all employed and unemployed persons including those seeking work for the first time) aged 10 years and over to the population of all ages.

Source: World Demographic Estimates and Projections, 1950-2025 United Nations 1988.

Aga Khan Foundation

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what controls will be put on the use of food granted to the Aga Khan Foundation.

Mr. Chris Patten: Her Majesty's Government have not made any donations of food to or through the Aga Khan Foundation; nor do they have any such plans.

Group of Seven

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the average percentage of gross national product given in aid by members of the Group of Seven leading industrialised countries, excluding the United Kingdom, in 1987 or in the latest available year.

Mr. Chris Patten: In 1986, the latest year for which official figures are available, the net official development assistance of the Group of Seven leading industrialised countries excluding the United Kingdom represented 0·32 per cent. of their combined GNP.

World Bank

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list in the *Official Report* all those votes taken at meetings of the World Bank since 1979, stating the position Her Majesty's Government took on each vote; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: It is not the policy of Her Majesty's Government to disclose how our executive director voted in the World Bank's executive board.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Mr. Illsley: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 7 June.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 7 June.

Mr. Ieaun Wyn Jones: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 7 June.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 7 June.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 7 June.

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 7 June.

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 7 June.

Mr. Stern: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 7 June.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 7 June.

Mr. Sumberg: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 7 June.

The Prime Minister: This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House, I shall be having further meetings later today. This evening I hope to have an audience of Her Majesty the Queen.

Blandford Fly (Dorset)

Mr. Adley: To ask the Prime Minister if she will make a statement on the co-ordination between the Department of the Environment, the Department of Employment and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in taking action to combat the scourge of the Blandford fly in Dorset.

The Prime Minister: I understand that there is to be a meeting on 8 June between representatives of the Health and Safety Executive, North Dorset district council and the Freshwater Biological Association to discuss the problem of the Blandford fly. Subsequently, if advice from the Independent Advisory Committee on Pesticides is required, all the approving Departments will automatically be involved. I am satisfied that there is good co-ordination between the Departments involved in pesticide approvals.

Church of Scotland (Reports)

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Prime Minister what response she will be making to the reports dealing with housing and the gap between the rich and poor presented to her at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland on 21 May.

The Prime Minister: My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland will, in due course, respond on behalf of the Government, to the report "Housing Scotland's People".

The discussion of poverty appears to rest heavily on the old DHSS low-income families statistics, which used the supplementary benefit scale rates as the yardstick for the measurement of low income. This series has been the subject of a recent technical review, the report of which has been placed in the Library. The report highlights a number of significant weaknesses in the approach, including the fact that under it the more help provided to those dependent on benefit, the more people will appear to be on "low incomes". In addition, there are significant statistical reservations about estimates for Scotland in isolation. The hon. Member may be aware that the recently published "Households Below Average Income—a statistical analysis 1981-85" shows that those in the lowest income groups have seen higher than average increases in real incomes.

President Evren

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Prime Minister whom President Evren of Turkey will meet when he visits Britain.

The Prime Minister: As guest of Her Majesty the Queen, President Evren will meet members of the royal family and Ministers, as well as a number of right hon. and hon. Members, officials, business men and others with an interest in Turkey.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Rifle Club Range

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Lord President of the Council what information he has as to how much public money was spent on establishing the Palace of Westminster rifle club range; and as to how much public subsidy goes towards its annual expenditure.

Mr. Wakeham: There is no record of the Palace of Westminster rifle club range ever having received any public subvention or annual subsidy.

Sports and Social Club

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Lord President of the Council what information he has as to how much public money was spent on establishing the Houses of Parliament sports and social club; and what subsidy is given towards its annual expenditure.

Mr. Wakeham: There is no evidence of public money having been spent on the establishment of the Houses of Parliament sports and social club. Its annual expenditure is financed by the annual appeal to Members of both Houses, by subscriptions and by profits from the club's facilities.

Palace of Westminster (Visitors)

Mr. Ken Hargreaves: To ask the Lord President of the Council what plans he has to protect from inclement weather visitors to the Palace of Westminster queuing for admission via the Norman Porch.

Mr. Wakeham: A number of possible measures has been considered by the authorities of both Houses. No acceptable arrangement has yet been agreed, but the matter is regularly reviewed.

ENVIRONMENT

Property Services Agency

Mr. Holt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has yet completed his assessment of the report of the efficiency scrutiny into project management in the Property Services Agency; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: We have now considered the report, and have produced an action plan which sets out our response to its recommendations and our plans for implementation. I have today placed copies of the report and action plan in the Library.

Prospect Estate, Rushmoor

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the purpose of discussions currently taking place between his Department and officers of the borough of Rushmoor on the subject of major technical repairs for the Prospect estate; and when he will receive a deputation from the borough.

Mr. Waldegrave: I met a deputation from the borough of Rushmoor on 26 May and discussed with them the effects of the subsidy rules on projects for the renovation of dwellings on the Prospect estate.

European Sporting Events (Policing)

Mr. McCrindle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he is satisfied with the co-operation between British Transport Police and their European counterparts regarding the policing of European sporting events involving United Kingdom clubs, including arrangements for travelling thereto and therefrom.

Mr. Moynihan: I am advised that the British Transport police have excellent communications with their counterparts in Europe. I understand that they maintain close co-operation, as appropriate, on police intelligence and the travel arrangements of supporters.

Waste Tips (Gases)

Mr. McCrindle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will introduce legislation to tighten controls over the emission of methane and other gases from waste tips; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: The Government put forward a number of proposals for strengthening the regulation of waste disposal in a consultation paper in September 1986. These proposals include empowering local authorities to require continuing precautions at waste disposal sites until they are safe. An announcement will be made shortly about the Government's decisions on these proposals.

An urgent survey by Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution to establish the extent of the landfill gas problem is currently in hand. When that exercise is complete, the Government will consider whether further measures are necessary.

Water Pollution

Mr. McCrindle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will introduce legislation to increase the penalties for pollution of water supplies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: The maximum penalties which can be imposed by Magistrates for offences under part II of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 are fines not exceeding £2,000 and terms of imprisonment of up to three months. On indictment there is no limit on the fine that may be imposed, and the term of imprisonment can be up to two years. Penalties for pollution offences are kept under regular review, but there are no immediate plans for increasing them.

British Waterways Freight Organisation

Mr. Norman Hogg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what discussions took place with his Department concerning the sale of the British waterways freight organisation; what consultation took place with interested parties; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: The British Waterways Board discussed with the Department its proposed approach to the sale of its road freight depots. The board advised staff and trade unions in February that it was seeking private sector involvement to secure the future of the depots. Staff and unions have been given details of the terms of the sale, which enabled staff to transfer on their existing conditions of service.

Dog Wardens

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if, in light of the renewed suspension of postal deliveries to the Hanway Estate, Hanwell W7, as a result of canine attacks on postmen, he will exempt local authority expenditure on dog wardens from the ambit of expenditure control; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: The Secretary of State has treated this request that he exempt local authority expenditure on dog wardens from the ambit of expenditure control as a representation that he make a specification subtracting this expenditure from total expenditure for block grant

purposes under powers in the Local Government Finance Act 1987. He has considered this request very carefully but is not minded to make such a specification in the light of the information available to him.

Sewage Discharges

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment which water authorities have so far submitted to his Department their reports for 1987 detailing works which have failed to comply with discharge consent conditions.

Mr. Moynihan: All water authorities have submitted reports detailing sewage treatment works which failed to comply with numerical discharge consent conditions in 1987.

Palace of Westminster Toilets (Cleaning)

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the last five occasions prior to 24 May when the wall tiles in the ladies' toilets of the Committee Room Corridor were fully cleaned; when the floor was cleaned; and if he will give the same information for each of the ladies' toilets in the Palace of Westminster.

Mr. Chope: The wall tiles and floors were cleaned in accordance with the terms of the contract on 17, 18, 19, 20 and 23 May.

Ramsgate Harbour (Access Road)

Mr. Aitken: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to announce his decision on the planning application for the Ramsgate harbour access road.

Mr. Waldegrave: Shortly.

Rating Reform

Mr. Steel: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what account he has taken of the potential usefulness of using dates of birth in the community charge register as a means of assistance for the assessors.

Mr. Howard: There will be no assessors in England and Wales. The Government's view of the usefulness of dates of birth to community charges registration officers in England and Wales was set out by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, during the Committee stage of the Local Government Finance Bill *(Official Report, Standing Committee E;* 9 February, c. 524).

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether community charge officers will be able to have access to the personal data that may be carried by the Government data network.

Mr. Howard: No.

Waste Disposal

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when methods of litter collection and disposal were last updated; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: The collection of litter and its disposal within the general waste stream together with other refuse collected in their respective areas is the responsibility of the relevant local authorities. It is for them to assess and utilise the most up-to-date and cost-effective methods available which are most suitable for their particular areas.

Hazardous Waste (Shipments)

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he intends to take to make sure that the Government comply with all EEC directives relating to transfrontier shipments of hazardous waste; when Her Majesty's Government will agree a definition of what is hazardous; whether it will adopt the current Belgian definition, and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: We plan to implement the directives by means of regulations to be laid before Parliament before the summer recess, to come into effect in the early autumn.

The control and supervision procedures introduced by the regulations will apply to special wastes as defined in the Control of Pollution (Special Waste) Regulations 1980 and will replace existing controls on imports and exports contained in the 1980 regulations. In addition, the procedures will apply to such imports of non special waste as are notified to waste disposal authorities by a holder in another member state as being "hazardous" in terms of that country's implementation of the directive.

The effect of the regulations will be to provide waste disposal authorities, both at the port of entry and at the disposal site, with prior notification of shipments and better information on the nature of the waste. Details of the proposed procedures have been circulated to local authority and industry associations.

Uranium Discharges

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what levels of uranium were discharged into Rivacre brook, and from there into the river Mersey, by British Nuclear Fuels plc Capenhurst in each year from 1983 to 1988; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: The annual total uranium alpha activity discharged into the Rivacre brook by British Nuclear Fuels plc from its Capenhurst works in each year from 1983 to 1986 is as follows. Data for 1987 and 1988 are not yet available.

Year	*Annual discharge in mega becquerels*
1983	500
1984	800
1985	900
1986	2,000

These levels demonstrate that the discharge represents an insignificant radiological hazard to members of the public.

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will impose an absolute level on discharges of uranium by British Nuclear Fuels plc at Capenhurst; and at what level that will be set.

Mr. Moynihan: The certificate of authorisation for the disposal of low level liquid radioactive waste from British Nuclear Fuels plc Capenhurst works into the Rivacre brook, which sets concentration limits on uranium discharges is currently subject to review by the authorising Departments. It is the intention to include limits on total quantities discharged. The review will be completed before the end of the year.

Ozone Layer

Miss Fookes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement about the results of research into the damage to the ozone layer over the Arctic and the Antarctic from the production of chlorofluorocarbons.

Mr. Moynihan: It seems evident from recent experiments that the Antarctic ozone hole is caused by man-made CFCs in the special conditions which exist over Antarctica each spring.

The effect of CFCs on the stratosphere over the Arctic is still far from clear; a large experimental programme (in which the United Kingdom is participating) will take place in the Arctic in January 1989 to try to resolve this. Our stratosphere ozone review group has agreed to provide an up-to-date report on these matters as soon as possible.

Ealing Council (Borrowing)

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will investigate borrowing by Ealing council against current and future housing investment programme allocations and capital receipts; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: The means by which a local authority may borrow are specified in schedule 13 to the Local Government Act 1972 and regulations made thereunder. If my hon. Friend has reason to believe that Ealing council is raising money by other means, I invite him to place the evidence before the council's auditor.

Water Byelaws

Mr. Clifford Forsythe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will implement water byelaws in England and Wales in accordance with the model issued by his Department in 1986.

Mr. Moynihan: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire) on 27 April 1988, at column 165.

Legionnaire's Disease

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if, in view of the recent outbreak of Legionnaire's Disease at the British Broadcasting Corporation he will instruct the Health and Safety Executive to give wider publicity, including advertising, to the dangers of improperly managed water systems in large buildings.

Mr. Nicholls: I have been asked to reply.

The Health and Safety Executive has already published advice in guidance note No. 48 of its environmental hygiene series on the precautionary measures that can be taken to minimise the occurrence of legionnaire's disease. Copies of this guidance note are available from HMSO and I welcome the opportunity provided by my hon. Friend to publicise it further. Copies of the note will be placed in the Library.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

National Farmers Union

Mr. Favell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the president of the National Farmers Union; and what subjects were discussed.

Mr. MacGregor: I last met the president of the National Farmers Union on 16 May when we discussed the Commission's 1988-89 farm price proposals.

Milk Marketing Board

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Milk Marketing Board; and what issues were discussed.

Mr. Donald Thompson: My right hon. Friend last met the chairman of the Milk Marketing Board on 25 April, when a number of issues of current concern to the dairy industry were discussed.

Food Industry (Exports)

Mr. Bovis: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the performance of the food industry in increasing exports to Community partners.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Exports of food from the United Kingdom to other countries of the EC12 have

more than doubled since 1980 and now comprise over 70 per cent. of the total of our food exports. This is a considerable achievement. However, given that this represents a little over £2,000 million in a total food market in the rest of the EC12 estimated at over £350,000 million, there are clearly further opportunities to be exploited.

Surplus Food and Drink

Mr. Canavan: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the current total volume and value in sterling of surplus food and drink in the European Economic Community.

Mr. MacGregor: A note setting out the volume of EC intervention stocks of agricultural commodities which includes only the surplus quantities held in EC intervention is deposited in the Library of the House and is updated monthly. The estimated book value of the EC stocks excluding depreciation, set out in the most recently deposited note, is £4·0 billion.

Farmers

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many farmers there are in each county in England at the latest convenient date.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The information requested is shown in the table.

Numbers of Farmers, Partners and Directors on Agricultural holdings, England, June 1987

Farmers, partners and directors (doing farm work)

County by standard statistical region	*Whole-time*			*Part-time*			*Total farmers, partners and directors*
	Principal farmers and partners	*Other partners and directors*	*Total*	*Principal farmers and partners*	*Other partners and directors*	*Total*	
Cleveland	314	116	430	78	62	140	570
Cumbria	4,531	1,610	6,141	947	676	1,623	7,764
Durham	1,526	503	2,029	370	240	610	2,639
Northumberland	1,657	666	2,323	381	316	697	3,020
Tyne and Wear	190	56	246	53	32	85	331
North Region	8,218	2,951	11,169	1,829	1,326	3,155	14,324
Humberside	2,412	1,109	3,521	620	508	1,128	4,649
North Yorkshire (North Allerton)	5,502	2,006	7,508	1,282	962	2,244	9,752
North Yorkshire (Beverley)	619	273	892	146	118	264	1,156
South Yorkshire	926	344	1,270	312	201	513	1,783
West Yorkshire	1,707	515	2,222	971	386	1,357	3,579
Yorkshire and Humberside	11,166	4,247	15,413	3,331	2,175	5,506	20,919
Derbyshire	2,422	728	3,150	816	466	1,282	4,432
Leicestershire	1,807	666	2,473	520	338	858	3,331
Lincolnshire	4,004	1,638	5,642	1,065	893	1,958	7,600
Northamptonshire	1,213	450	1,663	392	281	673	2,336
Nottinghamshire	1,304	559	1,863	348	284	632	2,495
East Midlands Region	10,750	4,041	14,791	3,141	2,262	5,403	20,194
Cambridgeshire	2,497	921	3,418	667	513	1,180	4,598
Norfolk	3,189	1,082	4,271	1,121	691	1,812	6,083
Suffolk	2,242	870	3,112	757	524	1,281	4,393
East Anglia Region	7,928	2,873	10,801	2,545	1,728	4,273	15,074
Bedfordshire	858	332	1,190	218	167	385	1,575
Berkshire	460	136	596	265	119	384	980
Buckinghamshire	1,085	326	1,411	503	280	783	2,194
East Sussex	1,185	315	1,500	677	295	972	2,472
Essex	2,151	872	3,023	675	597	1,272	4,295
Greater London (E)	99	26	125	21	24	45	170
Greater London (SE)	169	67	236	77	35	112	348
Hampshire	1,665	518	2,183	771	410	1,181	3,364
Hertfordshire	720	268	988	236	177	413	1,401
Isle of Wight	323	84	407	107	63	170	577
Kent	2,328	702	3,030	1,316	734	2,050	5,080
Oxfordshire	1,263	428	1,691	472	298	770	2,461
Surrey	833	190	1,023	548	228	776	1,799
West Sussex	1,179	331	1,510	556	285	841	2,351
South East Region	14,318	4,595	18,913	6,442	3,712	10,154	29,067
Avon	1,308	357	1,665	450	212	662	2,327
Cornwall	4,405	1,111	5,516	1,600	750	2,350	7,866
Devon	7,348	1,821	9,169	1,999	1,111	3,110	12,279
Dorset	1,800	518	2,318	697	435	1,132	3,450
Gloucestershire	1,937	542	2,479	784	397	1,181	3,660
Isles of Scilly	47	6	53	9	8	17	70

County by standard statistical region	Whole-time: Principal farmers and partners	Whole-time: Other partners and directors	Whole-time: Total	Part-time: Principal farmers and partners	Part-time: Other partners and directors	Part-time: Total	Total farmers, partners and directors
Somerset	3,686	1,005	4,691	1,207	646	1,853	6,544
Wiltshire	1,805	603	2,408	636	397	1,033	3,441
South West Region	22,336	5,963	28,299	7,382	3,956	11,338	39,637
Hereford and Worcester	4,142	1,282	5,424	1,622	839	2,461	7,885
Shropshire	3,331	1,002	4,333	866	597	1,463	5,796
Staffordshire	2,944	866	3,810	909	510	1,419	5,229
Warwickshire	1,465	500	1,965	514	290	804	2,769
West Midlands	296	93	389	122	69	191	580
West Midlands Region	12,178	3,743	15,921	4,033	2,305	6,338	22,259
Cheshire	2,883	886	3,769	840	472	1,312	5,081
Greater Manchester	936	292	1,228	358	200	558	1,786
Lancashire	3,814	1,300	5,114	1,050	703	1,753	6,867
Merseyside	352	115	467	88	73	161	628
North West Region	7,985	2,593	10,578	2,336	1,448	3,784	14,362
England	94,879	31,006	125,885	31,039	18,912	49,951	175,836

Source: June census.
Note: Figures exclude minor holdings not included in June census.

Farm Workers

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many farm workers are employed in each county in England at the latest convenient date.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The information requested is shown in the table.

Numbers of workers and salaried managers engaged on agricultural holdings, England, June 1987
All workers (excluding salaried managers)

County by standard statistical region	Male	Female	Total	Salaried managers
Cleveland	443	94	537	27
Cumbria	4,228	659	4,887	83
Durham	1,731	487	2,218	31
Northumberland	2,723	480	3,203	80
Tyne and Wear	322	99	421	8
North Region	9,447	1,819	11,266	229
Humberside	5,491	1,831	7,322	234
North Yorkshire (North Allerton)	7,058	1,739	8,797	224
North Yorkshire (Beverley)	1,370	1,437	2,807	62
South Yorkshire	1,356	495	1,851	31
West Yorkshire	2,343	808	3,151	71
Yorkshire and Humberside	17,618	6,310	23,928	622
Derbyshire	2,601	796	3,397	50
Leicestershire	2,703	934	3,637	108
Lincolnshire	9,393	4,701	14,094	447
Northamptonshire	2,207	551	2,758	121
Nottinghamshire	2,550	1,088	3,638	121
East Midlands Region	19,454	8,070	27,524	847
Cambridgeshire	5,514	3,016	8,530	244
Norfolk	8,556	4,615	13,171	368
Suffolk	5,722	2,653	8,375	314
East Anglia Region	19,792	10,284	30,076	926
Bedfordshire	1,676	756	2,432	90
Berkshire	1,299	568	1,867	109
Buckinghamshire	2,121	783	2,904	154
East Sussex	2,362	1,241	3,603	124
Essex	5,082	2,658	7,740	289
Greater London (East)	243	203	446	22

County by standard statistical region	Male	Female	Total	Salaried managers
Greater London (South East)	414	330	744	29
Hampshire	4,616	2,351	6,967	349
Hertfordshire	1,768	614	2,382	141
Isle of Wight	543	269	812	19
Kent	7,363	8,240	15,603	376
Oxfordshire	2,950	982	3,932	198
Surrey	2,272	1,655	3,927	192
West Sussex	3,499	2,827	6,326	283
South East Region	36,208	23,477	59,685	2,375
Avon	1,929	1,565	3,494	113
Cornwall	4,428	1,314	5,742	68
Devon	7,687	1,813	9,500	151
Dorset	3,378	859	4,237	149
Gloucestershire	3,202	1,363	4,565	180
Isles of Scilly	56	35	91	2
Somerset	5,104	1,562	6,666	142
Wiltshire	4,006	882	4,888	249
South West Region	29,790	9,393	39,183	1,054
Hereford and Worcester	6,473	3,931	10,404	247
Shropshire	4,654	1,506	6,160	121
Staffordshire	3,739	1,048	4,787	79
Warwickshire	2,397	872	3,269	120
West Midlands	440	312	752	14
West Midlands Region	17,703	7,669	25,372	581
Cheshire	4,261	1,006	5,267	159
Greater Manchester	1,138	469	1,607	18
Lancashire	4,883	1,911	6,744	137
Merseyside	634	289	923	18
North West Region	10,866	3,675	14,541	332
England	160,878	70,697	231,575	6,966

Source: June census.
Note: Figures exclude minor holdings not included in June census.

Somerset Wetlands

Mr. Ashdown: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how long he estimates the Somerset wetlands will continue to qualify as an environmentally sensitive area at current rates of drying out; and whether he will facilitate the introduction of a system of water table management aimed at preserving the levels, and moors, wetland status.

Mr. Gummer: My officials have met representatives from Wessex water authority, the NCC and RSPB to discuss their recent report on declining water levels and breeding wading bird numbers in the Somerset levels and moors. As a result, it has been agreed that a joint technical assessment of the current situation will be carried out in consultation with IDBs, environmental and farming interests. Proposals for remedial action will be examined if they are found to be necessary.

Alternative Land Use

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many applications have been received under the farm diversification grant scheme; and what progress has been made towards meeting the targets for applications under the scheme.

Mr. Gummer: By the end of April we had received 514 applications under the scheme in England. Grant has now been approved worth £686,000 on total capital investments of £2·745 million. We are delighted by the enthusiastic response from farmers to this new scheme.

Feed Additives

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what consultations he has had on the use of *(a)* Carbadox and *(b)* Olaquindox as an animal feed additive.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I am not authorised to consult representative organisations on the authorisation of medicinal feed additives. The following committees have been consulted at various times on one or other of these products:

(a) the veterinary products committee.
(b) the chief medical officers committee on mutagenicity of chemicals in food, consumer products and the environment.
(c) the chief medical officers committee on carcinogenicity of chemicals in food, consumer products and the environment.

Radionuclide Sampling

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make available the

information contained in the document "Radionuclide Sampling in the Environment 1987", in the form of a map with sampling points marked as accurately as possible; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I assume the publication referred to is "Radionuclide Levels in Food, Animals and Agricultural Products 1987". The information in section A of the document is given by product and by country. Section B gives a summary of live monitoring of sheep in Cumbria, Wales and by county outside the restricted areas. Section C gives laboratory results of sheepmeat sampling by zones within the restricted areas. The document summarises 279,000 monitoring results and the cost of individual mapping would be disproportionate.

Badgers (Tuberculosis)

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many badgers have been killed by his Ministry in each parish in 1986 and 1987 as a result of herd breakdown of tuberculosis; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 4 May to the hon. Member for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies) at columns *482-84*. All badgers taken in those removal operations were killed for post mortem examination.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to his answer of 19 May, *Official Report*, column *569*, when he expects the live testing of badgers for tuberculosis to begin and on what scale.

Mr. Donald Thompson *[holding answer 26 May 1988]:* Until the laboratory tests have been completed and the results validated it is not possible to say when the live testing of badgers for tuberculosis will begin, or on what scale.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any further information regarding the timing and scale of use of the tuberculosis vaccine for badgers.

Mr. Donald Thompson *[holding answer 26 May 1988]:* I have nothing to add to the reply which I gave to the hon. Member on 20 May at col. *612*.

Sheep Paint

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food why the paint issued to farmers in Cumbria to mark their sheep following the restrictions after Chernobyl contained no label indicating that it was harmful.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The tins did carry a warning in the form of a manufacturer's label.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will place in the Library the data sheet of application details of Dac-Chlor A.A. paint issued to farmers to mark sheep in the restricted areas following the Chernobyl disaster.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Examples of the written instructions issued by the Ministry to farmers concerning the application of Doc Chlor AA paint are being placed in the Library of the House.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food why the tins of paint issued to farmers to mark their sheep in the restricted area of Cumbria, following the Chernobyl disaster were collected in by his staff when the paint had been used and the tins emptied; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The used tins were collected for accounting purposes and to ensure that all supplies had been fully utilised.

Whaling Commission

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the Whaling Commission; and what subjects were discussed.

Mr. Gummer: I opened the 39th annual meeting of the International Whaling Commission last year and issued a statement to this year's meeting which has just taken place in New Zealand re-emphasising the need to uphold the moratorium on commercial whaling, stressing that it should not be undermined by misuse of provisions for scientific whaling and stating that further attention should be paid to a number of issues including humane killing to further the IWC's important responsibilities in the conservation and proper use of the world's natural resources.

Free Food

Mr. Steen: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make arrangements for the constituents of South Hams to receive free deliveries of beef and butter recently announced, which are currently unavailable because of a lack of delivery arrangements.

Mr. MacGregor: Applications were invited until 29 February from non-profit making organisations willing and able to distribute beef and butter to the needy. Although a large number of applications were received, none were from South Hams. Since the whole of the United Kingdom's allocation of funds has been divided between the 127 designated organisations, it would not be appropriate to entertain late applications. Nor do the rules of the scheme permit us to accept late applications as qualifying for the use of European Community funds.

Chernobyl

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what has been the total staff and administration cost to his Department of the Chernobyl accident.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Precise figures are not available, but on a broad assessment of the Department's programmes for food safety and for the radiological protection of our food supply I estimate that staff costs resulting from the Chernobyl accident are of the order of £1·9 million. In addition, my Department has spent some £0·4 million on the purchase of samples and of materials and equipment for analytical purposes and for monitoring.

Nutrition Information

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps he is taking to provide

consumers with suitable information to assist them in using the nutrition information provided voluntarily by manufacturers on food labels designed to enable individuals to achieve a balanced diet.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The major step we have taken in this area is the issue of voluntary nutrition labelling guidelines to encourage manufacturers and retailers providing nutrition information to do so in a standard format. This will enable consumers to compare foods more easily and to make healthy choices. We fully recognise the need to provide consumers with educational material to help them obtain maximum benefit from nutrition labelling. We have a very successful free booklet "Look at the Label" on understanding food labels and this is currently being updated to take account of the advent of nutrition labelling. Another valuable guide is our "Manual of Nutrition". The Health Education Authority has produced material on diet and health and there are numerous books by private authors available to the general public. A wide range of useful nutrition information is also produced by food manufacturers and retailers.

Storm Damage

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he is in a position to announce the Government's conclusions on the recommendations made by the House of Commons Select Committee on Agriculture and by the forest windblow action committee for further financial assistance for the restoration of woodlands damaged by the storm of 16 October 1987.

Mr. MacGregor: I am replying today to the Select Committee and a copy of my response will be placed in the House of Commons Library. Both the Select Committee and the forest windblow action committee recommended further financial assistance to deal with the rehabilitation of storm damaged woodland. The action committee in particular recommended:

(i) a short-term transport subsidy aimed at encouraging the movement of pine and beech wood to more distant markets (supported by the Select Committee);

(ii) a supplement to the normal Forestry Commission grants for replanting woodlands damaged in the storm of 16 October 1987.

After careful consideration of these recommendations, I have taken the view that the action committee's second proposal would provide a longer-lasting and more direct benefit than a transport subsidy in respect of the woodlands concerned. I recognise that owners whose woodlands suffered storm damage on 16 October 1987 will incur additional costs both in preparing sites for planting and in the planting itself. As an incentive to replant in these circumstances, I therefore intend to make special supplements of £150 per hectare for conifers and of £400 per hectare for broadleaves available over the next five years on top of the Forestry Commission's normal planting grants in respect of restocking in these storm-damaged woodlands. These supplements will be provided for eligible restocking carried out by applicants under the new woodland grant scheme and for those who still qualify under the commission's old schemes. On mature consideration the Government have concluded that such a supplement is the best way of meeting the Select Committee's concern that we consider whether more support should be available to help repair the damage. The European Commission is being informed under the provisions of article 93 of the treaty of Rome.

I have decided that there is an insufficient case for a transport subsidy. In reaching this conclusion, I have to take account of the fact that the loss of timber value, as opposed to the replanting cost, is insurable. The effect of a subsidy would be to reduce the insurable loss which it is not appropriate for the Government to undertake. Moreover, where there is a local glut after a storm prices will decline in any event and as a result it will be more economic for purchasers of timber to transport it, including over greater distances. Such a subsidy in these circumstances would be unlikely to provide cost-effective benefits.

Full details of the administrative arrangements for the new supplements will be announced by the Forestry Commission as soon as possible, but any owners who have already taken steps to secure the replanting of their storm-damaged woods under the commission's grant schemes will not be placed at a disadvantage as we have agreed that the supplement may be applied to them retrospectively.

It is estimated that the total cost of the supplements, covering the replanting of some 5000 hectares of conifers and 7000 hectares of broadleaves, will come to £3·5 million over the five-year period. There will be no addition to the overall provision for public expenditure programmes set out in Cm 288-II.

I hope that full advantage will be taken of these special supplements, so that the much-loved landscapes so sadly affected by the storm can eventually be restored to their former state.

Budgie Seed

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the proposal to increase the levy on budgie seed made by the European Commission; and whether this proposal will fall under the majority voting procedures within the Council of Ministers

Mr. Donald Thompson: We remain firmly opposed to this proposal, which would lead to unjustifiable increases in the import levies for canary seed, buckwheat and millet. The proposal is made under article 43 of the treaty of Rome, and may therefore be adopted by qualified majority.

New Zealand Lamb

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will consider pressing for a minimum import price for New Zealand lamb imported into the European Community.

Mr. Donald Thompson *[holding answer 27 May 1988]:* The European Council in February 1988 invited the Commission to prepare a mandate for negotiations with third countries on the import arrangements for sheepmeat. The Commission envisaged that this might contain a number of points including the respecting of import price discipline.

We shall consider the draft mandate and the appropriateness of the individual elements in it once the Commission submits it to the Council.

Pigmeat MCAs

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received concerning the pigmeat monetary compensation amount regime.

Mr. Donald Thompson *[holding answer 27 May 1988]:* We have received a substantial number of representations on this subject. My right hon. Friend has made clear in the Agriculture Council our commitment to press for the complete elimination of all United Kingdom MCAs in the pigmeat sector.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many people are at present employed in agriculture and related employment in the United Kingdom, the English regions, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland; what are the corresponding figures for 1978, 1968, and 1958; and in each case what is the percentage difference compared with the present situation.

Mr. Donald Thompson *[holding answer 27 May 1988]:* Numbers of persons engaged in agriculture in England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom as a whole at June 1987 are shown in the following table (1) along with corresponding figures for the years 1958, 1968 and 1978 as far as these are available. No figures are available for employment related to agriculture. Table 2 shows the numbers engaged in agriculture in the regions of England in 1978 and 1987. This table excludes minor holdings which do not make an annual census return. Comparable regional figures are not available for 1958 or 1968 because of change in definition. The final table shows the percentage reductions between each of the previous dates and 1987 in the number of farm workers, the only category for which data are available for all years.

Table 1

Numbers engaged on agricultural holdings: 1958-1987

Thousands

	Farmers, partners and directors (doing farm work)	*Spouses of farmers, partners and directors (doing farm work)*	*Salaried managers*	*All workers*	*Total labour force*
1987					
United Kingdom	284·9	76·9	7·9	297·3	666·9
England	188·4	51·9	7·0	236·0	483·2
Wales	33·8	11·8	0·3	19·7	65·6
Scotland	27·2	7·8	0·6	23·0	58·6
Northern Ireland	35·4	5·3	not collected	18·6	59·4
1978					
United Kingdom	303·3	79·8	8·3	365·6	757·0
England	200·8	54·6	7·2	286·9	549·4
Wales	34·9	10·8	0·4	22·7	68·7
Scotland	28·5	8·0	0·8	35·9	73·2
Northern Ireland	39·1	6·5	not collected	20·2	65·7
1968					
United Kingdom	—	—	—	450·1	—
England	—	—	—	344·2	—
Wales	—	—	—	23·1	—
Scotland	—	—	—	50·2	—
Northern Ireland	—	—	—	32·5	—
1958					
United Kingdom	—	—	—	730·3	—
England	—	—	—	551·3	—
Wales	—	—	—	39·3	—
Scotland	—	—	—	88·4	—
Northern Ireland	—	—	—	51·2	—

Source: June census.

Table 2

Numbers engaged on agricultural holdings in England by region 1978 and 1987

Thousands

Region	*Farmers, partners and directors (doing farm work)*	*Spouses of farmers, partners and directors (doing farm work)*	*Salaried managers*	*All workers*	*Total labour force*
1987					
North	14·3	3·9	0·2	11·3	29·7
Yorkshire and Humberside	20·9	4·9	0·6	23·9	50·4
East Midlands	20·2	4·7	0·8	27·5	53·2
East Anglia	15·1	3·7	0·9	30·1	49·7
South East	29·1	7·6	2·4	59·7	98·7
South West	39·6	11·7	1·1	39·2	91·6
West Midlands	22·3	6·1	0·6	25·4	54·4
North West	14·4	4·1	0·3	14·5	33·3

Region	Farmers, partners and directors (doing farm work)	Spouses of farmers, partners and directors (doing farm work)	Salaried managers	All workers	Total labour force
1978					
North	15·3	4·0	0·3	13·9	33·5
Yorkshire and Humberside	22·5	5·1	0·6	27·9	56·0
East Midlands	22·7	5·3	0·8	34·4	63·3
East Anglia	17·7	4·1	1·0	40·0	62·8
South East	32·2	7·7	2·5	72·7	115·2
South West	43·3	11·5	1·0	46·0	101·9
West Midlands	24·3	6·0	0·7	30·1	61·1
North West	16·0	4·3	0·3	16·5	37·1

Source: June census.

Table 3
All workers—Percentage reduction

	1958 to 1987 per cent.	1968 to 1987 per cent.	1978 to 1987 per cent.
United Kingdom	59·3	33·9	18·7
England	57·2	31·4	17·8
Wales	49·9	14·7	13·2
Scotland	74·0	54·2	35·9
Northern Ireland	63·7	42·8	7·9
Regions			
North	n/a	n/a	18·7
Yorkshire and Humberside	n/a	n/a	14·3
East Midlands	n/a	n/a	20·0
East Anglia	n/a	n/a	24·7
South East	n/a	n/a	17·9
South West	n/a	n/a	14·8
West Midlands	n/a	n/a	15·6
North West	n/a	n/a	12·1

n/a = Not available.

EMPLOYMENT

North-West (Tourism)

14. **Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on his Department's proposals to encourage foreign tourists to visit the north-west of England.

Mr. Lee: The British Tourist Authority has, in conjunction with the North West tourist board and the Northern Consortium developed a range of promotional activities to encourage overseas visitors to the north-west of England. These include brochures and videos on holidays in the region, travel guides and sales missions aimed at overseas tour operators and travel agents.

Equal Pay

15. **Mr. Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on his Department's policies on the implementation of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, in the light of the decision in Hayward v. Cammell Laird Shipbuilders Ltd.

Mr. Nicholls: The Government fully support the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. We monitor closely the working of the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts to see whether they are operating fairly and effectively. We shall continue to do this in the light of this important decision and of other test cases still before the courts.

Skill Shortages

16. **Mr. Mans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement about current proposals to deal with skill shortages.

Mr. Cope: The strength of the economy is leading to increasing demand for skills. We have made a massive increase in our investment in training since 1979, particularly for young people and the unemployed. Employers need to continue to take advantage of this whilst also stepping up their own investment in the skills of their employees.

Adult Training Programme

17. **Mr. Jacques Arnold:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement about the plans for the new adult training programme employment training.

Mr. Fowler: The new employment training programme is to come into operation on 5 September on the basis of the unanimous recommendations of the Training Commission which I have accepted in full. The commission has made considerable progress on the detailed implementation arrangements and has just begun the process of signing contracts under the new programme.

41. **Mr. Frank Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he is considering making any changes in the proposed adult training schemes.

Mr. Nicholls: No. My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State accepted in full the recommendations made to him by the Training Commission—and recently announced his decisions on some detailed issues arising from the Commission's recommendations. The new employment training programme will come into operation as planned on 5 September.

47. **Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many local authorities and voluntary organisations have indicated that they will not participate in the adult training scheme unless the arrangements for the scheme are changed.

Mr. Nicholls: The Training Commission is currently in negotiation with potential providers of training for the new programme including local authorities and voluntary organisations. They were asked for proposals or clear expressions of interest by 3 June. It is, therefore, too early to take a firm view on how many will take part. But it is clear that large numbers are serious about getting involved. Training Commission officials have been and are

giving them all possible help. I urge all local authorities and voluntary organisations, particularly existing community programme sponsors and agents, who have indicated interest to submit proposals as soon as possible.

61. **Mr. Charles Wardle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what representations he has received on the adult training scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: The community programme and our provision for unemployed adults will be replaced by employment training from 5 September. I have received a number of representations from hon. Members and others about this important new programme which will provide quality training for longer-term unemployed people.

62. **Mr. Anthony Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what representations he has received on the principle of trainees on the adult training scheme receiving their full entitlement to benefit plus a training allowance; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: I have received a number of representations from hon. Members and others about the payments to be made to participants on employment training. Decisions by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on the training allowance implement the unanimous recommendations made by the Training Commission and will ensure that all participants will be better off on the programme than remaining unemployed and claiming benefit.

63. **Ms. Abbott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment under what conditions single parents who wish to participate in the adult training scheme will be eligible for child care allowance.

Mr. Nicholls: All lone parents who participate in employment training will be entitled to have child care costs of up to £50 a week for each child placed with a childminder, nursery or creche registered with a local authority met by the Training Commission.

68. **Mr. Kirkhope:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans to meet representatives of the Trade Union Council general council to discuss the adult training scheme.

Mr. Nicholls: My right hon. Friend met representatives of the TUC general council on 18 May to discuss employment training. There are no plans for a further meeting.

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the maximum weekly top-up payable to participants on the adult training scheme beyond the £10 to £12 per week to be paid by the Manpower Services Commission without incurring benefit loss or tax liability; and what would be the effect of employers deciding to make a payment of more than £5 weekly.

Mr. Nicholls: Under DHSS regulations, regular voluntary payments of up to £5 a week per family unit may be disregarded for the purposes of assessing entitlement to income support or housing benefit. Such payments are not liable to income tax. If a payment in excess of £5 were made to a trainee in receipt of income support, the first £5 would be disregarded and the balance deducted £1 for £1 from his or her benefit entitlement. The payment would not be liable to income tax.

Labour Statistics

18. **Mr. John Browne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the current levels of unemployment in Hampshire and the south-east.

Mr. Lee: In April 1988, the number of unemployed claimants in the county of Hampshire was 40,800, a fall of 17,000, or more than 29 per cent. compared with a year ago. The comparable figure for the south-east region was 549,700, a fall of 171,700 or nearly 24 per cent. over the year.

21. **Mr. Curry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the current levels of unemployment in Yorkshire.

Mr. Lee: In April 1988, the number of unemployed claimants in the counties of South Yorkshire, North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire was 205,700, a fall of 39,400 or more than 16 per cent. compared with a year ago.

31. **Mr. Lester:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the proportion of population of working age in employment in the United Kingdom and in the European Community.

Mr. Lee: Taking working ages as 15 to 64 years the proportion in 1985 was 66 per cent. in the United Kingdom and 57 per cent. in the European Community as a whole.

32. **Mr. Harris:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on current levels of unemployment in the south-west.

Mr. Lee: In April 1988, seasonally adjusted adult unemployment in the south-west region was 145,400, compared with 186,900 in April 1987, a fall of 22.2 per cent. over the last 12 months.

34. **Mr. John M. Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the current levels of unemployment in the west midlands.

Mr. Lee: In April 1988, seasonally adjusted adult unemployment in the west midlands region was 249,200, compared with 313,000 in April 1987, a fall of 20.4 per cent. over the last 12 months.

40. **Mr. Andrew MacKay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the current levels of employment.

Mr. Lee: In December 1987, the latest date for which figures are available, there were 24,735,000 people in the employed labour force in Great Britain. The employed labour force is the sum of employees in employment, the self-employed and H.M. forces.

43. **Mr. Yeo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the present level of employment in Suffolk.

Mr. Lee: Employment statistics for counties and smaller areas are available only for dates when censuses of employment are taken, and the most recent are for September 1984. There were then 221,000 employees in employment, excluding self-employed people and members of Her Majesty's forces, in the county of Suffolk.

48. **Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the current levels of unemployment in East Anglia.

Mr. Lee: In April 1988, seasonally adjusted adult unemployment in the East Anglia region was 55,400 compared with 76,000 in April 1987, a fall of 27·1 per cent. over the last 12 months.

50. **Mr. Gerald Bowden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the current levels of employment in the London borough of Southwark.

Mr. Lee: Employment statistics for local areas are available only for dates when censuses of employment are taken and the most recent are for September 1984. There were then 130,700 employees in employment, excluding self-employed people and members of Her Majesty's forces, in the London borough of Southwark.

51. **Mr. Parry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the level of unemployment in Liverpool, Riverside.

Mr. Lee: In April 1988 the number of unemployed claimants in the Liverpool, Riverside parliamentary constituency was 9,922, a fall of 1,126 over the last 12 months.

52. **Mr. Forth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the number of job vacancies at jobcentres for the last month for which figures are available.

Mr. Lee: On 8 April 1988, the number of unfilled vacancies at jobcentres in the United Kingdom was 253,700, seasonally adjusted and excluding community programme vacancies. This figure represents only about one third of all vacancies in the economy.

54. **Mr. Brandon-Bravo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the rate of the fall in unemployment in the last 12 months in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Lee: In April 1988 the level of seasonally adjusted adult unemployment in the United Kingdom was 2,455,000, a fall of 566,000 over the last 12 months—the largest annual fall since similar records began in 1948.

55. **Mr. Hayward:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the fall in the level of unemployment since July 1986.

Mr. Lee: Unemployment (seasonally adjusted excluding school leavers) fell by 755,000 between July 1986 and April 1988. This is the largest sustained fall on record.

57. **Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the rate of fall in long-term unemployment during the last 12 months in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Lee: Over the 12 months to April 1988 there was a record annual fall of 266,000 in the number of unemployed claimants who had been unemployed for one year or more in the United Kingdom.

64. **Sir John Farr:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how the number of unemployed persons in the Leicester travel-to-work area has changed in the past 12 months.

Mr. Lee: In April 1988, the number of unemployed claimants in the Leicester travel-to-work area was 19,075, a fall of 5,505 or 22·4 per cent. over the last 12 months.

65. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the latest figure for the percentage increase in unemployment since May 1979; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: Between May 1979 and April 1988 the seasonally adjusted level of adult unemployment increased by 113 per cent. on a consistent basis. However, since July 1986 unemployment has fallen by 755,000. It is now, 2,455,000, the lowest figure since October 1981.

69. **Mr. Carrington:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the current levels of employment in Greater London.

Mr. Lee: In December 1987, the latest date for which figures are available, there were 3,937,000 people in the civilian employed labour force in Greater London. The civilian employed labour force is the sum of employees in employment and the self-employed.

74. **Mr. Jack:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on levels of unemployment in the north-west.

Mr. Lee: In April 1988, seasonally adjusted adult unemployment in the north-west region was 341,100, compared with 410,800 in April 1987, a fall of 17 per cent. over the last 12 months.

78. **Mr. Miscampbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the present level of unemployment in the Blackpool and Fylde travel-to-work area.

Mr. Lee: In April 1988 the number of unemployed claimants in the Blackpool travel-to-work area, which includes within its boundaries the Fylde local authority district, was 14,757.

Mr. Doran: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what are the respective numbers of unemployed, as at June 1979 and June 1987 in the following constituencies *(a)* Amber Valley, *(b)* Mid-Worcestershire, *(c)* Lancashire, West, *(d)* Staffordshire Moorlands, *(e)* Hendon, South, *(f)* Darlington and *(g)* Fylde.

Mr. Lee: The following information is in the Library. The table shows the number of unemployed claimants, for each of the parliamentary constituencies requested, at June 1987. Figures for parliamentary constituencies are available only from June 1983.

Unemployed claimants: June 1987

Parliamentary constituency	
Amber Valley	3,825
Mid Worcestershire	5,086
West Lancashire	6,309
Staffordshire Moorlands	2,867
Hendon South	2,553
Darlington	5,326
Fylde	2,486

Local Enterprise Agencies

19. **Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many local enterprise agencies are currently in existence.

Mr. Cope: There are currently 416 local enterprise agencies throughout the United Kingdom. Of these, 365 are approved under the terms of the 1982 Finance Act, which allows business sector sponsors tax relief on their contributions to the agencies. There are 309 agencies in England of which 189 receive Government support under the local enterprise agency grant scheme.

Redundancies (Northern Region)

20. **Mr. Fallon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many redundancies were notified in the northern region *(a)* at the latest month and *(b)* in the same date in 1987.

Mr. Nicholls: In April, there were 2,693 advanced notifications of redundancies in the northern region compared with 2,134 in April last year. Some of the advanced notifications of redundancies are normally averted.

European Year of the Traveller

22. **Mr. Bevan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what information he has on proposals to make 1990 the European year of the traveller.

Mr. Lee: The European Parliament has adopted a proposal that 1990 be designated European year of the traveller. The European Commission is now involved in drawing up detailed proposals on the activities that might be involved. I await these proposals with interest.

Vacancies

24. **Mr. Oppenheim:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many vacancies were advertised in jobcentres in January 1983 and in January 1988.

Mr. Lee: In January 1988 the number of unfilled vacancies registered at jobcentres in the United Kingdom, seasonally adjusted and excluding community programme vacancies, was 249,500. The corresponding figure for January 1983 was 121,600. It is estimated that about one third of vacancies are notified to jobcentres.

Factory Inspectors

25. **Miss Lestor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many new factory inspectors have been appointed in the latest period for which figures are available; and how many have left in the same period.

Mr. Nicholls: Between 1 May 1987 and 30 April 1988, a total of 20 factory inspectors joined the Health and Safety Executive and 44 left. Some 30 successful candidates from a recent recruitment exercise should be joining HSE shortly. A further recruitment programme for factory inspectors is under way.

Part-time Workers

26. **Mrs. Dunwoody:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he will consider the extension of full employment protection rights to part-time workers.

Mr. Nicholls: No. To do so would impose additional costs on employers and discourage them from recruiting part-time workers.

Community Work

27. **Dr. Michael Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what progress is being made in linking unemployment benefit to work associated with benefiting the community; and if he will make a statement

Mr. Nicholls: It is open to people in receipt of unemployment benefit to undertake voluntary work in the community if they wish. This does not affect their entitlement to benefit so long as they remain available for work.

Hotel Building

28. **Mr. Gill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the total of section 4 tourist grants awarded for hotel building in England and Wales in 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: The total section 4 assistance offered to hotels and guesthouses in England and Wales in the 1987-88 financial year was £4·6 million.

Enterprise Allowance

29. **Mr. Couchman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many unemployed people have been helped to start a business during the last 12 months through the enterprise allowance scheme.

Mr. Cope: During the year April 1987 to March 1988, a total of 106,305 people joined the scheme. 110,000 places will be available during the current year.

42. **Mr. Ian Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the number of people currently receiving the trading allowance on the enterprise allowance scheme.

Mr. Cope: At the middle of May 1988 there were over 93,000 people receiving the enterprise allowance.

75. **Mr. Brazier:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people are currently participating in the enterprise allowance scheme.

Mr. Cope: At the middle of May 1988, over 93,000 people were participating in the enterprise allowance scheme.

Job Vacancies (Bury)

30. **Mr. Sumberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many job vacancies in Bury were reported in the first quarter of 1988 and what were the figures for the previous five years.

Mr. Lee: The table shows the number of new notified vacancies, excluding community programme vacancies, at the Bury jobcentre in the first quarter of each year from 1984. Vacancy statistics for local areas are only available on a consistent basis from April 1983.

Bury jobcentre—Inflow of notified vacancies
Quarter ended March

Year	*Number*
1984	773
1985	827
1986	1,001

Year	*Number*
1987	1,150
1988	1,631

Small Firms Service

33. **Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many inquiries were handled by the small firms service during the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement.

58. **Mr. Soames:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many inquiries were received by the small firms service during the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: In the period May 1987 to April 1988 inclusive, the small firms service in England handled 266,497 inquiries.

Equal Opportunities Commission

35. **Mr. Janner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when he next expects to meet the chairman of the Equal Opportunities Commission; and what matters will be discussed.

Mr. Nicholls: I shall be meeting Mrs. Foster on 4 July for an initial discussion following her appointment as EOC chairman. I expect our discussion to range over a variety of topics concerning the promotion of equal opportunities in employment.

Youth Unemployment

36. **Mr. Chapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement about the present level of youth unemployment in the London boroughs, and the prospects for jobs.

Mr. Lee: In April 1988 the number of unemployed claimants aged under 18 years of age in the Greater London region was 7·777, a fall of 28·2 per cent. over the last 12 months.

Self-Employment

37. **Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people are currently self-employed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: In December 1987, the latest date for which figures are available, there were an estimated 2,863,000 self-employed people in Great Britain.

Restart

38. **Mr. Crowther:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has any plans to extend beyond the pilot areas the practice of recalling for further restart interviews those who have not taken up any of the offers made at their earlier interview.

Mr. Lee: As announced in the White Paper, "Training for Employment", the restart programme will be further developed during 1988-89. An important aspect of this development will be the gradual introduction of follow-up interviews throughout the country. They will be carried out by both restart counselling staff and by claimant advisers, and will be offered to those who most need additional help. This will include those who decline all offers of help at their main restart interview.

Channel Tunnel

39. **Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is his latest estimate of jobs created by the construction of the Channel tunnel.

Mr. David Mitchell: I have been asked to reply.

It is estimated that about 100,000 man years of work will be generated in the United Kingdom by Eurotunnel and British Rail work on the Channel tunnel and its equipment during its construction.

Retraining Grants

44. **Mr. Kennedy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans to review the availability of Manpower Services Commission grants for retraining; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: The Training Commission has a range of grant schemes to encourage the training of employees, including retraining. These are regularly reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet employers' needs and provide value for money.

Disabled People

45. **Dr. Marek:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has any plans to improve the services provided by his Department for disabled people.

Mr. Lee: As announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment during the debate on the Local Government Bill on Wednesday 9 March, *Official Report*, column 346, I am reviewing the policies and programmes that my Department supports for disabled people. Plans for improvements to services will be developed in the light of this review.

Young Persons (Advice)

46. **Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what arrangements are being made by his Department to provide advice on employment or training to young people who cease to be eligible for benefits on 4 September.

Mr. Cope: From September 12 when most young people under 18 will cease to be eligible for income support, the Government are extending their guarantee of a YTS place to all 16 and 17-year-olds who are not in work or further education. As a result, no young person under 18 need be unemployed. Advice and help in applying for training and employment opportunities will be promptly and readily available, as now, from the careers services provided by local authorities and from my Department's jobcentres.

Building and Construction Sites (Safety)

49. **Mr. Madel:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when he next plans to meet the chairman of the Health and Safety Commission to discuss safety on building and construction sites; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: I have not planned to meet the chairman of the Health and Safety Commission to discuss safety on building and construction sites. The Government fully support the Health and Safety Executive's approach to improving safety standards in this area, which was outlined in the debate on 2 December 1987. It includes the current series of blitzes and other initiatives designed to effectively impress on employers and others the importance of safety.

Enterprise Agencies

53. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a further statement on the progress of enterprise agencies.

Mr. Cope: There are now over 400 local enterprise agencies in the United Kingdom. My Department, through the local enterprise agency grant scheme, encourages the development of viable agencies in England; 189 agencies were supported in 1987-88.

Lost Working Days (Strikes)

56. **Mr. Knapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many working days were lost by strike action in January 1979 and January 1988; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: The number of working days lost through stoppages of work due to industrial disputes in January 1979 is 2,966,000. The comparable figure for January 1988 is provisionally estimated as 92,000 lost working days.

Overtime

59. **Mr. Gerald Howarth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the average number of hours of overtime worked per manufacturing industry employee during the last quarter of 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: The information available relates to overtime hours worked by operatives in manufacturing industry. During the last quarter of 1987 the average number of weekly overtime hours worked per operative was 3·7 seasonally adjusted. This compares with between 3 and 3·25 hours per week observed in each quarter of 1985 and 1986.

Job Clubs

60. **Mr. Paice:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many job clubs are currently in operation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: At 31 March 1988, a total of 1,204 job clubs were in operation. The employment service expects to increase substantially the number of places available in job clubs in 1988-89 compared with 1987-88.

Youth Training Scheme

66. **Miss Widdecombe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a further statement on the two year youth training scheme.

71. **Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a further statement on the progress of the YTS.

Mr. Cope: At the end of April 1988 there were 381,000 young people training on the two-year YTS. Over 50 per cent. of trainees entering their second year on the scheme have already gained a vocational qualification. Latest survey results show that when young people leave YTS, 75 per cent. go into jobs or into further education and training. The YTS is firmly established among young people as a natural and valued start to working life, while employers welcome YTS as the means to ensuring a highly trained and adaptable work force.

Accidents at Work

67. **Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what proposals he has to reduce accidents at work.

Mr. Nicholls: The Health and Safety Commission and Executive currently have a number of initiatives under way to reduce the number of accidents at work. I expect the commission to submit proposals for the next three years to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State later this year.

Centres for the Unemployed

70. **Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what plans he has to ensure continuance of the centres for the unemployed after the ending of the community programme.

Mr. Nicholls: Applications for the continuance of centres for the unemployed will be considered in the same way as all other proposals under the new programme for unemployed adults, employment training.

Long-term Unemployment

72. **Mr. Colvin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what have been the results of the trial use of outreach workers and video facilities to make contact with the longer-term unemployed.

Mr. Lee: The employment service is trying a number of outreach activities to make its services more accessible to unemployed people, including the long-term unemployed. The main projects are:

Specialist "inner city officers" working from jobcentres.

Direct access to jobs and information through videos and information technology.

Advertising of jobs on television.

These projects are still being evaluated.

Registered Disabled People

73. **Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the number of registered disabled people unemployed on 30 April.

Mr. Lee: I regret that this information is not available. The only count made of unemployed registered disabled people is of those who choose to register for work at jobcentres. The latest figures available show that on 8 January there were 21,765 unemployed registered disabled people registered for work at jobcentres.

Benefit Changes

76. **Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment in how many cases his Department's attention or that of the Manpower Services Commission

has been drawn to individuals in the various employment and training schemes being placed in difficulty as a consequence of the social security and housing benefit changes.

Mr. Nicholls: None.

Growth

77. **Mr. Speller:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment which sectors of the industrial and service industries are currently showing the most growth and potential for growth throughout the United Kingdom.

Mr. Lee: During 1987, employment in the United Kingdom grew fastest in banking, insurance and finance (by 7 per cent.), construction (by 4 per cent.) and transport and communications (by 3 per cent.). In addition, employment in tourism-related industries grew by over 3 per cent. in 1987.

The Department does not make forecasts of employment changes. However with the economy about to enter its eighth successive year of growth, all sectors of the economy should benefit from the continuation of the Government's current economic policies.

Child Care Payments

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what assessment he has made of the reasons for the current rate of take up of the child care payments in the 10 pilot programme areas.

Mr. Cope: Under the pilot scheme in 10 areas, child care payments were made available for lone parents who are eligible for the new job training scheme. People who are registered as unemployed for more than six months are eligible for the new job training scheme, but those, including lone parents who are on benefits, who are not registered as unemployed, are not eligible.

The employment training programme, which will replace the new job training scheme from September, will extend child care payments for lone parents, on these terms, nationally. In addition, we have announced that lone parents, all of whose children are in full-time education, and who have received income support on DHSS order books for at least six months, will be eligible for the programme and for child care payments.

Wages

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the average hourly wage for *(a)* full-time female employees, *(b)* part-time female employees, *(c)* full-time male employees, and *(d)* part-time male employees, in the English regions since 1985, in cash and real terms.

Mr. Lee: The available information, based on average hourly earnings excluding overtime, is provided in the table.

Average hourly earnings of full-time employees on adult rates excluding overtime, in April of each year
Pay not affected by absence; *Pence per hour*

	In cash terms			*In real terms*		
	1985	*1986*	*1987*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*
Full-time males						
South East	507·0	553·6	607·9	544·6	577·0	607·9
East Anglia	410·9	443·7	477·5	441·3	462·5	477·5
South West	422·0	455·1	491·4	453·3	474·4	491·4
West Midlands	418·7	454·8	482·1	449·7	474·0	482·1
East Midlands	401·0	439·7	496·6	430·7	458·3	469·6
Yorkshire and Humberside	417·3	441·4	470·5	448·2	460·1	470·5
North West	434·0	464·0	497·8	466·2	483·6	497·8
North	419·9	451·1	482·0	451·0	470·2	482·0
Part-time males						
South East	418·2	422·1	427·6	449·2	440·0	427·6
East Anglia	..	..	..	..	..	..
South West	..	..	..	..	..	..
West Midlands	..	..	..	..	..	..
East Midlands	..	..	..	..	..	..
Yorkshire and Humberside	..	..	..	..	..	..
North West	..	..	..	..	..	..
North	..	..	..	..	..	..
Full-time females						
South East	370·3	403·6	438·1	397·7	420·7	438·1
East Anglia	299·0	328·8	345·3	321·2	342·7	345·3
South West	316·2	342·1	361·2	339·6	356·6	361·2
West Midlands	313·6	340·0	361·6	336·8	354·4	361·6
East Midlands	298·5	327·6	342·6	320·6	341·5	342·6
Yorkshire and Humberside	307·8	323·1	346·1	330·6	336·8	346·1
North West	323·3	349·9	363·2	347·3	364·7	363·2
North	311·3	334·2	359·2	334·4	348·3	359·2
Part-time females						
South East	281·7	300·8	323·8	302·6	313·5	323·8
East Anglia	260·5	272·9	286·5	279·8	284·4	286·5
South West	246·6	267·8	280·5	264·9	279·1	280·5
West Midlands	252·6	266·5	284·9	271·3	277·8	284·9
East Midlands	240·3	264·0	280·7	258·1	275·2	280·7
Yorkshire and Humberside	247·5	263·2	284·1	265·8	274·3	284·1

	In cash terms			In real terms		
	1985	1986	1987	1985	1986	1987
North West	248·7	267·4	284·8	267·1	278·7	284·8
North	247·5	258·3	276·3	265·8	269·2	276·3

Note:
Cash figures revalued to April 1987 prices using the Retail Price Index (all items) as at April each year.
.. denote not available.
Source: New Earnings Survey.

Industrial Tribunals

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many cases of unfair dismissal because of trade union activity have been brought before industrial tribunals in each of the last 10 years; and what percentage were successful.

Mr. Nicholls: The best available information on the number of complaints since 1979 of unfair dismissal because of trade union membership or activity which have been heard by industrial tribunals is set out in the table.

Year	Number of complaints heard by industrial tribunals	Percentage of complaints successful
1979	263	12·5
1980	255	13·3
1981	82	22·0
1982	126	16·7
1983	132	15·9
1984	150	14·0
1985	179	32·4
1986-87	226	22·6

Figures for 1987-88 are not yet available.

Figures for 1978 can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Single Market

Sir David Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what changes will be necessary in United Kingdom employment legislation in order to satisfy the harmonisation requirements of the European Community for the achievement of the single market in 1992.

Mr. Cope: No directives have been adopted in the context of completion of the single market in 1992 which require changes in the United Kingdom employment legislation.

Building Sites (London)

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what were the estimated number of building sites in London during 1987 and the number of inspectors in the field in London, inspecting these sites during 1987.

Mr. Nicholls *[holding answer 26 May 1988]:* The HSE does not keep estimates of the number of building sites and cannot provide the information sought. On 31 December 1987, a total of 12 qualified inspectors were employed on construction work in London.

Building Sites (Prosecutions)

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the final outcome in terms of *(a)* construction sites visited, *(b)* prohibition and improvement notices issued and *(c)* prosecutions initiated, with the results, for the series of visits to construction sites carried out by the Health and Safety Executive in 1987.

Mr. Nicholls *[holding answer 26 May 1988]:* During the series of construction site blitzes carried out by the Health and Safety Executive in 1987, a total of 4,289 construction sites were visited, 1,006 prohibition and 28 improvement notices were issued, and 25 prosecutions were initiated. The present series of construction blitzes will continue until September 1988. The results of prosecutions initiated are not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

THE ARTS

Libraries

Mr. Haynes: To ask the Minister for the Arts how many complaints he has received in the past 12 months from library users that public libraries are not sufficiently client-orientated.

Mr. Luce: None, but a number of the representations made on the Green Paper, "Financing our public library service: four subjects for debate", have advocated the development of more client-orientated services.

British Telecom

Mr. Butler: To ask the Minister for the Arts what information he has on sponsorship of the arts undertaken by British Telecom.

Mr. Luce: I am delighted by the recent increase in British Telecom's programme of arts sponsorship. Under the business sponsorship incentive scheme, I have made 12 awards of £115,394 to match new sponsorships by BT headquarters, BT mobile communications and seven BT regions. I know that a number of other BT regions also support local arts activities.

Premium Book Subscription Schemes

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts what evidence he has of the outcome of premium book subscription schemes in *(a)* New Zealand and *(b)* West Germany.

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 26 May 1988]:* I understand that the schemes operated in New Zealand and West Germany are not premium book subscription schemes of the kind proposed in my Green Paper.

SCOTLAND

AIDS

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish in the *Official Report* for each health authority in Scotland the number of persons suffering from AIDS; and if he will disaggregate the statistics by age and sex.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: To the end of April 1988, reports had been received of 56 cases of persons with AIDS in Scotland, of whom 50 were male and six were female. 26 of the males and five of the females were alive at that date. Disaggregations by age are not available. As the figures of AIDS cases and deaths for particular health board areas are, in some cases, very low, and as their publication may in consequence endanger medical confidentiality, geographical breakdowns are not published.

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his Department's latest estimate of the number of people in Scotland that are currently HIV positive.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: We have not made an estimate of the number of people in Scotland who are HIV positive. Of those who have chosen to be tested for HIV antibodies, by the end of March 1988 1,436 had been found to be HIV positive.

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many terminations of pregnancy have occurred in Scotland because the mother is HIV positive.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: There have been 26 terminations of pregnancy since 1985 on women who were recorded as HIV positive.

New Hospitals

Mr Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give for each health board the dates of approval for all new hospitals approved since 1979.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information is as follows.

All projects approved since 1979

	Approval-in-principle
Argyll and Clyde	
Ravenscraig Phase III(a) (Alcohol and Rehabilitation Unit)	November 1985
Oban Hospital	May 1986
Campbeltown Hospital	December 1987
Dunoon and District General Hospital	April 1982
Merchiston Hospital	May 1984
Ayrshire and Arran	
Dunlop House	March 1985
Seafield Hospital	March 1985
Acute Hospital, Ayr	October 1985
Biggart Hospital	April 1984
Dumfries and Galloway	
Services for the Mentally Handicapped	October 1985
Annan Hospital (geriatric)	October 1980
Forth Valley	
Bonnybridge (psychogeriatric)	January 1982
Royal Scottish National Hospital Larbert	April 1979
Sauchie Hospital	June 1979
Falkirk Royal Infirmary	June 1979
Grampian	
Royal Cornhill	October 1985
Woodend Geriatric Hospital	April 1979
Inverurie Hospital	June 1980
Woodend Hospital—Glenburn Wing	April 1979
Greater Glasgow	
Parkhead Psychiatric Development Phase II	September 1982
Rutherglen (geriatric)	May 1981
Leverndale Support Services	June 1985
Eastern District College of Nursing	June 1979
Lennox Castle (2 intensive care units)	September 1986
Woodilee 3 × 30 bed units	December 1987
Leverndale Phase I(a)	November 1983
Lennox Castle	May 1983
Lanarkshire	
Kirklands Phase II	July 1979
Geriatric, Psychogeriatric and Psychiatric Project:	
a. Hairmyres	December 1985
b. Udston (including 30 place day hospital)	December 1985
Kirklands Hospital Phase I	July 1979
Kirklands Hospital Phase I(a)	July 1979
Kirklands Residential	July 1979
Lothian	
Princess Margaret Rose Spinal Paralysis and Rehabilitation Unit	September 1982
City Hospital (Pharmacy)	May 1983
Edinburgh Dental Hospital	May 1986
Orkney	
Balfour Hospital	August 1985
Tayside	
Perth Royal Infirmary	April 1979
Western Isles	
Stornoway Lewis Hospital	May 1986

Rating Reform

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether community charge officers will be able to ask for information concerning an individual from gas, water and electricity boards; and whether those boards could exchange information about individuals to the community charge officer.

Mr. Lang: Under section 17(3) of the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987, community charges registration officers have access, for the purpose of carrying out their functions, to information held by regional councils as water authorities. They have no access to information held by electricity boards or British Gas plc (Scotland), except in the unlikely event (which may also apply to regional councils as water authorities) of these bodies being "responsible persons" in relation to particular premises for community charge registration purposes. None of the bodies mentioned will have access to the community charges register beyond that provided for in section 20(2) of the 1987 Act.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish all cost estimates made in relation to the implementation of the community charge in Scotland.

Mr. Lang: The only cost estimates made by my right hon. and learned Friend were those contained in the explanatory and financial memorandum to the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Bill. A record of all the estimates made by local authorities and others is not held centrally.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he will issue advice to Scottish local authorities to inform community charge officers that they should indicate on the forms they send to members of the public that the names and addresses of individuals which are collected in relation to the community charge can be sold or disclosed to other organisations without their consent or knowledge.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend is considering whether any restriction should be placed on the parts of the community charges register available for inspection by the public which may be made available for sale. Pending that consideration, I do not consider that formal notification to individuals of the present position on sale of the register is required. It is already made clear in the notice to be sent to registered persons informing them of their entry in the register (schedule 1 to the Community Charges (Registration) (Scotland) Regulations 1988) that certain parts of the register will be available for public inspection.

Prosthetists

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if his Department has costed a National Health Service workshop and prosthetists limb fitting service.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: No.

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the numbers of prosthetists working in the Health Service who are *(a)* contractor employed and *(b)* employed by the health boards.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: There are two contractor-employed prosthetists working in the Health Service in Scotland and 18 employed by health boards.

Kerb Crawling

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) how many arrests for kerb crawling have been made by Strathclyde police in Glasgow in the last 12 months and the previous 12 months;

(2) how many convictions there have been in Glasgow for kerb crawling in the last 12 months and the previous 12 months.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: There is no statutory offence of kerb crawling in Scotland. Depending on the circumstances, incidents involving kerb crawling may be charged as breach of the peace but statistics on such convictions are not separately identifiable in the Scottish Home and Health Department classification of crimes and offences.

Prostitution

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many convictions there have been in Glasgow for soliciting in the last 12 months and the previous 12 months.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: In 1987, 444 persons were convicted in Glasgow of offences relating to prostitution. The figure for 1986 was 504.

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) how many owners of saunas in Glasgow have been arrested for offences in connection with prostitution in the last 12 months and the previous 12 months;

(2) how many managers of saunas in Glasgow have been arrested for offences in connection with prostitution in the last 12 months and the previous 12 months.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Statistics on arrests are not held centrally.

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) how many owners of saunas in Glasgow have been convicted for offences in connection with prostitution in the last 12 months and the previous 12 months;

(2) how many managers of saunas in Glasgow have been convicted for offences in connection with prostitution in the last 12 months and the previous 12 months.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I regret that the information requested is not available.

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many licence holders operating saunas in Glasgow have had their licences revoked because of reasons connected with prostitution in the last 12 months and the previous 12 months.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I understand that saunas in Glasgow are not required to be licensed by the local authority.

Fishing Vessels (Pressure Stock Licences)

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the number of pressure stock licences attaching to fishing vessels in each port of registration *(a)* at the outset of the scheme and *(b)* at the most recent date for which information is available.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Licences issued by DAFS to vessels based on Scottish ports numbered 1,204 at the start of the scheme and 1,168 at 30 April 1988. The table below gives the port of registration of vessels concerned, including a small number registered outwith Scotland.

List of numbers of pressure stock licences by registry ports issued in Scotland

Registration port	*3 February 1984*	*30 April 1988*
Aberdeen (A)	43	35
Alloa (AA)	—	1
Arbroath (AH)	28	27
Ayr (AR)	6	9
Ballantrae (BA)	78	66
Buckie (BCK)	93	103
Banff (BF)	123	119
Broadford (BRD)	7	15
Campbeltown (CN)	47	32
Castlebay (CY)	10	9
Dundee (DE)	—	1
Fraserburgh (FR)	104	115
Inverness (INS)	97	96
Kirkwall (K)	28	23
Kirkcaldy (DY)	58	49
Leith (LH)	90	87
Lerwick (LK)	79	66
Montrose (ME)	6	11
Oban (OB)	36	33

Registration port	3 February 1984	30 April 1988
Peterhead (PD)	109	111
Rothesay (RO)	3	3
Stornoway (SY)	47	42
Tarbert (TT)	22	21
Ullapool (UL)	16	23
Wick (WK)	31	29
Belfast (B)	1	6
Blyth (BH)	1	2
Berwick (BK)	5	6
Brixham (BM)	1	—
Boston (BN)	1	—
Beamaris (BS)	2	1
Colchester (CK)	1	1
Caernarvon (CO)	1	1
Castletown (CT)	1	1
Exeter (E)	—	1
Fleetwood (FD)	4	2
Grimsby (GY)	2	2
Guernsey (GU)	2	—
Hull (H)	5	3
Hartlepools (HL)	—	1
Lynn (LN)	1	—
Lowestoft (LT)	—	1
Newry (N)	1	1
Penzance (PZ)	1	1
Rye (RX)	—	1
Ramsey (RY)	1	2
Swansea (SA)	1	1
Scarborough (SH)	2	2
North Shield (SN)	2	—
St. Ives (SS)	2	2
Whitehaven (WA)	2	1
Whitby (WY)	3	3
Totals	1,204	1,168

Note: All English, Welsh, Manx, Channel Islands and Northern Ireland registered vessels are based in Scotland.

Cervical Tests

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to be able to publish figures showing how long patients in the Greater Glasgow health board area are having to wait for results of cervical smear tests, as well as the comparable figures for the last 10 years.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Galbraith) on 17 May 1988 at column *395*.

Private Hospital, Clydebank

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has on the level of private funding for the proposed Health Care International hospital at Clydebank.

Mr. Lang: The company and its financial advisers have provided, on a commercially confidential basis, full details of the financial structure which is proposed for the projected Health Care International hospital at Clydebank.

Health Care International

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met representatives from Health Care International; and what subjects were discussed.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: My right hon. and learned Friend met representatives from Health Care International during a visit to the Harvard university medical centre on 12 October 1987. The subjects discussed were American public and private sector provision, and arrangements for the supply of blood to the hospital which HCI proposes to build in Clydebank.

Beaches

Mr. Michael J. Martin: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps are being taken to clean up the beaches on the south-west coast of Scotland.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Responsibility for the cleanliness of beaches rests with the district or islands council concerned, while monitoring the quality of bathing waters is the responsibility of the river purification authorities. If, however, the hon. Member has a particular problem in mind he may like to write to me about it.

Hospital Waiting Lists

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give for each year since 1970 the number of patients on hospital in-patient waiting lists in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The number of persons on in-patient waiting lists for National Health Service hospitals in Scotland at 30 September in each year is as follows:

Year	Number
1970	51,482
1971	51,675
1972	52,468
1973	61,079
1974	56,182
1975	54,614
1976	53,381
1977	55,387
1978	62,464
1979	71,247
1980	67,387
1981	65,228
1982	86,365
1983	88,338
1984	83,077
1985	77,677
1986	80,732
[1]1987	77,772

[1] Provisional.

Hospital Building

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give for each year since 1970 the amount spent at 1970 prices on new hospital building in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The figures are given below. They relate solely to hospital and community health new works and exclude spending on upgradings, repairs, maintenance and equipment.

	£ million
1970-71	9·4
1971-72	8·2
1972-73	9·5
1973-74	11·3
1974-75	11·7
1975-76	11·3
1976-77	8·8
1977-78	7·4
1978-79	10·4
1979-80	10·9

	£ million
1980-81	10·4
1981-82	12·6
1982-83	13·3
1983-84	11·5
1984-85	9·9
1985-86	10·0
1986-87	7·8

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give for every hospital completed since 1979 the date on which the appropriate health board was notified of approval.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 27 May 1988]:* The information is as follows.

All projects completed since 1979

	Approval-in-principle
Argyll and Clyde	
Johnstone Hospital	1978
Dunoon and District General Hospital	April 1982
Merchiston Hospital Phase I	January 1973
Merchiston Hospital	May 1984
Royal Alexandra Hospital, Paisley	December 1971
Ayrshire and Arran	
Crosshouse Hospital	September 1964
Biggart Hospital	[1]April 1984
Borders	
Hay Lodge, Peebles	May 1974
Borders General	May 1974
Dumfries and Galloway	
Annan Hospital (geriatric)	October 1980
Fife	
Glenrothes Hospital	January 1974
Whyteman's Brae, Kirkcaldy	November 1973
West Fife District General Hospital	March 1976
Forth Valley	
Royal Scottish National Hospital, Larbert	April 1979
Sauchie Hospital	June 1979
Falkirk Royal Infirmary	June 1979
Grampian	
Woodend Geriatric Hospital	April 1979
Inverurie Hospital	June 1980
Spynie Hospital, Elgin	November 1972
Ugie Hospital, Peterhead	October 1978
Woodend Hospital—Glenburn Wing	April 1979
Woodlands Hospital	November 1976
Greater Glasgow	
Blawarthill Hospital	May 1978
Canniesburn Hospital	May 1978
Gartloch Hospital	May 1978
Gartnavel Hospital	May 1978
Mearnskirk Hospital	May 1978
Stobhill Hospital	May 1978
Belvidere Hospital Phase I	May 1978
Woodilee Hospital Phase I	May 1978
Glasgow Royal Infirmary Phase I	December 1966
Stobhill Hospital	May 1978
Gartloch Hospital	June 1978
Leverndale Phase I(a)	November 1983
Lennox Castle	May 1973
Highland	
Lochaber Hospital	June 1976
Raigmore Hospital, Inverness	June 1973
Caithness Hospital Phase II	October 1973
Lanarkshire	
Kirklands Hospital Phase I	July 1979
Kirklands Hospital Phase I(a)	July 1979
Kirklands Residential	July 1979
Lothian	
Edinburgh Royal Infirmary Phase I	December 1959
Royal Edinburgh Phase I	March 1972
Astley Ainslie Hospital	October 1974
Herdmanflat Hospital	April 1974
Royal Victoria Hospital, Edinburgh	January 1974
Shetland	
Montfield Hospital	May 1978
Tayside	
Irvine Memorial Hospital, Pitlochry	June 1977
Murray Royal Hospital, Perth	January 1977
Perth Royal Infirmary	June 1977
Royal Liff Hospital, Dundee	October 1977
Blairgowrie Cottage Hospital	June 1977
Aberfeldy Cottage Hospital	June 1977

[1] Date of approval of tender.

Acute Beds

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give for each health board the number of acute medical and surgical beds in private clinics in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Information in the form requested is not available.

Coal Imports

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has on which countries export coal to Scotland, via Rotterdam, in the current year.

Mr. Lang: Such information is not held by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland: questions concerning Government policy on imports into the United Kingdom are for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy. The latest information on coal imports is set out in the reply given to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang) by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy on 4 March.

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has as to how much coal, expressed *(a)* in tonnes and *(b)* in monetary value, had been imported by the South of Scotland Electricity Board so far in the current year.

Mr. Lang: I am advised by the South of Scotland Electricity Board that it has taken delivery of approximately 30,000 tonnes of imported coal in the current financial year to date. The monetary value of the imports is a confidential matter between the board and its suppliers.

Housing Transfers

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has given any advice to any of the new town development corporations on the transfer of blocks of houses with sitting tenants to any private developer or any other housing body; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: No such advice has been issued.

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he proposes to give advice to any of the new town development corporations on the transfer of blocks of houses with sitting tenants to any private developer or any other housing body prior to the announced intention to amend the New Towns (Scotland) Act 1968; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: No transfer of tenanted houses to other landlords in the period before wind-up of the development corporations will take place without the consent of the tenants involved. Advice to development corporations will be issued following enactment of the Housing (Scotland) Bill currently before Parliament.

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will take steps to ensure that no new town tenant can be transferred to any other landlord under a management agency agreement without the prior consent of the tenant.

Mr. Lang: Any decision to transfer to another landlord in the period before wind-up of a development corporation is a matter for the tenant, as was made clear by my hon. Friend, the Minister responsible for home affairs and the environment when he responded to the hon. Member during Committee stage consideration of the Housing (Scotland) Bill—First Scottish Standing Committee, 25 February 1988, column *1023*. The options for housing transfer at wind-up will be considered in the detailed and wide-ranging review which was announced by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State on 13 May.

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will take steps to ensure that any new town tenant transferred to a new landlord under a management agency agreed between a new town development corporation and a private developer or any other housing body will retain existing security of tenure.

Mr. Lang: Since ownership of the house in such circumstances would remain with the development corporation, any tenants affected by a management agency agreement would retain their existing statutory right to security of tenure.

Housing Debt

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any proposals to write off existing housing debt on any blocks of new town houses purchased by a private developer or any other housing body from a new town development corporation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: No specific proposals have yet been submitted by development corporations to the Secretary of State and any such proposal would require to be considered on its merits.

New Town Housing Stock

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give for each of the five new towns details of any discussions which have taken place between new town officials and private developers or any other housing body on the management under an agency agreement of any part of the new town housing stock.

Mr. Lang: Preliminary discussions have taken place between representatives of Quality Street and Glenrothes development corporation, which included the possibility of a management agency covering a portion of the housing stock. Those discussions were exploratory and no commitments were made on either side. No such discussions have as yet taken place in the other four towns, although an exploratory meeting has been arranged between Livingston development corporation and Quality Street, at the latter's request.

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if any advice has been given to any of the new town development corporations to enter into discussions with private developers on the disposal or management of the new town housing stocks; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: The Scottish new town development corporation continue to receive advice on the Government's housing policy objectives in the regular meetings which take place between officials of my Department and those of the corporations. There is nothing new about discussions between private housing developers and development corporations.

Chernobyl

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what have been the total staff and administration cost to his Department of the Chernobyl accident.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Staff and associated administration costs relating to the Chernobyl accident which have been incurred by the Scottish Office in the period to the end of May 1988 are estimated to be in the region of £0·9m. In addition, some £464,000 has been spent on such matters as purchasing sheep and other produce for testing; the laboratory analysis of these to establish the levels of radioactivity; associated transport costs; and purchasing live monitoring equipment and paint used in connection with the mark and release scheme. Compensation to farmers in the restricted areas in Scotland has so far amounted to £1·6m.

Forestry

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total area of land for which forestry grant applications were submitted in each year from 1 April 1983 to date in *(a)* England, *(b)* Wales and *(c)* Scotland; and in each country what was the area of land (i) withdrawn before decision on forestry grant was reached and (ii) refused grant-aid by the Forestry Commission.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 10 May]:* The information is as follows

Hectares

Year to 31 March	*England*	*Wales*	*Scotland*
Area of land for which applications for grant were submitted			
1984	16,537	3,314	60,567
1985	20,505	2,977	56,570
1986	28,709	5,824	78,479
1987	37,528	6,920	103,634
1988	32,881	5,317	89,164
Area of land for which applications for grant were withdrawn			
1984	511	155	14,737
1985	143	300	26,979
1986	1,690	113	13,902

Year to 31 March	England	Wales	Scotland
1987	7,243	905	27,143
1988	4,265	738	31,207
Area of land for which applications for grant were refused			
1984	175	1	Nil
1985	36	634	944
1986	2	Nil	1,870
1987	32	425	Nil
1988	587	119	1,091

Notes:

1. The figures given in the above tables comprise the total areas of land covered by applications, and include unplantable land areas which it is proposed to leave unplanted for other reasons and existing woodland, as well as land intended for new planting or restocking.
2. The areas of land shown as withdrawn include cases in which applicants decided not to proceed because of objections or modifications to their proposals put forward by the Forestry Commission or consulted authorities which were expected to result in the application being refused in whole or in part.

Patients (Treatment Statistics)

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give for each year since 1979 the number of patients treated in each health board from outside that health council's area.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 26 May]:* The information is given in the table.

Discharges[1] of non residents treated in each health board 1979-86

Health board of treatment	All specialties							
	1979	1980	1981	[2]1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Argyll and Clyde	5,214	4,785	5,174	4,215	4,911	4,760	4,466	4,813
Ayrshire and Arran	1,493	1,178	1,263	1,239	1,416	1,435	1,443	1,430
Borders	342	377	319	345	332	296	368	421
Dumfries and Galloway	1,033	798	826	755	734	726	712	798
Fife	542	476	474	462	422	490	488	543
Forth Valley	2,435	1,985	1,599	1,614	1,683	1,606	1,816	1,733
Grampian	4,230	3,858	4,083	3,832	4,293	4,515	4,564	4,549
Greater Glasgow	39,589	41,496	42,689	39,315	44,947	47,766	50,183	50,645
Highland	3,133	2,969	3,139	3,123	3,349	3,453	3,353	3,550
Lanarkshire	4,905	4,318	4,146	4,212	4,229	3,891	3,583	3,952
Lothian	17,814	17,929	18,675	17,452	19,001	18,146	19,544	18,411
Orkney	47	42	58	40	36	49	58	61
Shetland	326	226	210	153	135	126	94	141
Tayside	7,689	7,845	7,950	7,610	8,751	9,048	9,852	9,319
Western Isles	124	76	71	66	105	75	47	61
TOTAL	88,916	88,358	90,676	84,433	94,344	96,382	100,571	100,427

[1] Including day cases.
[2] Low figures coincide with industrial action in the health service.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Child Benefit

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has as to the total amount of additional revenue which would be collected if child benefit were to be counted as part of taxable earnings; and what this sum would represent in terms of a reduction in the standard rate of income tax.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The income tax liability arising from taxing child benefit in 1988-89 would be about £1,100 million. This estimate assumes that child benefit received by married couples would be taxed as the husband's income. A reduction of 1p in the basic rate of tax would cost about £1,400 million in a full year at 1988-89 levels of income.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give the total amount of child benefit together with the number of families and children in respect of which it is paid and the percentage which each figure represents for the following income bands *(a)* under £5,000, *(b)* £5,000 to £10,000, *(c)* £10,000 to £15,000, *(d)* £15,000 to £20,000, *(e)* £20,000 to £25,000, *(f)* £25,000 to £50,000, *(g)* £50,000 to £100,000, and *(h)* £100,000 and over.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 27 May 1988]:* Information about the incomes of families receiving child benefit is not routinely collected. The following estimates of the distribution of gross incomes of recipient families in 1988-89 are therefore made on the basis of sample survey data which are subject to normal sampling and response variation.

Band of gross income	Families receiving child benefit		Number of children		Child benefit expenditure	
	(thousands)	(per cent.)	(thousands)	(per cent.)	(thousands)	(per cent.)
Under £5,000	560	(8·3)	780	(6·4)	290	(6·4)
£5,000 to £10,000	1,770	(26·2)	3,350	(27·6)	1,260	(27·6)
£10,000 to £15,000	1,830	(27·1)	3,210	(26·5)	1,210	(26·5)
£15,000 to £20,000	1,220	(18·1)	2,280	(18·8)	860	(18·8)
£20,000 to £25,000	650	(9·7)	1,150	(9·5)	430	(9·5)
£25,000 to £50,000	640	(9·4)	1,180	(9·8)	450	(9·8)
Above £50,000	80	(1·2)	180	(1·5)	70	(1·5)
	6,750	(100·0)	12,120	(100·0)	4,570	(100·0)

Notes:

(1) Estimates are based on the 1985 family expenditure survey, supplemented by the survey of personal incomes, and updated to 1988-89 levels

of earnings and benefit rates.
(2) Income is measured on a gross basis and is the family's total income from all sources including benefits.
(3) No detailed breakdown is possible for an income band above 50,000 because of sample sizes.
(4) All figures rounded to the nearest 10,000.
(5) Estimates assume 100 per cent. take-up of income-related benefits.

Labour Statistics

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the increase in employment in the United Kingdom since 1983; and what equivalent figures he has for those countries subject to the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system.

Mr. Lilley: Figures for civilian employment in the United Kingdom and in the member countries of the ERM are given in "Eurostat", March 1988, page 39.

Growth Rates

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what information he has as to what has been the average rate of growth of the countries subject to the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system since 1985; which country has enjoyed the highest and which the lowest rate of growth; and what have been the respective rates of growth.

Mr. Lilley: Figures for GDP for each of the ERM countries are given in "Eurostat", March 1988, page 35.

Inflation

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what information he has as to what has been the average rate of inflation of the economies subject to the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system since 1985; which country has enjoyed the lowest rate of inflation and which the highest; and what were the respective rates.

Mr. Lilley: Consumer price indices are given for all ERM member countries in "OECD Main Economic Indicators", monthly.

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the rate of inflation in the British economy since January 1985; and what information he has as to how many countries within the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system have had a higher rate of inflation.

Mr. Lilley: Consumer price indices for the United Kingdom and for all the ERM member countries are given in "OECD Main Economic Indicators", monthly.

Mr. Andrew MacKay: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the current level of inflation.

Mr. Lilley: The retail prices index rose by 3·9 per cent. in the year to April.

Productivity

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the growth in productivity in the United Kingdom since 1983; and what equivalent figures he has for productivity of each of the economies subject to the European monetary system.

Mr. Lilley: One measure of the productivity of labour is real GDP divided by the number of persons employed. GDP figures for the United Kingdom, on the average basis, are given in "Economic Trends", April 1988, page 6 and for the other countries in the "OECD National Accounts", volume 1. Figures for civilian employment for all the countries can be found in "Eurostat", March 1988, page 39.

Mr. Jack: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the annual growth of productivity for the whole economy since 1980.

Mr. Major: Between 1980 and 1987, output per head in the whole economy increased by 20·5 per cent. This represents an annual average increase of 2·7 per cent. over the period.

Pound Sterling

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how the rate of exchange of the pound sterling with the currencies subject to the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system has altered since January 1986.

Mr. Lilley: The average sterling exchange rate index against those currencies participating in the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system has fallen by 3·7 per cent. since January 1986.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Burnley on 20 May, *Official Report*, column *583*, how many of the representations received on the value of the pound were from the glass-making industry; to what effect they were made; and if he will make a statement;

(2) pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Burnley on 20 May, *Official Report*, column *583*, how many of the representations on the value of the pound were from the aerospace aviation industry or its supplier; to what effect they were made; and if he will make a statement;

(3) pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Burnley on 20 May, *Official Report*, column *583*, how many of the representations received on the value of the pound were from the textiles industry; to what effect they were made; and if he will make a statement;

(4) pursuant to the answer given to the hon. Member for Burnley on 20 May, *Official Report*, column *583*, how many of the representations received on the value of the pound were from the motor industry or its suppliers; to what effect they were made; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley: My right hon. Friend has received a number of representations on the exchange rate from several different sectors of industry.

Job Creation

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what information he has as to what has been the average level of job creation since 1983 of the economies whose currency is subject to the exchange rate

mechanism of the European monetary system; which country enjoyed the highest level of job creation and which the lowest; and what were the respective levels.

Mr. Lilley: "Eurostat", March 1988, page 39 gives data on civilian employment for each member country of the ERM. These data generally relate to numbers of jobs rather than numbers of persons.

Economic Growth

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the growth of the United Kingdom economy since January 1985; and what equivalent figures he has for those economies subject to the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system.

Mr. Lilley: Growth is usually measured as the increase in GDP (or GNP) at constant prices. Quarterly and annual GDP figures for the United Kingdom are given in "Economic Trends", April 1988, page 6. (The average estimate at 1980 prices is the preferred measure for calculating growth rates.) Annual figures for the United Kingdom and all the member countries of the ERM, are given in the "OECD National Accounts." volume 1.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish a table showing public expenditure by main programme in real terms for each year from 1975 onwards, taking 1975 as the base year at 100.

Mr. Major: The table shows, in index form (1978-79 = 100), the changes in real terms in the public expenditure planning total by function since 1978-79. Figures for earlier years are not readily available on a comparable basis.

Planning total by function in real terms[1]
1978-79 to 1990-91

Index numbers (1978-79 = 100)

	1978-79 outturn	*1979-80 outturn*	*1980-81 outturn*	*1981-82 outturn*	*1982-83 outturn*	*1983-84 outturn*	*1984-85 outturn*	*1985-86 outturn*	*1986-87 outturn*	*1987-88 estimated outturn*	*1988-89 plans*	*1989-90 plans*	*1900-91 plans*
Defence	100	105	108	110	118	121	129	127	125	124	121	122	122
Overseas services, including overseas aid	100	96	60	57	71	82	87	78	86	95	78	94	90
Agriculture, fisheries, food and forestry	100	105	115	107	129	139	132	149	110	121	123	124	128
Industry, energy, trade and employment	100	89	94	109	91	89	112	83	83	69	72	64	58
Of which: Employment and training[2]	100	101	131	137	129	151	155	158	177	173	178	175	172
Arts and libraries	100	101	102	109	110	112	116	116	124	128	127	128	128
Roads and transport	100	104	106	104	100	96	97	92	91	89	91	89	88
Housing	100	108	91	61	52	57	55	48	43	40	44	42	42
Other environmental services	100	102	99	93	96	99	98	91	90	90	84	85	85
Law, order and protective services	100	108	112	120	124	130	140	137	145	158	161	162	162
Education and science	100	99	101	100	101	101	101	98	104	109	109	109	109
Health and personal social services	100	103	111	113	114	116	119	119	124	130	131	133	135
Of which: Health	100	102	110	113	115	116	119	119	124	129	131	133	135
Social security	100	101	103	114	121	126	130	134	139	139	139	142	144
Miscellaneous expenditure	100	101	100	108	107	82	86	88	95	101	105	130	108
Planning total	100	101	102	104	106	107	111	108	109	110	113	116	119

[1] Real terms figures are the cash outturns or plans adjusted by excluding the effect of general inflation as measured by the GDP deflator.
[2] Includes expenditure on employment and training in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
Source: Table 5.12, Public Expenditure White Paper, 1988-89 to 1990-91, Cm 288-1.

Developing Countries (Debt)

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* showing for each developing country for each year from 1983 the proportion of export earnings constituted by debt service charges.

Mr. Lilley: The information is contained in the 1987-88 edition of the "World Debt Tables" (volume II) published by the World Bank. A copy is available in the statistical section of the Library.

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* showing the percentage of all non-oil developing country debt, for each year from 1973 to 1987, at variable interest rates.

Mr. Lilley: The percentage of public and publicly guaranteed long-term debt outstanding and disbursed at variable interest rates for non-oil developing countries, for 1975 and for each year from 1980 to 1986 (the latest available year), is as follows:

Percentage of public and publicly guaranteed long-term debt outstanding and disbursed at variable interest rates, non-oil developing countries, 1975, 1980-1986

Year end	*Percentage*
1975	16·6
1980	31·1
1981	34·4
1982	35·5
1983	39·8
1984	39·9
1985	39·8
1986	43·6

Note:
Non-oil developing countries are defined as all countries included in the World Bank debt tables less those classified as "oil exporters".
Source: World debt tables, 1987-88 edition, World Bank.

Comparable information for each year from 1973 to 1979 (other than for 1975) may be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Figures for the percentage of total debt at variable interest rates are unavailable.

Value Added Tax

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received seeking an exemption from value added tax for hospital radio stations in respect of equipment bought by them; and what response he has made.

Mr. Lilley: My right hon. Friend has received no further representations since the reply I gave to the hon. Member on 6 May at column *649*.

Mr. Anderson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the overall costs of administration, collection and enforcement of value added tax.

Mr. Lilley: The overall cost of the administration, collection and enforcement of value added tax is estimated to be £244 million for the year ended 31 March 1988.

Mr. Holland: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the number of companies *(a)* registering for value added tax and *(b)* deregistering for value added tax in each available year since and including 1979.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 23 May 1988]:* Figures for businesses registering and deregistering for value added tax in each year since 1979 are as shown by the table:

Period		*New registrations*	*Deregistrations*	*Net increase*
From	*To*			
30 December 1978	21 December 1979	169,058	122,258	46,800
22 December 1979	5 January 1981	173,907	149,979	23,928
6 January 1981	5 January 1982	142,961	103,235	39,726
6 January 1982	2 February 1983	164,990	148,032	16,958
3 February 1983	3 January 1984	180,310	147,243	33,067
4 January 1984	4 January 1985	184,333	154,324	30,009
5 January 1985	6 January 1986	184,392	170,448	13,944
7 January 1986	5 January 1987	190,259	167,266	32,993
6 January 1987	7 January 1988	202,232	154,426	47,806

Economic Output

Mr. Anthony Coombs: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the growth of economic output over the latest 12 months period for which figures are available.

Mr. Major: Preliminary estimates show that the output-based measure of gross domestic product increased by 4½ per cent. between the first quarter of 1987 and the first quarter of 1988.

Customs Posts

Mr. Gregory: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was by port the number of customs posts at 1 May; and what was the figure on 1 June 1986.

Mr. Lilley: For operational reasons the number of customs officers employed in each of the 155 ports and airports controlled by customs is not published.

Mr. Gregory: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total number of customs posts at ports and airports at 1 May; what was the figure on 1 June 1986; and how the customs budget has changed over the same period.

Mr. Lilley: The total number of customs officers deployed at ports and airports at 1 June 1986 was 6,900 and at 1 May 1988 the provisional figure is 7,700.

The total cost of administration of customs work for the financial year ending 31 March 1986 was £161·8 million and for the year ending 31 March 1988 the provisional cost is £203 million.

Exchange Rate

79. **Mr. Blunkett:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has estimated the effect of the exchange rate on the rate of employment; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley: Exchange rate policy is part of total economic policy. The firm financial discipline inherent in the Government's economic strategy has contributed to the longest period of continuous employment growth in almost 30 years.

Civil Servants (Northern Ireland)

Mr. McCusker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what action he has taken to set up monitoring procedures to examine the religious affiliation of civil servants employed by his Department in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: Her Majesty's Treasury does not employ any civil servants in Northern Ireland.

Customs Station, Donnally

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects the new customs station, currently under construction at Donnally, Newry, to become operational.

Mr. Lilley: The new customs station at Damolly, Newry is expected to become operational on 1 November 1989.

Business Investment

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest forecast for business investment in 1988.

Mr. Major: Business investment is forecast to grow by 9 per cent. in 1988, as shown in chapter 3 of the Financial Statement and Budget Report.

Retail Prices Index

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table

showing the increase in the retail prices index for each of the last nine years and his estimate for this figure in the current year.

Mr. Lilley: The figures are given in the table.

Retail Prices Index
Percentage increase on previous year

	per cent.
1979	13·4
1980	18·0
1981	11·9
1982	8·6
1983	4·6
1984	5·0
1985	6·1
1986	3·4
1987	4·2

Forecast 1988 Q4 on 1987 Q4 is 4 per cent.

Government Departments (Personal Data)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what plans he has to ensure that any new use or disclosure of personal data between participating Departments on the Government data network is subject to prior approval of the Data Protection Registrar;

(2) if he will describe the intended process of authorisation of disclosures of personal data between Departments that may arise following the introduction of the Government data network; and if he will make it his policy to place a copy of any document or future document which describes that authorisation process in the Library.

Mr. Brooke: The process of authorisation of disclosures of personal data between Departments is governed by their registrations under the Data Protection Act 1984. Compliance is a matter for the Departments concerned.

Government Data Network

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will describe the changes brought to the design of the Government data network as a result of his discussions with the Data Protection Registrar.

Mr. Brooke: The Data Protection Registrar has been kept informed from the outset of the proposals for maintaining security on the Government data network, including arrangements for controlling access. He has expressed no reservations about the proposals.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will now quantify the cost savings that will arise over the next 10 years as a result of the Government data network.

Mr. Brooke: In assessing the value for money of the Government data network, its costs were compared with the viable alternatives—using comparable public services, or implementing separate networks similar to GDN.

The savings from using the GDN service are estimated at around 45 per cent. and 30 per cent. respectively. Actual savings will depend on the use made of the service.

Manufacturing Output

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement about manufacturing output during the last 12 months for which figures are available.

Mr. Major: In the first quarter of 1988 manufacturing output was 5½ per cent. higher than a year earlier.

Income Tax

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give, for the latest year available, the number of tax units who are married couples falling within each £1,000 income band up to an income of £30,000 and thereafter in £10,000 income bands up to £100,000; and if he will specify the number of wives and husbands falling within each band, giving the average incomes of wives and husbands within each band separately and the same figures in aggregate for those tax units on incomes in excess of £100,000.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 13 May 1988]:* Provisional estimates for married couples liable to income tax in 1988-89 are given in the table. I regret that a more detailed analysis is not possible, because estimates are based on a projection of the 1985-86 survey of personal incomes. The table shows the average income of husbands where the wife has no income and average incomes of both husband and wife where both spouses have income.

Married couples liable to income tax 1988-89

Total income (lower limit)	*Number of couples*			*Average income*		
	all	*where wife has no income*	*with wife's income*[1]	*where wife has no income*	*where both spouses have income*	
					husband	*wife*[1]
£'000	*'000s*	*'000s*	*'000s*	*£*	*£*	*£*
4	110	100	10	4,500	4,600	50
5	310	130	180	5,600	4,500	1,100
6	440	190	250	6,500	5,300	1,300
7	470	200	270	7,500	5,900	1,600
8	630	270	360	8,500	6,500	2,000
9	590	230	360	9,500	7,400	2,100
10	1,440	520	920	11,000	8,500	2,500
12	1,950	570	1,380	13,400	10,400	3,100
15	2,420	480	1,940	17,300	12,700	4,600
20	2,000	340	1,660	23,500	17,400	6,400
30	530	80	450	34,400	26,000	8,000
40	150	30	120	44,500	34,600	9,600
50	80	20	60	54,800	43,500	10,700
60	40	10	30	64,700	51,100	13,500

Total income (lower limit)	Number of couples all	Number of couples where wife has no income	Number of couples with wife's income[1]	Average income where wife has no income	Average income where both spouses have income: husband	Average income where both spouses have income: wife[1]
£'000	'000s	'000s	'000s	£	£	£
70	80	20	60	117,000	92,600	22,200
All	11,240	3,190	8,050	14,500	13,700	4,400

[1] Earnings, pensions, and investment income.

Corporation Tax

Mr. Holland: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the number of companies paying corporation tax at *(a)* the full rate and *(b)* the small companies rate as applicable for each available year since and including 1979.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 23 May 1988]:* Estimates of the numbers of companies liable to pay corporation tax on their profits in accounting periods ending in financial years 1978-79 to 1985-86 are shown in the table. Figures for more recent years are not sufficiently complete to provide a reliable estimate. The 1985-86 estimate is provisional. These numbers have on this occasion been reduced to take account of the fact that CT liabilities are eliminated for some companies by tax already deducted or paid.

Companies liable to Corporation Tax

Accounting periods ending in:	Numbers '000
1978-79	195
1979-80	200
1980-81	210
1981-82	220
1982-83	235
1983-84	245
1984-85	260
1985-86	300

In respect of 1985-86 about 20,000 companies have liabilities at the full rate and a further 20,000 are in the transitional band between the small companies rate and the full rate. Equivalent figures for earlier years are not available. Membership of company groups affects the point at which marginal and full rates apply and recently available information on this aspect has been used in deriving these estimates.

Inheritance Tax

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the total amount of inheritance tax payable in respect of an inheritance of £1 million of a capital distribution made to an individual from an accumulation and maintenance trust where the settlor has survived for seven years.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 23 May 1988]:* Gifts are exempt from inheritance tax where donors survive seven years. This applies also to distributions from accumulation and maintenance trusts where the settlor has survived seven years.

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much inheritance tax would be payable in respect of an inheritance in 1988-89 amounting to £1 million by a single individual on his or her 21st birthday comprising *(a)* a gift of shares from his father in an unquoted company comprising a controlling interest and constituting business property valued at, before relief £200,000, *(b)* cash from his mother who has made no previous gifts of £100,000, *(c)* a gift of a farm from his uncle who survives for seven years after the gift of the value of £500,000 and *(d)* capital distribution of £200,000 from an accumulation and maintenance trust set up by his father who survives for seven years, where no gifts have been made by his father other than *(a)* and *(d)*.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 23 May 1988]:* Because the donors at *(a)* *(c)* and *(d)* have survived their gifts by seven years and the gift by the donor at *(b)* is below the 1988-89 taxable threshold, (an exemption which also applied under capital transfer tax) no inheritance tax would be payable in 1988-89 on any of these gifts. However, if the donors at *(a)*, *(c)* and *(d)* had died within seven years of their gifts, inheritance tax would have been payable at their deaths with business and agricultural property reliefs on the gifts at *(a)* and *(c)* as under capital transfer tax.

Trading Services (Accounts)

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of the accounts for trading services operated by departments of certain other public bodies for which the Treasury has directed or approved the form of accounts according to the procedure of section G, paragraph 4 of Government Accounting (1986), indicating *(a)* the category of accounts so prescribed, *(b)* the statutory basis for this requirement of the period over which this has been done by convention and *(c)* the form and place of publication of such accounts.

Mr. Brooke *[holding answer 25 May 1988]:* The information available is as follows:

Name of public body or department (1, 2, 3)	Category of public body (4)	Statutory requirement	Form and place of publication (5)
Agricultural Training Board, The	NDPB	Agricultural Training Board Act 1982	Annual accounts available from Body
Arts Council of Great Britain	NDPB	Royal Charter 1967	Annual accounts available from Body
Audit Commission for Local Authorities in England and Wales	NDPB	Local Government Finance Act 1982	Annual accounts available from Body

Name of public body or department (1, 2, 3)	Category of public body (4)	Statutory requirement	Form and place of publication (5)
Aycliffe and Peterlee Development Corporation	NDPB	New Towns Act 1981	Annual accounts available from HMSO (Dev Corpns Report).
Black Country Development Corporation	NDPB	Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980	Annual accounts available from Body
Board of Trustees of the Royal Armouries	NDPB	National Heritage Act 1983	Annual accounts available from HMSO
British Museum	NDPB	Legislation pending	Annual accounts available from Body
British Tourist Authority	NDPB	Development of Tourism Act 1969	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Cardiff Bay Development Corporation	NDPB	Local Government Planning and land Act 1980	Annual accounts available from Body
Central Office of Information	Department	Exchequer and Audit Departments Acts 1866 and 1921	Annual accounts available from Body
Clothing and Allied Products Industry Training Board	NDPB	Industrial Training Act 1982	Annual accounts available from Body
Co-operative Development Agency	NDPB	Co-operative Development Agency Act 1978	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Commission for Local Authority Accounts in Scotland	NDPB	Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Commission for the New Towns	NDPB	New Towns Act 1981	Annual accounts available from Body
Commonwealth Development Corporation	NDPB	Commonwealth Development Corporation Act 1978	Annual accounts available from Body
Construction Industry Training Board	NDPB	Industrial Training Act 1982	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Countryside Commission	NDPB	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Countryside Commission for Scotland	NDPB	Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Crown Agents Holding and Realisation Board	NDPB	Crown Agents Act 1979	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Crown Agents for Oversea Governments and Administrations	NDPB	Crown Agents Act 1979	Annual accounts available from Body
Crown Suppliers Trading Fund, The	Trad Fund	Government Trading Funds Act 1973	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Cumbernauld Development Corporation	NDPB	New Towns (Scotland) Act 1968	Annual accounts available from HMSO (Dev Corpns Report)
Cwmbran Development Corporation	NDPB	New Towns Act 1981	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Development Board for Rural Wales	NDPB	Development of Rural Wales Act 1976	Annual accounts available from Body
Development Commission	NDPB	Miscellaneous Financial Provisions Act 1983	Annual accounts available from HMSO
East Kilbride Development Corporation	NDPB	New Towns (Scotland) Act 1968	Annual accounts available from HMSO (Dev Corpns Report)
Engineering Industry Training Board	NDPB	Industrial Training Act 1982	Annual accounts available from Body
English Industrial Estates Corporation	NDPB	English Industrial Estates Corporation Act 1981	Annual accounts available from Body
English National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting	NDPB	Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors Act 1979	Annual accounts available from HMSO
English Tourist Board	NDPB	Development of Tourism Act 1969	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Erskine Bridge Tolls	Supp'l Account	Erskine Bridge Tolls Act 1968	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Export Credits Guarantee Department	Department	Exchequer and Audit Departments Act 1921 s5	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Fleet Air Arm Museum	NDPB	National Heritage Act 1983	Annual accounts available from Body
Food from Britain	NDPB	Agricultural Marketing Act 1983	Annual accounts available from Body
General Practice Finance Corporation	NDPB	National Health Service Act 1966	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Glenrothes Development Corporation	NDPB	New Towns (Scotland) Act 1968	Annual accounts available from HMSO (Dev Corpns Report)
Greater Manchester Residuary Body	NDPB	Local Government Act 1985	Annual accounts available from Body
Health and Safety Commission	NDPB	Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Health and Safety Executive	NDPB	Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Her Majesty's Stationery Office Trading Fund	Trad Fund	Government Trading Funds Act 1973	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Highlands and Islands Development Board	NDPB	Highlands and Islands Development (Scotland) Act 1965	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England	NDPB	National Heritage Act 1983	Annual accounts available from Body
Home-Grown Cereals Authority	NDPB	Cereals Marketing Act 1965	Annual accounts available from Body
Horticultural Development Council	NDPB	Industrial Organisation and Development Act 1947	Annual accounts available from Body
Hotel and Catering Training Board	NDPB	Industrial Training Act 1982	Annual accounts available from Body
Housing Corporation	NDPB	Housing Act 1964	Annual accounts available from Body
Imperial War Museum	NDPB	Legislation pending	Annual accounts available from Body

Name of public body or department (1, 2, 3)	*Category of public body (4)*	*Statutory requirement*	*Form and place of publication (5)*
Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce	Department	Exchequer and Audit Departments Act 1921 s5	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Irvine Development Corporation	NDPB	New Towns (Scotland) Act 1968	Annual accounts available from HMSO (Dev Corpns Report)
Land Authority for Wales	NDPB	Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Livingston Development Corporation	NDPB	New Towns (Scotland) Act 1968	Annual accounts available from HMSO (Dev Corpns Report)
London Docklands Development Corporation	NDPB	Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980	Annual accounts available from Body
London Residuary Body	NDPB	Local Government Act 1985	Annual accounts available from Body
Manpower Services Commission	NDPB	Employment and Training Act 1973	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Meat and Livestock Commission	NDPB	Agriculture Act 1967	Annual accounts available from Body
Merseyside Development Corporation	NDPB	Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980	Annual accounts available from Body
Merseyside Residuary Body	NDPB	Local Government Act 1985	Annual accounts available from Body
Milton Keynes Development Corporation	NDPB	New Towns Act 1981	Annual accounts available from HMSO (Dev Corpns Report)
Museums and Galleries Commission	NDPB	Royal Charter 1986	Annual accounts available from Body
National Army Museum	NDPB	National Heritage Act 1983	Annual accounts available from Body
National Biological Standards Board	NDPB	Biological Standards Act 1975	Annual accounts available from HMSO
National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting for Scotland	NDPB	Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors Act 1979	Annual accounts available from HMSO
National Dock Labour Board	NDPB	Dock Work Regulation Act 1976	Annual accounts available from Body
National Enterprise Board	NDPB	Industry Act 1975	Annual accounts available from Body
National Galleries of Scotland—Board of Trustees	NDPB	National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985	Annual accounts available from Body
National Gallery	NDPB	Legislation pending	Annual accounts available from Body
National Library of Scotland—Board of Trustees	NDPB	National Library of Scotland Act 1925	Annual accounts available from Body
National Maritime Museum	NDPB	Legislation pending	Annual accounts available from Body
National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside	NDPB	Museums and Galleries on Merseyside Order 1986	Annual accounts available from Body
National Portrait Gallery	NDPB	Legislation pending	Annual accounts available from Body
National Research Development Corporation	NDPB	Development of Inventions Act 1967	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Nature Conservancy Council	NDPB	Nature Conservancy Council Act 1973	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Offshore Petroleum Industry Training Board	NDPB	Industrial Training Act 1982	Annual accounts available from Body
Oil and Pipelines Agency	NDPB	Oil and Pipelines Act 1985	Annual accounts available from Body
Ordnance Survey	Department	Exchequer and Audit Departments Act 1921 s5	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Peterborough Development Corporation	NDPB	New Towns Act 1981	Annual accounts available from HMSO (Dev Corpns Report)
Pilotage Commission	NDPB	Pilotage Act 1983	Annual accounts available from Body
Plastics Processing Industry Training Board	NDPB	Industrial Training Act 1982	Annual accounts available from Body
Registrar of Public Lending Right	NDPB	Public Lending Right Act 1979	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Road Transport Industry Training Board	NDPB	Industrial Training Act 1982	Annual accounts available from Body
Royal Air Force Museum	NDPB	National Heritage Act 1983	Annual accounts available from Body
Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, Board of Trustees	NDPB	National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew	NDPB	National Heritage Act 1983	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Royal Mint, The	Trad Fund	Government Trading Funds Act 1973	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Royal Naval Museum, Portsmouth	NDPB	National Heritage Act 1983	Annual accounts available from Body
Royal Navy Submarine Museum, Gosport	NDPB	National Heritage Act 1983	Annual accounts available from Body
Science Museum	NDPB	Legislation pending	Annual accounts available from Body
Scottish Development Agency	NDPB	Scottish Development Agency Act 1975	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Scottish Sports Council	NDPB	Royal Charter 1972	Annual accounts available from Body
Scottish Tourist Board	NDPB	Development of Tourism Act 1969	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Sea Fish Industry Authority	NDPB	Fisheries Act 1981	Annual accounts available from Body
Severn Bridge Tolls	Supp'l Account	Severn Bridge Tolls Act 1965	Annual accounts available from HMSO
South Yorkshire Residuary Body	NDPB	Local Government Act 1985	Annual accounts available from Body
Sports Council	NDPB	Royal Charter 1972	Annual accounts available from Body
Sports Council for Wales	NDPB	Royal Charter 1972	Annual accounts available from Body
Tate Gallery	NDPB	Legislation pending	Annual accounts available from Body
Teesside Development Corporation	NDPB	Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980	Annual accounts available from Body
Telford Development Corporation	NDPB	New Towns Act 1981	Annual accounts available from HMSO (Dev Corpns Report)

Name of public body or department (1, 2, 3)	*Category of public body (4)*	*Statutory requirement*	*Form and place of publication (5)*
Trafford Park Development Corporation	NDPB	Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980	Annual accounts available from Body
Tyne and Wear Development Corporation	NDPB	Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980	Annual accounts available from HMSO (Dev Corpns Report)
United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority	Trad Fund	Atomic Energy Authority Acts 1954 and 1986	Annual accounts available from Body
United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting	NDPB	Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors Act 1979	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Victoria and Albert Museum	NDPB	Legislation pending	Annual accounts available from Body
Wales Tourist Board	NDPB	Development of Tourism Act 1969	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Wallace Collection	NDPB	Legislation pending	Annual accounts available from Body
Warrington and Runcorn Development Corporation	NDPB	New Towns Act 1981	Annual accounts available from HMSO (Dev Corpns Report)
Washington Development Corporation	NDPB	New Towns Act 1981	Annual accounts available from HMSO (Dev Corpns Report)
Welsh Development Agency	NDPB	Welsh Development Agency Act 1975	Annual accounts available from HMSO
Welsh National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting	NDPB	Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors Act 1979	Annual accounts available from HMSO
West Midlands Residuary Body	NDPB	Local Government Act 1985	Annual accounts available from Body
West Yorkshire Residuary Body	NDPB	Local Government Act 1985	Annual accounts available from Body

Notes:

1. This information has been extracted from a new computerised database being built up by the Treasury. There is a risk that the names of some bodies may not yet be on the database, but the list is substantially complete.
2. The list includes bodies producing commercial style accruals accounts, and some bodies at present producing cash accounts which intend to move over to an accruals basis shortly.
3. The list excludes Memorandum Trading Accounts (MTAs): as Government Accounting paragraph G: 4(c) explains these are informal working documents. Treasury "direction" of the form that MTAs take is through the dissemination of general guidelines to departments.
4. The abbreviations used to categorise public bodies are:
   "NDPB": non-departmental public body;
   "Department": a Government department;
   "Trad Fund": a trading fund established under the Government Trading Funds Act, plus the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority; and
   "Supp'l Account": an account for a service conducted by a department, for which audited commercial style accounts are produced and published.
5. The references in the final column to indicate the form and place of publication mean:
   "Annual accounts available from HMSO": these are formal "White Paper", accounts as defined in Government Accounting (Section 0 Paragraph 185), printed by HMSO and laid before Parliament;
   "Annual accounts available from Body": the accounts are not laid before Parliament, but copies may be obtained from the body itself.

Channel Tunnel

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the estimated capital cost of the proposed customs facility at Waterloo station for Channel tunnel passengers.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 26 May 1988]:* Discussions are at present taking place between Customs and British Rail about the facilities that will be required at Waterloo for the clearance of Channel tunnel passengers. The provision and capital funding of the facilities are the responsibility of British Rail.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the estimated annual running cost of the proposed customs facility at Waterloo station for Channel tunnel passengers.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 26 May 1988]:* The arrangements for Customs clearance at Waterloo station have yet to be finalised and it is too early at this stage to estimate what the running costs will be.

European Investment Bank (Loans)

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) why exchange risk cover for European Investment Bank loans of over $25 million will not be applied to loans made to local authorities which are not part of a European Community integrated operation; and what was the cost to the Treasury of the last five years of the operation of the scheme;

(2) why the ½ per cent. interest rate subsidy formerly available for European Investment Bank borrowers has not been reinstated; and, over the last five years of the scheme's operation, how much local authorities in the United Kingdom benefited from the ½ per cent. interest rate subsidy.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answers 26 May 1988]:* I refer the hon. Member to my answer to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Slough (Mr. Watts) on 2 December 1987 at column *614*, which sets out the reasons for the withdrawal of interest rate subsidy available under the official exchange cover scheme. Loans over $25 million made to local authorities, whether or not they are part of a European Community integrated operation, are eligible for exchange risk cover.

In the period to 2 December 1987 local authorities borrowed £570 million under the scheme. During this time, the interest rate benefit available to borrowers has varied from ¼ to ½ per cent. However, this does not reflect the true cost of operating the scheme. Local authorities borrow under the scheme for the benefit of the reserves, so any calculation must take into account the interest earned on that part of the United Kingdom's official reserves raised by this means and the cost to the Government of the

sterling finance, but the sums involved cannot be hypothecated. Moreover, the calculation would also have to take into account any exchange rate gain or loss made on repayment of the loans and any changes in overseas interest rates in relation to those charged on public sector debt during the life of the loans. These calculations cannot be made until the loans have run their full term.

European Community (Contributions)

Mr. Marlow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the United Kingdom net contribution to the EEC for each of the last eight years; and what is the most likely estimate for the current year and 1989 expressed both in terms of payments made during the year and payments attributed to the year in question.

Mr. Brooke *[holding answer 26 May 1988]:* The information requested for the period 1980 to 1987 is set out in the table. Estimates of the United Kingdom's net contribution to the Community budget for 1988-89 and 1989-90 (on a payments basis) and 1988 and 1989 (on a budget basis) are contained in the last public expenditure White Paper (Cm. 288-II, pages 33 to 36). These estimates did not take account of the agreement at the Brussels European Council on 11 to 13 February on the future financing of the Community. This agreement is likely to increase our net contribution to the Community budget by some £200 to £300 million a year.

Net contribution to Community budget

	Payments basis[1] *£ million*	*Budget basis*[2] *£ million*
1980	706	269
1981	397	115
1982	606	682
1983	647	766
1984	656	709
1985	1,808	759
1986	572	943
1987	1,713	[3]1,135

[1] These figures show the net payments actually made during calendar years, irrespective of the Community budget to which they relate or from which they are financed. Receipts flowing directly to the United Kingdom private sector are excluded.

[2] These figures show the United Kingdom's net contribution in respect of particular budgets, regardless of when the payments and receipts actually took place. They include an estimate of receipts flowing directly to the United Kingdom private sector and certain payments to other member states which nevertheless benefit the United Kingdom by allowing us to import CAP produce at prices below CAP levels. They take account of our net contribution to the "unallocated budget", which consists mainly of the Community's aid expenditure.

[3] Estimate.

EC (Budget)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will provide a table showing details of total payments to the European Economic Community budget for 1987 and total receipts for each of the member countries of the European Economic Community.

Mr. Brooke *[holding answer 27 May 1988]:* Details of payments made by the European Economic Community to member states in 1987 are not readily available. The own resources payments made by member states to the Community in 1987 were as follows:—

	mecu
Belgium	1,702
Denmark	845
Germany	9,385
Greece	340
Spain	1,700
France	7,330
Ireland	338
Italy	5,192
Luxembourg	74
Netherlands	2,372
Portugal	342
United Kingdom	5,728

Source: European Commission documents.

Mortgage Interest Relief

Mr. Summerson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer on what date in August mortgage interest tax relief becomes applicable to a property.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 27 May 1988]:* I assume my hon. Friend is referring to the proposed change to a residence basis for mortgage interest relief. Under clause 41 of the Finance Bill this will take effect from 1 August 1988.

Manufacturing Investment

Mr. Cash: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effect of successive Budget changes on investment in manufacturing industry in the regions.

Mr. Kirkhope: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effect of successive Budget changes on investment in manufacturing industry in the north.

Mr. Jack: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effect of successive Budget changes on investment in manufacturing industry in the north.

Mr. Major: The reductions in tax rates and increases in allowances in recent Budgets have improved incentives and stimulated enterprise, which will have contributed to higher investment throughout the country.

DEFENCE

RAF Feltwell

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what will be the role of the proposed deep space tracking station at RAF Feltwell in relation to *(a)* the United States Air Force global positioning system and *(b)* any other systems; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: I have nothing to add to the answer I gave the hon. Member on 21 March 1988 at column *7*.

Low Flying

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are the overall rates of low-level flying accidents in the Royal Air Force, expressed as a percentage of flying hours and low-level flying hours since 1980.

Mr. Freeman: As was explained to the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) at column *82* on 8

December 1987, records of hours flown at low level by military aircraft are not held centrally. The rate of major accidents (per 10,000 hours flown by Royal Air Force aircraft at all levels worldwide) which occurred during low level operations was as follows:

	Per cent.
1980	0·12
1981	0·11
1982	0·22
1983	0·17
1984	0·14
1985	0·10
1986	0·08
1987	0·18

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many low-level sorties were flown by the RAF in *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* the Federal Republic of Germany; in each year since 1980.

Mr. Freeman: Separate records of low-level sorties flown by the RAF in the United Kingdom are not available, but those for all British military aircraft (both fixed wing and helicopter) were as follows.

	Number
1980	[1]80,860
1981	[1]94,620
1982	[1]106,920
1983	[1]118,920
1984	109,244
1985	115,063
1986	123,488
1987	123,293

[1] Before 1984 sorties were not recorded directly but have been calculated from movements. On average there are 2·5 movements per sortie.

Figures for RAF fixed wing low-level sorties in the Federal Republic of Germany are not available prior to 1984. Those for 1984 onwards are given below. These do not include helicopter sorties because these are not centrally recorded.

	Number
1984	18,752
1985	18,124
1986	16,853
1987	15,900

RAF Jets (Accidents)

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the overall rate of fast jet major flying accidents in the Royal Air Force, expressed as a percentage of fast jet flying hours, for each year since 1980.

Mr. Freeman: I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 18 April to the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours), at columns *336-8*.

RAF (Accidents)

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what is the overall rate of major flying accidents in the Royal Air Force, expressed as a percentage of flying hours, for each year since 1980;

(2) what are the annual totals of serious flying accidents to United Kingdom military aircraft for each year since 1980;

(3) how many aircrew have been injured in Royal Air Force Tornado accidents since 1980;

(4) how many aircrew have been killed in Royal Air Force Tornado accidents since 1980;

(5) how many Royal Air Force Tornados have been seriously damaged in flying accidents since 1980;

(6) how many Royal Air Force Tornados have been destroyed in flying accidents since 1980.

Mr. Freeman: I refer the hon. Member to the annual Statements on the Defence Estimates which, since 1980, have published relevant information about all accidents to aircraft of the three Services which have involved loss of, or serious damage to the aircraft or which have resulted in fatalities or serious injuries. The most recently published information is in Cm. 344-II, tables 5.8 and 5.9.

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many serious accidents involving Royal Air Force Tornados have occurred during low-flying operations since 1980 in *(a)* the United Kingdom, *(b)* the Federal Republic of Germany and *(c)* other locations.

Mr. Freeman: Since entering service with the Royal Air Force in 1980, major accidents to Tornado aircraft during low-flying operations have been as follows:

	Number
United Kingdom and surrounding waters	6
Federal Republic of Germany	4
United States of America	1

Tornado Aircraft

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he intends to order an attrition batch of Tornado aircraft; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: Nine Tornado GR1 aircraft have already been ordered as replacements for expected attrition losses. A possible further purchase of Tornado aircraft is under consideration.

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many night vision targeting pods he intends to order for the Royal Air Force Tornado aircraft.

Mr. Sainsbury: A contract for the supply of 10 advanced laser designator pods for Tornado GR1 aircraft has been awarded to Ferranti Defence Systems Ltd.

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans exist to sell Tornado F2 aircraft withdrawn from RAF service to overseas customers.

Mr. Sainsbury *[holding answer 27 May 1988]:* There are no plans to sell the Tornado F2 aircraft currently in storage at RAF Athan to overseas customers.

Chipmunk Aircraft

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the average number of flying hours carried out per trainee Royal Air Force pilot in de Havilland Chipmunk aircraft.

Mr. Freeman: Sixty-five.

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how long he expects de Havilland Chipmunk aircraft to remain in Royal Air Force service.

Mr. Freeman: The Chipmunk is expected to remain in service with the Royal Air Force until about the turn of the century.

Hawk Aircraft

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what will be the cost of rewinging Royal Air Force Hawk aircraft.

Mr. Sainsbury: An initial order for an improved design of wing for Hawk aircraft in Royal Air Force service has been placed with British Aerospace. The total cost of the programme will be governed by the outcome of a competition which my Department currently plans to hold for the supply of further production quantities.

Redtop Missiles

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department intends to use the Redtop missiles from Lightning aircraft for training purposes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: No. When the Lightning is withdrawn from service later this month, the remaining Redtop missiles will be disposed of as no further economical use has been found for them. The Lightning is being replaced by Tornado F3 armed with Skyflash medium-range and Sidewinder short-range air-to-air missiles.

ASR 1238

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to make a decision on ASR 1238.

Mr. Sainsbury: A decision on ASR 1238 is not expected for some months.

European Fighter Aircraft

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects a decision to be made on the ordering of an interim engine for the European fighter aircraft.

Mr. Sainsbury: The assessment of the competing bids is well advanced and I would expect the result to be announced later this year.

Canberra Aircraft

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much longer he expects Canberra aircraft to remain in Royal Air Force service.

Mr. Ian Stewart: On current plans the Canberra is expected to remain in service into the next century.

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Canberras are still in Royal Air Force service.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Four units of Canberras are currently in service with the Royal Air Force.

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has any intention of selling Canberra planes presently in Royal Air Force service; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: No Canberra aircraft presently in service with the Royal Air Force are being offered for sale. A few non-effective aircraft may, however, be disposed of later this year once spares recovery has been completed.

Jet Provosts

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how long he expects Jet Provost aircraft to remain in Royal Air Force service.

Mr. Freeman: The majority of Jet Provost aircraft are due to be replaced by the Tucano by the mid-1990s, although a few Jet Provosts are expected to remain in service with the Royal Air Force until the turn of the century.

RAF Waddington

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the cost of building hangars for Boeing AWACS aircraft at RAF Waddington.

Mr. Sainsbury: One hangar is being built at RAF Waddington for the United Kingdom E-3 fleet, at a cost of some £5 million.

Jet Provosts and Chipmunks

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether Shorts of Belfast contribute any funds to his Department to keep Jet Provost and de Havilland Chipmunk aircraft in Royal Air Force service.

Mr. Sainsbury: No.

United States Navy, Brawdy

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has as to whether there are any plans to withdraw the operating personnel from the United States naval facility at Brawdy, Wales, with a view to introducing remote control operation of the facility.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I understand that there are no current plans to change the United States Navy manning at RAF Brawdy.

Air Combat (Manoeuvring Instrumentation)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what consideration has been given to the deployment of an air combat manoeuvring instrumentation range off the east coast of Britain; and whether any decisions on research, development or procurement of such a system have been made.

Mr. Sainsbury: I refer the hon. Gentleman to my reply of 11 May at column *134*, to my hon. Friend the Member for Waveney (Mr. Porter).

Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British military personnel are currently serving with the joint strategic target planning staff; and what is their function.

Mr. Ian Stewart: A senior RAF officer is serving as a member of SACEUR's liaison team with the joint strategic target planning staff. There are no representatives of Her Majesty's Government with the staff.

Netway

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the function of the Netway communication system; what is the total cost of procuring the system; and where it will be deployed.

Mr. Sainsbury: The Netway communication system is being procured as part of the RAF station transport management aid (STAMA), a system for the routine management and operation of vehicles which will be deployed in most RAF stations. The Netway system will be used to provide communications between remote terminals and the computer processor on the larger STAMA installations. The costs of the system are a matter of commercial confidentiality.

North Sea Platforms

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what military use is made of offshore oil and gas platforms in the North sea.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Offshore oil and gas platforms are occasionally used by the armed forces for training purposes. Military helicopters may also refuel on such platforms when crossing the North sea.

AWACS

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if it is planned to fit Royal Air Force AWACS with the radar upgrades currently being developed by Boeing for the United States Air Force AWACS fleet.

Mr. Sainsbury: When the time comes to upgrade the radar in the United Kingdom's AWACS we shall look very closely at the benefits of participating in any United States air force programme.

Loan Service Personnel

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on which Departments' Votes the salaries and operating costs of United Kingdom loan service personnel serving in overseas countries are borne.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The salaries and other costs of loan service personnel, which are borne initially on Defence Votes, are charged to the foreign Governments concerned or to the FCO and are recovered to Defence Votes as appropriations-in-aid.

Aerazur Parachutes

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if the Aerazur/GQ 8m low-level parachute is in service with British forces; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: No such parachute is in service with British forces. However, initial trials to assess possible contenders to satisfy a requirement to replace the existing in-service mass drop parachute have taken place. No final decision on a future development and production contract has yet been taken.

Nirex

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what advice on the disposal of defence radioactive wastes is being provided to his Department by United Kingdom Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive Ltd.

Mr. Sainsbury: The Ministry of Defence liaises with UK Nirex Ltd. on a regular basis on the disposal of defence radioactive wastes; the advice received is similar to that given to other nuclear operators.

British Geological Survey

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the contracts currently held by his Department with the British Geological Survey; and what is the purpose of each.

Mr. Sainsbury: Three contracts were placed with the British Geological Survey in 1986 but these were all completed in 1987. No further contracts have been placed. It is not the Department's practice to release details of individual contracts for reasons of commercial confidentiality.

United States Aircraft

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received from the United States authorities concerning the possibility of basing United States air force F-15E aircraft in Britain; and what is the Government's policy on such a deployment.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I have nothing to add to the reply I gave to the hon. Member on 3 December 1987 at column 709.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has as to what contracts have been awarded to British Aerospace to service United States air force F-15 aircraft; and what arrangements have been made in support of such contracts.

Mr. Sainsbury: The servicing of United States air force F-15 aircraft, based in the Federal Republic of Germany, is a commercial matter for British Aerospace and the United States air force.

Joint Medical Support Plan

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the role of the joint medical support plan in United Kingdom home defence.

Mr. Freeman: The joint medical support plan for the United Kingdom base covers the management and care of battle casualties arising from general war operations within the United Kingdom and NATO areas.

Services Medical Planning Committee

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the functions of the joint services medical planning committee.

Mr. Freeman: The function of the joint services medical planning committee is to co-ordinate joint operational medical policy to meet the requirements of operational planning conducted on behalf of the United Kingdom commanders in chief, and advise the United Kingdom commanders in chief, as appropriate, on medical matters arising from joint operational plans.

Artillery

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the number of nuclear-assigned units of 155mm artillery is to be increased to compensate for the withdrawal of 8in howitzers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: In accordance with long-standing plans, the number of 155mm systems deployed in BAOR will be increased for the purpose of replacing 105mm Abbot guns. There are, however, no plans to increase the number of 155mm nuclear certified systems to compensate for the withdrawal from the 8in nuclear artillery role.

Weapons Storage and Security

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if there are any plans to purchase the weapons storage and security systems from the United States of America for use on RAF airfields.

Mr. Sainsbury: Various options are being examined to improve the storage of our air-delivered nuclear weapons but no firm decisions have yet been taken. There are, consequently, no plans at present to purchase the United States weapons survivability and security system for use by the Royal Air Force.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has been given by the United States authorities concerning the year in which the United States Air Force is expected to seek Congressional approval for the commencement of construction of weapons storage and security system vaults at *(a)* RAF Bentwaters, *(b)* RAF Upper Heyford, *(c)* RAF Lakenheath, *(d)* RAF Greenham Common and *(e)* RAF Molesworth.

Mr. Ian Stewart: It is understood that the United States Administration seeks Congressional approval each year for the funding of the construction programme for weapon survivability and security systems for the following fiscal year. No decision has yet been made on the year in which approval would be sought for sites in United Kingdom.

Submarine Reactors

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if any options for disposal of decommissioned nuclear submarine reactors on civil-owned land have been considered.

Mr. Sainsbury: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Woolwich (Mr. Cartwright) on 13 April at column *137*.

United States Forces (Mildenhall)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans exist to move the headquarters of the United States third air force from Mildenhall; and what is the location of its new base.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) on 12 April at column *35*.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what plans exist to move the United States naval air facility from Mildenhall to Greenham Common;

(2) what plans exist to move the United States air force airborne command and control EC-135 aircraft from Mildenhall to Greenham Common.

Mr. Ian Stewart: None.

NATO Force Goals

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if the forces specified in NATO force goals are necessarily to be assigned to NATO command in time of crisis or war; if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: No.

United States' HI-CAMP Programme

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assistance has been provided by the United Kingdom to the United States Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency's HI-CAMP programme; and whether the United States of America is providing the United Kingdom with any technical or scientific results from this programme.

Mr. Sainsbury: Under long-standing international arrangements the MOD has collaborated in the United States defence advanced research projects agency's HI-CAMP programme by participation in joint trials and in the analysis of the data resulting. There has been a full exchange of scientific results between the United States and the United Kingdom.

Polaris

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Polaris missile test launches have been conducted in each year since 1979.

Mr. Sainsbury: There have been a total of 31 test launches of United Kingdom Polaris missiles since 1979. These took place as follows:

Year	*Number of missiles fired*
1979	5
1980	5
1982	4
1983	6
1985	3
1986	4
1987	4

Defence Exports Sales Organisation

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list those countries in receipt of official development assistance from the United Kingdom which were visited by representatives of the Defence Exports Sales Organisation in any year since 1979.

Mr. Sainsbury: I have been asked to reply.

Representatives of Defence Export Services Organisation travel very extensively and there must be few places in the free world which they have not visited at some time. Because of the confidentiality of many of the matters involved it is not the practice to list individual countries which have been visited.

Non-nuclear R and D Establishments

Mr. John Garrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to receive the report of the study groups inquiring into the feasibility of agency management in the non-nuclear research and development establishments of the Ministry of Defence.

Mr. Sainsbury: I expect to receive the report of the study group during the summer.

Naval Documents (Firth of Forth)

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the discovery of naval documents floating in the Firth of Forth.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The document in question, classified restricted, listed work which had been specified during the recent routine refit of HMS Hermione in Rosyth royal dockyard. The circumstances of the loss and subsequent discovery are being investigated.

Greenham Common

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many times since 1979 he has consented to building on common land at Greenham Common under the Law of Property Act 1925.

Mr. Freeman: Developments at RAF Greenham Common have been subject to the planning procedures applicable to Crown land; no consents have been sought under the Law of Property Act 1925.

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many orders of compulsory purchase have been made concerning common land at Greenham Common; and how many negotiated purchases have been agreed, in the past two years.

Mr. Freeman: No compulsory purchase orders have been made by the Ministry of Defence for land at Greenham Common; parts of Greenham and Crookham Commons were requisitioned under emergency powers in the last war and the freeholds were later acquired by agreement.

No land has been purchased at RAF Greenham Common in the past two years.

Mr. Michael McNair Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with the officer commanding the 3rd United States air force about the likely future use of RAF Greenham Common once the INF treaty has been ratified and the first cruise missiles have been taken back to the United States of America.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The withdrawal of ground-launched cruise missiles from RAF Greenham Common will not be complete until towards the end of the three-year reduction period which commenced on the entry into force of the INF treaty. No detailed discussions have yet taken place on the future use of the base after the missiles are withdrawn and firm decisions are not expected for some time.

Bullying

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on progress in implementing the measures to combat bullying in the Army, outlined to the House in the Army debate on 26 January, *Official Report*, columns 256-58.

Mr. Freeman: The further detailed examination mentioned in the statement in the Army debate, which in many cases has been concerned with quantifying the manpower requirement for the measures outlined, has been continuing; the Army Board of the Defence Council has strongly endorsed the outcome and the way ahead. Taking them in the order announced in the House, the present position on the various measures is as follows:

At the recruiting and entry stage, medical screening will be improved, by increasing the medical cover at five particular depots where such support is currently provided on a part time basis. In addition, the briefing of civilian medical practitioners will be improved, to give them a fuller appreciation of service medical requirements and the rigours of military training. As part of this process, the Army will implement by March next year a sytem under which all civilian doctors engaged in recruiting attend an annual training day.

The review of the current procedures for selecting and training instructors for recruit training establishments continues. One improvement already agreed, and now being implemented, is the introduction of a new man-management pack, to be included in the training of all instructors. Additionally, a specialised training and management course will be mandatory for either the second in command or the training officer of each training unit.

In order to allow officers and NCOs to devote more time to their primary training and supervisory roles, just over 100 extra posts are to be re-established in the Army's training organisation in United Kingdom, to undertake and alleviate the pressures of unit administration. The additional posts will provide for 22 extra company seconds in commands, 14 additional company quarter-master sergeants, and 66 more corporals. All these posts will have been re-established, and filled, by the end of March next year.

As a means of improving welfare arrangements for single personnel in the Army, an additional 92 posts will be established for members of the Women's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS). Roughly one third of these posts will be within the United Kingdom Army training organisation where the build-up will start later this summer. Other posts will be added, as recruitment allows, in major units and barracks complexes in Cyprus, the Falkland Islands, and throughout north-west Europe. An additional WRVS personnel management post will be created at the beginning of July, to co-ordinate the recruitment, training and administration of these extra supporting staff.

The content and extent of man-management training on all Army officers' warrant officers', and non-commissioned officers' courses is being re-examined. Special attention is being devoted to young officers' courses, and to the guidance on man management given to commanding officers.

All improper initiation ceremonies have been formally banned, and instructions and guidance issued throughout the Army relating to such practices, to the handling of alcohol abuse which has sometimes led to such incidents, and to the importance of "out of hours" supervision of soldiers. In addition, the chain of command throughout the Army has been formally reminded of the need for all cases of alleged bullying or other unacceptable behaviour to be reported without delay, thoroughly investigated and appropriate action taken where substantiated.

The costs of these measures are estimated at £500,000 for the current financial year, rising to £2 million a year thereafter as the additional staff are recruited.

House Sales (Boscombe Down)

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he will offer for sale to sitting tenants houses in Cadnam crescent, Beaulieu road and Lyndhurst road at Boscombe Down in Wiltshire; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: Sitting tenants living in Cadnam crescent, Beaulieu road and Lyndhurst road, whose houses have already been declared surplus to Defence requirements, will receive letters by the end of July asking them if they wish to purchase their houses. Consideration is currently being given to whether any additional houses in Cadnam crescent can be declared surplus and a decision on those will be made in due course.

Property Services Agency (Restructuring)

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the implications for the management of the Salisbury Plain training area and the management of the housing stock occupied by military and civilian personnel in south Wiltshire, following the announcement of the restructuring of the Property Services Agency by the Secretary of State for the Environment.

Mr. Freeman: I do not foresee any changes in the policy for management of the Salisbury Plain training area or the housing stock occupied by military and civilian personnel in south Wiltshire as a result of the restructuring of the Property Services Agency. South Wiltshire will continue to be managed by the defence land agent at Durrington who will, from 1 October 1988, report directly to the Ministry of Defence rather than to the Property Services Agency. Defence estate management policy has always been the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence and will remain so in future.

Civil Servants (Religious Affiliations)

Mr. McCusker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what monitoring procedures he has implemented to examine the religious affiliation of civil servants employed by his Department in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Sainsbury: In common with other home Civil Service Departments with personnel located in Northern Ireland the Ministry is collecting data by means of a voluntary survey which will be regularly updated.

Royal Irish Rangers

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans there are to deploy the Royal Irish Rangers Regiment in Northern Ireland within the period between 1 July 1988 and 30 June 1989.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The possibility of deploying Irish named regiments to Northern Ireland is kept under consideration.

Irish Regiments

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many soldiers from *(a)* Great Britain, *(b)* the Republic of Ireland and *(c)* Northern Ireland now serve in each of the Irish regiments of the Regular Army.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The number of soldiers currently serving in Irish Regiments in the Regular Army is listed by place of birth:

	Great Britain	*Republic of Ireland*	*Northern Ireland*	*Others*
5th Royal Enniskillen Dragoon Guards	413	6	101	2
Queen's Royal Irish Hussars	346	24	154	4
Irish Guards	486	51	235	9
Royal Irish Rangers	492	82	978	18

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many recruits from *(a)* Great Britain, *(b)* Northern Ireland and *(c)* the Republic of Ireland joined each of the Irish regiments in the Regular Army during each of the past five years.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The information is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Forged CIA Documents

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Brent East, 28 March, *Official Report*, column *362*, whether forged CIA identity documents have been prepared by members of the Army information services in Northern Ireland at any time from 1971 to the current date.

Mr. Freeman: It is not our practice to comment on operational matters.

Departmental Contracts

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to encourage British companies to tender for, and to obtain, contracts for the supply of vehicles and field communications systems to his Department.

Mr. Sainsbury: Our general policy is for contracts in these particular fields—along with most others—to be gained competitively. To help provide the fullest measure of encouragement for Companies to compete arrangements have been established to provide for the regular publication of all tender opportunities over £500,000 in the MOD *Contracts Bulletin*.

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to restrict tendering for contracts to supply his Department to companies on an approved list; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: The Ministry seeks to offer the widest practicable opportunity to companies to bid for MOD requirements where this can lead to better value for

money. Accordingly invitations to tender are not restricted to companies on an approved list. However, the Ministry would normally place headquarter contracts only with companies on its defence contractors list.

M.L. Vehicles

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he will place orders for the supply of M.L. vehicles for his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: I will write to the hon. Member.

Ocean Venture 88 Exercise

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether Her Majesty's forces participated in the Ocean Venture 88 exercise held earlier in the current year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: No British forces participated in Exercise Ocean Venture 88.

Nuclear Weapons Accident Training

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the nuclear weapons accident training that currently takes place at Catterick will be moved when the Royal Air Force fire service is transferred from Catterick to Manston; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: It has been the policy of successive Governments not to discuss the locations or roles of particular units which may be involved in responding to, or training for, an accident involving nuclear weapons.

SDI (Contracts)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the contracts for research and development that have been awarded to universities and other research institutions in the United Kingdom as part of the strategic defence initiative programme, together with the purpose and cost of each contract.

Mr. Sainsbury: No. It is for those universities or other research institutions who hold SDI research contracts to decide whether to divulge such information publicly.

Harriers (Crash)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will make a statement on the circumstances in which a United States Navy pilot was killed flying a Royal Air Force Harrier on 2 November 1987;

(2) if he will make a statement on the estimated frequency of pilots from other nations flying the aircraft of the British armed forces, the level of authority required for pilots of other nations to fly British armed forces aircraft and whether that authority was given in the case of the accident on 2 November 1987 involving a Royal Air Force Harrier piloted by United States Navy pilot.

Mr. Freeman: On 2 November 1987, two Royal Air Force Harrier aircraft from No. 3 squadron, RAF Gutersloh collided over the Otterburn training range while undertaking bombing practice during Exercise Mallet Blow. The pilots, Flight Lieutenant D. R. Sunderland and Lieutenant (United States Navy) J. R. Carver, were both killed. The accident has been the subject of an RAF board of inquiry. A summary of its findings will be published in due course and a copy placed in the Library of the House in the usual way.

Lieutenant Carver had been flying with the RAF as an exchange pilot, in accordance with the usual regulations governing such arrangements. Aircrew exchanges between the services and those of other countries take place on a regular basis. In addition, non-UK personnel occasionally undertake flying training with the services as part of sponsored training schemes, or familiarisation flights for commercial or other reasons. All aircrew are subject to the same rigorous procedures as United Kingdom personnel. It would not be possible, without undue cost and effort, to quantify precisely the frequency of flights undertaken in service aircraft by non-United Kingdom personnel, since this varies over time. All such flights are, however, authorised by the appropriate authority.

Vehicle Checks

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will call for a report from the chief constable of Wiltshire concerning the reports received of Army personnel stopping vehicles on 11 May at 11.45 pm on the A345 at Figheldean.

Mr. Freeman: No. These allegations have not been substantiated by the civil police.

Search and Rescue Stations

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secrertary of State for Defence what search and rescue stations presently exist; what facilities are present on these stations; what equipment is used; what planes and helicopters are used; what are their numbers; how many sorties were flown in the last five years, by year; how many rescues took place; and what new facilities have been provided in the past year.

Mr. Freeman *[holding answer 26 May 1988]:* Military search and rescue helicopters are currently based as follows:

	Helicopters
RAF Lossiemouth	2 Sea Kings
RAF Leuchars	2 Wessex
RAF Boulmer	2 Sea Kings
RAF Leconfield	2 Wessex
RAF Coltishall	2 Sea Kings
RAF Manston	2 Wessex
RNAS Portland	2 Sea Kings
RNAS Culdrose	2 Sea Kings
RAF Chivenor	2 Wessex
RAF Brawdy	2 Sea Kings
RAF Valley	2 Wessex
HMS Gannet at Prestwick	1 Sea King

The helicopters at all these stations are fitted with standard rescue helicopter equipment to meet national and international standards and are supported by appropriate ground facilities. With regard to the ground facilities provided in the past year, I refer the hon. Member to my reply on 13 May to the hon. Member for Angus, East (Mr. Welsh) at column *262* in respect of RAF Leuchars.

In addition, one RAF Nimrod operates from RAF Kinloss or RAF St. Mawgan as appropriate in the long-range search and rescue role. It is fitted with droppable rescue equipment.

Suitably equipped RAF mountain rescue teams are based at RAF Leuchars, RAF Kinloss, RAF Valley, RAF St. Athan, RAF Stafford and RAF Linton-on-Ouse. Within the past year a new headquarters has been built for the team at RAF Stafford; a new headquarters is currently under construction at RAF Leeming for the team at RAF Linton-on-Ouse.

With regard to sorties flown and rescues achieved, I refer the hon. Member to the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1988", Vol. 2, table 6.2.

Helicopter Orders

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what orders he has placed for new helicopters since 1 January; and what new orders he intends to place between now and the end of the year.

Mr. Sainsbury *[holding answer 27 May 1988]:* A development contract for a light battlefield version of the Lynx helicopter was let in March and, subject to satisfactory resolution of contractual issues, an order for 16 of the type is expected to be placed shortly. Delivery is planned to start at the end of 1990.

Low-frequency Transmissions (Rugby)

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the health risks associated with electromagnetic radiation in the context of very low frequency transmissions in the Rugby area; what is regarded as the minimum safe distance for persons living or working in the vicinity of such a transmitter; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman *[holding answer 27 May 1988]:* Such transmissions pose no health threat to people living and working in the area.

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what is the role of the very low frequency communications facility at Rugby; whether it is subject to United Kingdom control; and if he will make a statement;

(2) how many United States personnel are based at the very low frequency communications facility at Rugby; what are their ranks; and what are their functions.

Mr. Freeman *[holding answer 27 May 1988]:* The facility, which is an unmanned site, provides a communications relay station for United States forces stationed in Europe.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Aborted Foetuses (Tissue)

Mr. Amos: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will establish an inquiry into the implications for medical ethics of the operations performed on 3 March and 7 April at the midland centre for neurosurgery and neurology which involved the transplant of live tissues from aborted foetuses;

(2) if he will make it his policy to prevent the use of National Health Service facilities for the performing of operations involving the transplant of live tissue from aborted foetuses;

(3) what information he has as to whether the mothers of the aborted foetuses used as donors of live tissues in operations performed on 3 March or 7 April at the midland centre for neurosurgery and neurology were in any way related or connected with the recipients of the transplanted cells;

(4) what information he has to whether the mothers of the aborted foetuses used as donors of live tissues in operations performed on 3 March or 7 April at the midland centre for neurosurgery and neurology received any payment in connection with the procedures.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what special administrative procedures were adopted prior to the operations performed at the midland centre for Neurosurgery and Neurology on 3 March and 7 April which involved the transplanting of foetal cells to the brains of adult patients suffering from Parkinson's disease;

(2) if consent was obtained from *(a)* those patients receiving transplanted foetal cells, *(b)* the mothers of the aborted or stillborn foetuses from whom the transplanted cells were taken, *(c)* the local ethical committees and *(d)* his Department prior to the operations performed on 3 March and 7 April at the midland centre for Neurosurgery and Neurology which involved the transplanting of foetal cells to the brains of adult patients suffering from Parkinson's disease;

(3) if he will publish in the *Official Report* the guidelines issued by his Department on the use of transplant operations of live cells taken from aborted or stillborn foetuses;

(4) if the parents of the aborted or stillborn foetuses used as donors during operations performed at the midland centre for Neurosurgery and Neurology on 3 March and 7 April in the treatment of Parkinson's disease were told the precise use to which the foetal material would be put;

(5) how many of the foetuses from which live cells were taken for operations at the midland centre for Neurosurgery and Neurology on 3 March and 7 April in the treatment of Parkinson's disease were *(a)* aborted or *(b)* stillborn; and in the case of *(a)* what was the number of weeks of gestation;

(6) under which statutory grounds the foetuses involved as donors of living cells for transplant operations at the midland centre for Neurosurgery and Neurology on 3 March and 7 April were aborted.

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will make it his policy to incorporate into the forthcoming Bill on human embryo experimentation a clause protecting aborted foetuses from being used as donors of live tissue in transplant operations;

(2) whether his Department is aware of any evidence that the use of live cells from aborted babies in transplant operations is of long-term benefit to sufferers from Parkinson's disease; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he will make it his policy to introduce a moratorium on the use of aborted foetuses as donors of live cells in transplant operations until such time as the House can legislate on this matter;

(4) if he will list the names and occupations of the members of the local ethical committee which gave permission for the use of live cells from aborted foetuses to be used in transplant operations at the midland centre for Neurosurgery and Neurology on 3 March and 7 April; and

if he will publish in the *Official Report* the details of the application which they were asked to consider and the form in which such an application was made;

(5) if he will call for a report from the chairmen of the relevant regional and district health authorities as to the circumstances in which operations involving the transplant of live tissue from aborted babies were performed on 3 March and 7 April at the midland centre for Neurosurgery and Neurology.

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will review the status and responsibilities of hospital ethical committees; if he will monitor use of foetal material; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Bernard Braine: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what guidelines have been issued by his Department with regard to the ethical implications involved in the use of human foetal brain cells in the treatment of Parkinson's disease; what is the source of supply of such material; how that supply is organised; what the required age of gestation of the foetus involved; what is the method of abortion used; what pain is caused to the foetus in the operation; if an anaesthetic is used separately on the foetus; what steps are taken to obtain the mother's consent in each case; whether any payment is involved and to whom; what information he has as to whether there is any connection between the doctors involved in these abortions with those requesting the foetal material; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: The Department's current guidance is that any research involving a foetus or fetal material should be subject to approval by the local ethical committee, and that such committees should base their consideration on the code of practice set out in the report on the advisory group on the use of foetuses and fetal material for research (known as the Peel report, published in 1972). The code's provisions include that there should be no known objection on the part of the parent; that no payment should be made for the material; and that responsibility for deciding whether the material may be used for research should not rest with those conducting the research.

Local ethical committees, which are also the subject of separate guidance, are advisory bodies to safeguard patients' interest and to advise health authorities on the ethics of clinical research investigations. Information on ethical research committee membership is not held centrally.

In the two cases to which the questions refer, the fetal material used was obtained from a nursing home approved under the 1967 Abortion Act, under arrangements approved by the Secretary of State for that nursing home to supply fetal material to the Birmingham university medical centre for a number of research projects. It is a condition of the Secretary of State's approval that the provisions of the code of practice recommended by the advisory group on the use of foetuses and fetal material for research are adhered to. All women whose foetuses may be used to provide material which may be passed to the medical centre are invited to sign a declaration to the effect that they have no special wishes concerning the disposal of material arising from their pregnancy. Material provided to the medical centre is provided anonymously. Information about patients and the circumstances of their abortions cannot be released for reasons of confidentiality, but I am assured that the women concerned received no payment in connection with the procedures, nor were they known to be in any way related to or connected with the recipients of the transplanted cells.

I understand from inquiries made of the appropriate health authorities that the transplant operations were conducted with the consent of the patients who received the transplants and the consent of the local ethical committee, which I understand considered the issues involved with great care and over a long period of time.

A third operation involving the transplantation of fetal brain tissue to a patient suffering from Parkinson's disease has now been performed at the midland centre for neurosurgery and neurology. This also was done in accordance with the Peel code of practice and existing clinical guidance.

In view of the continued advance of medical techniques since the Peel report was published, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services, together with my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales, has decided to set up a committee with the following terms of reference:

> "In the light of recent developments in the field of human tissue transplantation, and other relevant medical research, to review the Report of the Advisory Group on the Use of Fetuses and Fetal Material for Research (the "Peel Report"), and in particular to consider whether any modifications or additions should be made to the Recommended Code of Practice in that Report."

The committee will be chaired by the Rev. Dr. J. Polkinghorne FRS, Dean of Trinity hall, Cambridge and its membership will comprise Sir Raymond Hoffenberg, president of the Royal College of Physicians of London, Professor Ian Kennedy, Professor of medical law and ethics, Kings College, London and Dr. Sally McIntyre, director MRC sociology unit, University of Glasgow.

Influenza

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many cases of flu' were reported in each year since 1982.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that this information is not held centrally.

Since influenza is not a notifiable disease no national statistics are collected however the communicable disease surveillance centre does monitor the types of virus in circulation. During the winter of 1987-88 this sample monitoring indicated that the level of influenza infection in England and Wales was relatively low. The last epidemic was in 1975-76.

Mental Health

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the annual total of cases in which section 136 of the Mental Health Act was used for the last 10 years.

Mrs. Currie: The figures in the table show the number of admissions to NHS mental illness and mental handicap hospitals and units in England under the provisions of section 136 of the Mental Health Act for each year since 1977.

Admissions under section 136, Mental Health Act

Year	Number
1977	1,497
1978	1,608
1979	1,561
1980	1,883
1981	1,907
1982	1,885
1983	1,853
1984	1,959
1985	1,832
1986	1,523

Elderly People

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what proportion of national income Her Majesty's Government spend on programmes for elderly people.

Mr. Moore: About 8·2 per cent. of national income in the United Kingdom is spent by the Government on the social security benefit expenditure and the health and personal social services programmes for elderly people.

Disabled People (Benefits)

Mr. Patrick Thompson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how much is being spent on benefits for disabled people at the current time; and how much was being spent in 1979.

Mr. Scott: The amount, in cash terms, spent on benefits for people who are long-term sick or disabled was as follows:

	Great Britain £ million
1978-79	1,780
1987-88	6,750

Black Report

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what action his Department is currently taking arising from the publication of the Black report, "Inequalities in Health."

Mrs. Currie: The Black report was published in 1980. Since then the Government have made significant increases in the resources available to the Health Service, and the overall health of the nation has continued to improve. Many of the underlying objectives behind the recommendations of the report were in line with the Government's polices set out in "Care in Action", so in many instances the same end has been pursued by different means.

The Government have taken a number of steps to promote good health and to ensure the equitable distribution of health care resources. Unhealthy lifestyles and unhealthy diets create major risks to health. One of the Government's main aims in setting up the Health Education Authority was to give greater emphasis to disease prevention and health promotion. We are determined that all social groups should have the information they need to make wise choices to protect their health. The first major campaign of the new authority, in conjunction with the Government, has been directed at coronary heart disease, which disproportionately affects men from lower socio-economic groups.

The Government have pursued a policy of allocating health authority resources more fairly across the country using the resource allocation working party's approach. Substantial progress has been made in bringing regions closer to their RAWP targets, and this year all regions are within 96 per cent. of target. The review of the RAWP formula has been looking, amongst other issues, at whether the formula should be revised to make it more sensitive to the impact of social deprivation or need for health care.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how much money was spent on preparing for and publicising the changes in the housing benefits system introduced on 11 April; and how much he estimates will be spent on preparing for and publicising the amendments for the housing benefits scheme announced on 27 April;

(2) how much money each local authority administering the housing benefits scheme, introduced on 11 April, has spent on preparing for and publicising the scheme; and how much he estimates each authority will spend on preparing for, and publicising the amendments to the scheme announced on 27 April.

Mr. Portillo: The Department centrally spent about £400,000 on publicising the changes to the housing benefit scheme introduced on 1 April, and made available to local authorities in total a grant of £25 million to support their costs in preparing for the reformed housing benefit scheme; information on actual costs incurred by individual authorities is not available centrally. The cost to authorities of implementing the changes to the scheme announced on 27 April cannot be estimated until the Department completes consultations with the local authority associations on the detailed procedures, and until figures are available for the number of claims expected.

Mr. Doran: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what are the numbers of housing benefit claimants as at June 1979 and June 1987 in each of the following constituencies *(a)* Amber Valley, *(b)* Mid Worcestershire, *(c)* West Lancashire, *(d)* Staffordshire Moorlands, *(e)* Hendon South, *(f)* Darlington and *(g)* Fylde.

Mr. Portillo: I regret that the information is not available.

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the latest details of the arrangements under which claimants will be able to apply for and receive their transitional payments of housing benefit; and what steps his Department is taking to make sure that all those who qualify will receive their transitional help.

Mr. Portillo: Leaflet RR4 "Housing Benefit—New Rules" which contains a claim form for transitional payments is available from local authorities, DHSS local offices and post offices. A separate leaflet outlining the scheme has been sent to the various organisations advising

claimants. Advertisements drawing attention to transitional payments and to the availability of the leaflet appeared in the national press during the week commencing 23 May.

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report* a revised version of the table showing gainers and losers from the structural change to housing benefit, *Official Report* 18 December 1987, columns 915-918, resulting from his increase in the capital cut-off limit announced on 27 April, and a similar table showing the cash position as a result of the transitional help announced on the same date, excluding the effect of local authority rate and rent increases.

Mr. Portillo: The tables published previously remain the best guide to the structural effect of the reforms. The increase in the capital limit to £8,000 is expected to bring back into the scheme about 100,000 households. The transitional payments reduce the size of cash losses but do not affect the overall structural figures for housing benefit.

Artificial Limbs

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list the companies that currently supply artificial limbs to the National Health Service;

(2) if his Department has costed a contract-based limb fitting service for the National Health Service.

Mr. Scott: These are matters for the Disablement Services Authority, to which the hon. Member should address his questions.

AIDS

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many babies have so far been born in England who were HIV positive at birth;

(2) how many babies have been born in England to mothers who are HIV positive.

Mr. Newton: The number of babies born to mothers who are HIV positive is not known, since pregnant women are not routinely tested for HIV antibodies. However, to the end of March the communicable disease surveillance centre had received reports of a total of 20 children who have antibodies to HIV and whose mothers are known to be infected or at high risk. The presence of antibody at birth is not necessarily an indication of infection, and it is probable that some of these babies will eventually be shown to be free of infection.

Solvent Abuse

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to the reply given to the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner) on 20 April, *Official Report*, column *463*, if he will give the nature and extent of the drug misuse services for solvent abuse.

Mrs. Currie: The Department has asked health authorities to give priority to the development of services for drug misusers and has provided extra resources to enable them to do so. These services provide counselling, advice and information and, where necessary, detoxification.

Information on the full extent to which local drug misuse services are able to help solvent misusers is not held centrally. Recent research, based on reports from local drug projects, shows, however, that for about half of those seeking help, solvent misuse was, in varying degrees, a problem.

Mental Institutions

Mr. Sumberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many former mental institutions have been disposed of by his Department as surplus assets; how many have been retained by his Department for other use; and of those sold off, what proportion of the income has been retained by the originating district health authorities.

Mrs. Currie: The information requested is not routinely collected and to collect it by means of a special exercise would involve disproportionate cost. I would however refer my hon. Friend to my reply to a question from the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) on 16 February at column *564*. That information was the result of a special exercise.

Our policy is that all proceeds should be retained by the health service for reinvestment in the service with a significant proportion being passed to the district health authority which initiated the sale. Proceeds from the sale of former mental institutions are required to be used for the development of services for the mentally ill or mentally handicapped.

State Pension

Mr. Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the current value in real terms of the basic state pension in 1979 terms.

Mr. Scott: The basic pension of £19·50 payable from November 1978 would be worth £40·19 at April 1988 prices. The current basic pension rate is £41·15, a real terms increase of 2·4 per cent.

Supplementary Benefit (Gallup Survey)

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the results of the Gallup survey for the National Audit Office of supplementary benefit claimants' satisfaction with the service provided by his Department's local offices; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: We have found the results of the Gallup Survey to be a valuable supplement to the Department's own customer research. Some of the findings are encouraging; for instance the local office service provided for supplementary benefit (now income support) pensioners is generally well received. But there are criticisms too, for example, of a lack of privacy for local office callers, which officials will be seeking to put right. It is our intention to commission independent customer research of this type on a regular basis from 1989-90 onwards.

Pensioners

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he last met representatives of the pensioners' organisations; and what issues were discussed.

Mr. Scott: I met representatives of Pensioners' Voice on 9 May, when we discussed a wide range of matters affecting the elderly.

Surplus Property (Sale)

Mr. Cran: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what criteria will be used to determine the proportion of receipts from the sale of surplus property by health authorities which will be allocated to the district health authority initiating the sale.

Mrs. Currie: No criteria are issued, but the policy is that district health authorities should benefit from the disposals they initiate subject to regional health authorities' retaining the flexibility to exercise their strategic role.

Disability Premium

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether offices of his Department will accept backdated certificates where a claimant of disability premium in receipt of income support who is under 60 years of age and who has been incapable of work for 28 weeks, but who has not previously submitted medical certificates for this period; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: The award of the disability premium is, in the first instance, a matter for the office of the chief adjudication officer and local adjudication officers. I refer the hon. Member to the guidance issued by that office to local adjudication officers, a copy of which is held in the Library. The relevant guidance is at paragraphs 27092 and 11459 et seq.

Long-term Institutional Care

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people were discharged from long-term institutional care for each year since 1979; what proportion they constituted; and how many were subsequently detained by the police within 12 months of the date of discharge.

Mrs. Currie: I am sorry I cannot give the hon. Member all the information he seeks, as no record is kept centrally on individual patients or the outcome of patients after discharge.

The table shows the numbers of discharges, after a stay of five years or more, into the community from National Health Service mental illness and mental handicap hospitals and units in England. The table also shows these discharges as a percentage of all discharges inclusive of transfers and irrespective of duration of stay. Comparable figures for 1979 are not readily available.

Discharges from mental illness and mental handicap hospitals and units in England, after a duration of stay of five years or more.

Year	Mental Illness		Mental handicap	
	Number	Percentage of all discharges	Number	Percentage of all discharges
1980	804	0·5	657	3·5
1981	818	0·5	764	3·5
1982	733	0·4	764	3·0
1983	821	0·5	967	3·1
1984	981	0·5	1,375	3·8
1985	987	0·5	1,522	3·9
1986	1,082	0·6	1,951	4·7

Note: Excludes transfers to other NHS hospitals and Special hospitals.

Child and Family Allowances

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will update the information in his reply about child and family allowance of 15 January, *Official Report*, columns *441-444*, expressed in April prices to include the years 1988-89.

Mr. Scott: The information is as follows:

Value of child support[1] for each child in standard rate tax-paying families expressed at April 1988[2] prices (£)

Date[3]	Children under age 11			Children aged 11-15			Children aged 16 and over		
	1st child	2nd child	3rd[4] child	1st child	2nd child	3rd[4] child	1st child	2nd child	3rd[4] child
April 1958	7·04	9·27	9·96	8·75	11·07	11·59	10·56	12·79	13·39
April 1959	6·44	8·76	9·36	7·99	10·39	11·00	9·62	11·94	12·63
April 1960	6·40	8·70	9·38	7·93	10·32	10·92	9·55	11·86	12·54
April 1961	6·23	8·47	9·13	7·72	10·05	10·63	9·30	11·54	12·21
April 1962	5·89	8·01	8·64	7·31	9·51	10·06	8·80	10·92	11·55
April 1963	6·62	8·70	9·31	8·01	10·24	10·70	9·47	11·62	12·16
April 1964	6·49	8·53	9·13	7·85	10·04	10·49	9·28	11·39	11·92
April 1965	6·51	8·51	8·94	7·93	9·86	10·37	9·36	11·29	11·79
April 1966	6·28	8·21	8·63	7·66	9·52	10·01	9·04	10·90	11·39
April 1967	6·10	7·97	8·37	7·44	9·25	9·71	8·78	10·59	11·05
April 1968	5·84	7·31	7·76	7·12	8·60	8·98	8·40	9·81	10·26
April 1969	5·53	7·23	7·66	6·75	8·45	8·87	7·96	9·66	10·03
April 1970	5·24	6·85	7·25	6·39	8·00	8·40	7·54	9·15	9·50
April 1971	6·10	7·73	8·10	7·05	8·73	9·10	8·05	9·68	10·05
April 1972	5·74	7·27	7·62	6·63	8·21	8·56	7·57	9·10	9·45
April 1973	5·21	6·52	6·84	6·16	7·43	7·75	6·93	8·20	8·52
April 1974	5·98	7·08	7·36	6·88	7·91	8·22	7·63	8·65	8·97
April 1975	5·24	7·24	7·24	5·98	7·99	7·99	6·63	8·66	8·66
April 1976	5·49	7·21	7·21	6·12	7·83	7·83	6·69	8·38	8·38
April 1977	5·28	6·04	6·04	5·81	6·57	6·57	6·27	7·01	7·01
April 1978	6·28	6·28	6·28	6·78	6·78	6·78	7·19	7·19	7·19
April 1979	7·79	7·79	7·79	7·79	7·79	7·79	7·79	7·79	7·79
November 1980	7·23	7·23	7·23	7·23	7·23	7·23	7·23	7·23	7·23
November 1981	7·14	7·14	7·14	7·14	7·14	7·14	7·14	7·14	7·14
November 1982	7·49	7·49	7·49	7·49	7·49	7·49	7·49	7·49	7·49
November 1983	7·94	7·94	7·94	7·94	7·94	7·94	7·94	7·94	7·94
November 1984	7·97	7·97	7·97	7·97	7·97	7·97	7·97	7·97	7·97
November 1985	7·72	7·72	7·72	7·72	7·72	7·72	7·72	7·72	7·72
July 1986	7·70	7·70	7·70	7·70	7·70	7·70	7·70	7·70	7·70

Date[3]	Children under age 11			Children aged 11-15			Children aged 16 and over		
	1st child	2nd child	3rd[4] child	1st child	2nd child	3rd[4] child	1st child	2nd child	3rd[4] child
April 1987	7·54	7·54	7·54	7·54	7·54	7·54	7·54	7·54	7·54
April 1988	7·25	7·25	7·25	7·25	7·25	7·25	7·25	7·25	7·25

[1] The combined value of child tax-allowances after Clawback and Family Allowance/Child Benefit.
[2] Based on the movement in the General Index of Retail Prices at April 1988.
[3] Child Tax Allowance ceased after the 1978-79 Tax Year end and benefit up-rating dates are shown from 1979 onwards.
[4] And subsequent children.

Cyclotron Trust

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a grant to the cyclotron trust.

Mr. Newton: We are making a grant of £6 million to the cyclotron trust, as a contribution towards the £10·4 million capital cost of the cyclotron which the trust plans to provide in a new facility at St. Thomas' hospital. The cyclotron is used for treating cancers including some which are not normally responsive to conventional radiotherapy and can also enable some patients to avoid disfiguring surgery; 60 per cent. of the cyclotron's capacity will be reserved for NHS patients, and we shall meet up to 60 per cent. of the direct running costs in so far as they are not met from other sources. The project is an important instance of partnership between the public and voluntary sectors.

Mentally Senile Patients

Mr. Cran: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps he is taking to ensure health authorities have adequate nursing provision to allow for mentally senile patients to be cared for separately from those recovering from physical illnesses.

Mrs. Currie: Decisions on the numbers and deployment of nursing staff are matters for local National Health Service management. Health authorities are aware of the need to provide separate services for elderly physically frail and elderly mentally ill people so that mixing of mentally alert with confused patients on the same ward is avoided as far as possible.

Registered Homes Act 1984

Mr. Sims: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether residents of homes not required to be registered under the Registered Homes Act 1984 will be entitled to income support.

Mr. Portillo: There are certain circumstances in which residents of homes not required to be registered under the Registered Homes Act 1984 will be entitled to income support to the appropriate residential care or nursing home limit. These are set out in regulation 19(3), of the Income Support (General) Regulations 1987, as amended by the Income Support (General) Amendment Regulations 1988, which define "nursing home" and "residential care homes". All residents of homes mentioned specifically in this regulation will be entitled to income support, subject to the normal qualifying criteria.

Mr. Sims: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether residents of homes with less than four beds not required to be registered under the Registered Homes Act 1984 will receive income support.

Mr. Portillo: Subject to the normal qualifying criteria people in homes with fewer than four beds not required to be registered under the Registered Homes Act 1984 will be entitled to income support up to the appropriate residential care home limit if the conditions set out in regulation 19(3) of the Income Support (General) Regulations 1987 are met. Where the conditions are not met residents will be entitled to income support up to the ordinary board and lodging limits.

Child Abuse (Cleveland)

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to receive the report of Mrs. Justice Butler-Sloss's inquiry into child abuse in Cleveland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: The report was received yesterday. Arrangements are in hand for publication as soon as is practicable, which is likely to be in about a month's time.

Electro-convulsive Therapy

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the total number of cases in which electro-convulsive therapy has been administered in each year since the treatment became available; what proportion of patients voluntarily submitted to electro-convulsive therapy treatment; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: I am sorry I cannot give the hon. Member the information he seeks in the form requested, as no record is kept centrally of either the number of individual patients to whom electro-convulsive therapy was administered, or the circumstances of its administration.

The data held centrally are in the table which shows the number of courses of treatment and the total number of treatments by electro-convulsive therapy administered each year in special hospitals and National Health Service mental illness hospitals and units since statistics were collected in 1979. A patient may undergo more than one course of treatment during the year.

Electro-convulsive therapy treatments and courses: England 1979-80

Year	Treatments	Courses
1979	159,193	26,400
1980	160,277	25,441
1981	147,419	24,407
1982	139,307	22,578
1983	128,526	21,350
1984	125,357	19,850
1985	137,940	20,948
1986	129,757	19,308

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the preparation procedure for the administration of electro-convulsive therapy to an involuntary patient.

Mrs. Currie: The clinical management of a detained patient prior to the administration of electro-convulsive therapy (ECT), as with any other patient, is a matter for the professional judgment of the medical and other staff directly involved in the patient's care.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list in the *Official Report* those institutions which employ electro-convulsive therapy treatment; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The table lists all the mental illness hospitals and units, in England, whose medical staff administered electro-convulsive therapy during 1986, the latest year for which figures are available, irrespective of whether the actual treatment was carried out at this site or another.

ECT—Mental illness hospitals and units in England 1986

Northern Regional Health Authority
- Winterton
- St. George's Morpeth
- St. Nicholas
- Cherry Knowle
- Garlands
- St. Mary's
- St. Luke's, Middlesbrough
- North Tees
- South Shields General
- Hartlepool General
- Durham County
- Newcastle General
- West Cumberland
- Brighton Clinic
- Royal Victoria Infirmary
- Darlington Memorial
- Furness General

Yorkshire Regional Health Authority
- High Royds
- Stanley Royd
- Clifton, Moorlands and Southfields
- De La Pole
- Scalebor Park
- Broadgate
- Naburn
- St. James', Leeds
- Lynfield Mount
- St. Luke's, Huddersfield
- Airedale General
- Pontefract General
- Bootham Park
- Halifax General
- St. Mary's, Scarborough
- Leeds General Infirmary
- Grimsby District General
- Scunthorpe General
- Norman House Day Units

Trent Regional Health Authority
- University, Nottingham
- The Pastures
- Middlewood
- St. John's, Lincoln
- Carlton Hayes
- Saxondale
- The Towers
- Kingsway
- Rauceby
- Mapperley
- Northern General Psychiatric Unit
- Loversall
- Rotherham District general
- Barnsley District general
- Doncaster Royal Infirmary
- Walton
- Kings Mill
- Whitleywood Clinic
- Leicester General
- St. Francis
- Bassetlaw District General
- Chesterfield and North Derby Royal Mental Health Unit

East Anglian Regional Health Authority
- Fulbourne
- St. Andrews
- St. Audry's
- Hellesdon
- St. Clements, Ipswich
- St. Nicholas
- New West Suffolk General
- West Norwich (Yare clinic)
- Heath Road Wing, Ipswich
- Fermoy Unit, Queen Elizabeth
- Peterborough District
- Hinchingbrooke

North West Thames Regional Health Authority
- Shenley
- St. Bernards Wing, Ealing
- Horton
- Napsbury
- Fairfield, Hitchen
- Hillend
- Northwick Park
- Barnet General
- Ashford
- Queen Elizabeth II
- West Middlesex
- Lister
- Bedford General
- Luton and Dunstable (Faringdon Wing)
- Shrodells Wing (Watford General)
- St. Mary's (Patterson Wing)
- Hillingdon
- Charing Cross (Fulham)
- St. Mary Abbotts
- Central Middlesex
- Wembley
- Gordon Hospital
- St. Charles Hospital

North East Thames Regional Health Authority
- Claybury
- Friern and Halliwick
- Warley
- Goodmayes
- Severalls
- Runwell
- London (St. Clements)
- Basildon
- Princess Alexandra
- German
- Chase Farm
- Whittington
- St. Luke's, Woodside
- Hackney
- Royal Free
- St. Anns General
- St. Pancras and University College
- London (Whitechapel)
- The Middlesex
- Whipps Cross
- St. Bartholomews

South East Thames Regional Health Authority
- Hither Green
- Bexley
- Cane Hill
- Tooting Bec
- Maidstone District
- St. Augustine's
- Hellingley
- Stone House
- Farnborough
- Guys
- All Saints Chatham
- Joyce Green
- Greenwich District

Lady Chicester
New Cross
St. Thomas
Dulwich (North Wing)
Burmarsh Ward (William Harvey)
Queen Charlotte's Eversfield

South West Thames Regional Health Authority
Springfield
Netherne and Fairdene
Brookwood
Long Grove
Graylingwell
Warlingham Park
St. Francis
Abraham Cowley (St. Peters)
Epsom District
Frimley Park
Atkinson Morleys
Kingston
Queen Mary's Roehampton
Crawley
Sutton (Chiltern Wing)
The Ridings (Southlands)

Wessex Regional Health Authority
Basingstoke District (Park Prewett)
Roundway
St. James: Portsmouth
Herrison
Knowle
The Old Manor
Whitecroft
Moorgreen
St. Ann's, Poole
Depatment of Psychiatrity (Royal S. Hants.)
Seymour Clinic
Royal United Bath

Oxford Regional Health Authority
St. Marys (Martin Roth Unit)
St. John's, Stone
St. Crispin
Fairmile
Littlemore
Warneford
Wexham Park
Tindal General
Wycombe District
Kettering and District
Horton General (The Elms)
Milton Keynes
Stoke Mandeville

South Western Regional Health Authority
Exe Vale
St. Lawrence's, Bodmin
Horton Road and Coney Hill
Tone Vale
Glenside
Mendip and Meare Manor
Moorhaven and the Gables
Barrow
North Devon District
Yeovil District
Bristol District
Royal Cornwall (City)
Lexham Lodge Day
Gloucester House Day
Langdon

West Midlands Regional Health Authority
St. Matthews
St. Edwards
All Saints
Highcroft
Central, Warwick
St. George's, Stafford
Royal Shrewsbury (Shelton)
Rubery Hill
Barnsley Hall
Hollymoor
Walsgrave
New Cross
Burton Road
Worcester Royal (Newtown Branch)
John Connolly
City General, Stoke
Midland Nerve
Kidderminster General
Department of Geriatric Medicine (Dudley Road)
George Elliot

Mersey Regional Health Authority
Winwick
Rainhill
West Cheshire
Parkside
Sefton General
Greaves Hall
Whiston
Walton, Liverpool
Leighton
Fazakerley
Royal Liverpool
Arrowe Park
Clatterbridge

North Western Regional Health Authority
Prestwich
Whittingham
Lancaster Moor and Ridge Lea
North Manchester General
Withington
Bolton General
Stepping Hill
Oldham and District General
Billinge
Burnley General
Bridgewater
Tameside General (Hyde ESMI)
Fairfield General
Victoria
Brich Hill
Queens Park
Ormskirk and District General
Leigh Infirmary
Rossendale General
Wesham Park
Royal Preston (Avondale Unit)
Ribbleton
Hope
York House
Gaskell House
Eaves Lane
Cheadle Royal

Special Health Authorities
Bethlem Royal and Maudsley
National Hospitals for Nervous Diseases

Special Hospitals
Rampton
Broadmoor

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any plans to take steps to increase the level of staff provision available to undertake electro-convulsive therapy treatment.

Mrs. Currie: The allocation of staff to the administration of electro-convulsive therapy (ECT) is a matter for the professional judgment of those responsible for the clinical management of the patient concerned.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any plans to change the procedures under which electro-convulsive therapy treatment is administered.

Mrs. Currie: The clinical procedure for the administration of electro-convulsive therapy (ECT) is a matter for the professional judgment of those staff with direct responsibility for patient care.

There are no plans at present to change the legal requirements governing the administration of ECT to patients detained under the Mental Health Act 1983. A code of practice for the guidance of professionals involved in the treatment of mental disorder is in preparation, as required by section 118 of the Act, and this will cover procedures for the administration of ECT.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the average time between a recommendation of electro-convulsive therapy treatment by an involuntary patient's consultant, the agreement of an independent consultant under the Mental Health Act 1983, and the beginning of treatment.

Mrs. Currie: This information is not collected centrally, although the Mental Health Act Commission does arrange for the independent "approved" doctor to provide a second opinion within two working days of receiving the request for that opinion from the detained patient's consultant.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services in how many cases the recommendation of electro-convulsive therapy treatment on an involuntary patient by that patient's consultant was overruled by the Mental Health Act Commission, in each of the last five years.

Mrs. Currie: This information is not readily available, and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. However, the second biennial report (1985-1987) of the Mental Health Act Commission (section 7) contains statistical information collected by the commission relating to "Consent to Treatment and Second Opinions" which the hon. Member may find of interest. A copy of this report is in the Library.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what guidelines his Department issues on the circumstances in which a person who expresses his wish not to receive electro-convulsive therapy treatment may have that wish overruled.

Mrs. Currie: Other than in cases of emergency and in the case of patients detained under the Mental Health Act 1983, ECT cannot be given to patients without their consent. The Act provides that treatment can be given without the patient's consent where a second medical opinion from an independent, approved doctor (obtained through the Mental Health Act Commission) is obtained to the effect that the treatment is necessary and should be given. Before providing this second opinion, the independent doctor must consult two other persons who have been professionally involved with the patient's treatment; one a nurse, and the other neither a nurse nor a doctor.

GP and Hospital Visits

Sir David Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people in 1987 *(a)* visited a general practitioner at least once, *(b)* had at least one consultation in a National Health Service hospital and *(c)* were admitted as an in-patient to a National Health Service hospital at least once.

Mrs. Currie: Figures are not available in the form requested. The 1986 general household survey has provided the following figures on the use of health services in Great Britain.

(1) 14 per cent. consulted a NHS general practitioner in the 14 days before interview.
(2) 13 per cent. attended an outpatient or casualty department in a three-month reference period.
(3) 9 per cent. underwent an inpatient stay in a 12-month reference period.

Health Care

Sir David Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the average expenditure per person in the United Kingdom in 1987 for total health care provision broken down into convenient age groups.

Mr. Newton: In 1986, the latest year for which information is available from the national accounts published by the Central Statistical Office, the average expenditure per person in the United Kingdom on health care (public and private) was £384. No breakdown of this total is available by age, but an analysis of gross expenditure on health and personal social services in England in 1985-86 is published in "The Government's Expenditure Plans 1988-89 to 1990-91" (Cm 288-II)—chart 14.4.

Sir David Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the average expenditure per person in the United Kingdom in 1987 for health care provision in the public sector, and private sectors respectively.

Mr. Newton: In 1986, the latest year for which information is available from the national accounts published by the Central Statistical Office, the average expenditure per person in the United Kingdom on health care was:

	£
Public sector[1]	361
Private sector	23

[1] Excludes expenditure on Local Authority personal social services.

It is estimated that in 1987-88 United Kingdom gross expenditure on the National Health Service was equivalent to £380 per person. Later figures for private sector expenditure are not yet available.

Tendering

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Waveney on 24 May, in respect of regional health authority competitive tendering, he will undertake a central initiative to make all solicitors', architects', quantity surveyors' and engineers' services subject to tender.

Mrs. Currie: Not at this time. I am satisfied with the pace at which health authorities are themselves opening up these services to competition.

South West Thames RHA (Land)

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on how much surplus land is owned by South West Thames regional health authority; how much has been disposed of during the last five years; and what disposal plans it has for the future.

Mrs. Currie: The South West Thames regional health authority held 130 acres of land on 21 March 1987, comprising sites exceeding one acre which had been declared surplus. Disposals during the last five years were as follows:

£ million

Year	*Total area (acres)*	*Total receipts*
1983-84	7	2·4
1984-85	38	10·5
1985-86	32	9·1
1986-87	98	30·2
1987-88	Not available	25·4

During the 1988-89 financial year the Regional Health Authority anticipates disposal of about 100 acres of land.

Disabled Persons

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to the reply to the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) of 19 May, *Official Report*, column 559, why no formal meetings have taken place since October 1987 with local authority associations on the implementation of the Disabled Persons (Services Representation and Consultation) Act 1986; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: Since October 1987 much work has been done on the Act which has not required formal meetings. We are now, however, in touch with the associations to arrange a further meeting.

Multiple Sclerosis

Mr. John Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if those multiple sclerosis sufferers who are under pensionable age and who because of the varying effects of the condition work intermittently, thereby failing to meet the two-year period requirement, will be taken into account for disregard payment; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: Where entitlement to income support is interrupted for longer than eight weeks because a member of a couple is in work, it will be necessary for them to receive benefit for a futher two years in order to qualify for the higher earnings disregard. However, multiple sclerosis sufferers will qualify sooner if they are entitled to the disability premium. Entitlement to the disability premium depends on whether the person satisfies the criteria for receiving it, as set out in paragraphs 11 and 12 of schedule 2 to the Income Support (General) Regulations 1987.

Teenagers (Detention)

Mr. John Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when the transitional social security payments protection becomes operative for teenagers who have been held in detention.

Mr. Scott: The new rules for people who lost significant sums in housing benefit and income support when the new schemes were introduced are set out in leaflets RR4 (housing benefit) and SB22 (income support). These leaflets explain how people may claim. I have arranged for copies to be placed in the Library.

Children and Young Persons (Amendment) Act 1986

Mr. Walters: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when the hon. Member for Westbury can expect replies from the Minister for Health to his letters of 22 January and 28 March about the need for speedy implementation of the Children and Young Persons (Amendment) Act.

Mr. Newton: I replied to my hon. Friend on 2 June.

Rent Rebates

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his estimate of the number of tenants, by tenure, who would cease to qualify for a rent rebate allowance and the savings in expenditure that would be made, if the rent taper were increased to 70 per cent.

Mr. Portillo: We estimate that if the rent taper were increased from 65 to 70 per cent. there would be a public expenditure saving of some £50 million; 90,000 local authority tenants would lose their rent rebates and 20,000 private tenants their rent allowances.

Disability Benefits

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what he anticipates will be the time scale for the review of disability benefits the Government expects to undertake following publication of the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys survey reports; and what arrangements for consultations it will include.

Mr. Scott: When all the relevant results of the surveys are available, we shall consider what conclusions can be drawn from them concerning benefits for disabled people. We have not yet decided what form that consideration will take, but will make an announcement in due course about consultation with interested organisations on the implications of the survey results.

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether there will be any exemptions other than for one registered disabled to one eight-week limit for the payment of the bridging allowance; and whether young people who are not incapable of work but unable through disability to find a suitable YTS place will be able to claim income support after September.

Mr. Portillo: Payment of bridging allowance will be limited to a maximum of eight weeks in any period of 12 months in all cases except where a young person is registered disabled.

The Government have guaranteed a youth training scheme place to all young people under 18 who are capable of work, whether disabled or not. We cannot envisage a situation in which a young person would be too disabled to take up a YTS place and yet would be judged by the adjudicating authorities to be insufficiently disabled to be entitled to income support.

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to publish the first part of the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys survey of disablement; what areas will be covered by this and the further reports; and what the timetable is for publication of the further report.

Mr. Scott: There are four surveys covering adults and children separately, with each group further separated

between private households and communal establishments. Fieldwork for the last—children in communal establishments—was completed earlier this year.

We hope to publish the first report early in September. This will contain information about the overall prevalence of disability in adults and also report on the methods and concepts used in all the surveys, including the approach taken to the scaling of severity of disability. The second report, containing information about the financial circumstances of disabled adults, is likely to be published in November. Further reports will follow in 1988 and 1989 to cover disabled adults' use of services (including communal establishments), and to provide the same general range of information about children as about adults.

Income Support

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether 16 and 17-year-olds who satisfy any one of the conditions of regulation 13(2) of the Income Support (General) Regulations will ever be entitled to income support while in relevant education for longer than the child benefit extension period; and when regulations on these matters will be available.

Mr. Scott: Amending regulations will be laid before Parliament shortly to ensure that 16 and 17-year-olds who satisfy the conditions of regulation 13(2) (a) to (e) or (h) will be entitled to income support at all times from September 1988.

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether the 40 per cent. voluntary unemployment deduction is applied to the income support of those *(a)* who are not required to be available for work on grounds of severe hardship and *(b)* who are appealing against a decision that they are not incapable of work; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: One of the basic conditions of entitlement to income support is that a person must be available for work unless he or she comes within one of the groups of people who are exempt by regulations from that condition. If a person who is normally required to be available for work is not in fact available, but an adjudication officer is satisfied that refusal of income support would cause hardship to the claimant or his or her family, income support will be paid with a 40 per cent. reduction in the claimant's personal allowance.

If a person who has been sick, and therefore exempt from the availability requirement, is considered by the regional medical officer of the Department of Health and Social Security to be fit for work, and he or she declines to seek suitable work, or places unreasonable restrictions on his or her availability, the adjudication officer may disallow the claim. If the claimant appeals against the decision that he is fit for work, income support can continue to be paid pending the outcome of the appeal. A 40 per cent. reduction in the claimant's personal allowance will be made but there will be no requirement to show hardship in order to receive payment.

In each case the reduction is modified to 20 per cent. if any member of the claimant's family is pregnant or seriously ill and there is less than £200 capital.

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many claimants lost their transitional addition because of the change in the Income Support (General) Amendment Regulations 1988 (SI 663) which specified that the disability or higher pension premiums were awarded only if the partner who receives invalidity benefit or severe disablement allowance is the claimant, rather than, as previously, either partner; what was the reason for this change; and what advice was given or is being given to claimant couples in such circumstances.

Mr. Scott: No claimants lost their transitional addition as a result of this amendment to the Income Support (General) Amendment Regulations. The amendment affects members of couples, one of whom has been in hospital longer than 52 weeks. In this situation income support no longer treats the couple as members of the same household and requires a separate claim from each partner. However, under the rules governing invalidity pension and severe disablement allowance, any dependency benefit is normally paid to the partner at home. Thus a fully fit person claiming in his or her own right could have qualified for the disability premium by virtue of another person's entitlement to a qualifying benefit.

The change restored the original policy intention. As it was made before 11 April 1988 no claimant lost benefit, and no special advice was or is considered necessary.

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, whether the Government intend to disregard savings or mobility allowance in applying the capital rule for income support; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: No. I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshaw (Mr. Morris) on 17 May 1988 at columns *412-13*.

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people fail to satisfy the conditions of entitlement to income support because their mobility allowance savings take their capital over the limit allowed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: I have no knowledge that anyone has failed to satisfy the conditions of entitlement to income support because their savings of mobility allowance exceed £6,000.

Social Fund

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether copies of local social fund guidance indicating local priorities will be made available to the public; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: In the interests of good liaison we expect local office managers to make available, by such means as they judge best, copies of the local office priorities to interested agencies and individuals.

Pensions

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many pensioners currently receive an enhancement of 25p per week on account of their being aged 80 years or more; and what is the additional administration cost of this arrangement.

Mr. Scott: Nearly 2 million pensioners were receiving the age addition in September 1987. The addition is added automatically by computer and the extra administrative costs of paying it are therefore small.

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list all those official engagements in the previous 12 months at which the subject of the illness myalgic encephalomyelitis has been raised.

Mrs. Currie: Representatives from the Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association met my noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State on 21 March and had earlier had a meeting with officials.

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received from the British Medical Association on the illness myalgic encephalomyelitis.

Mrs. Currie: None.

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has had from organisations seeking help for the sufferers of myalgic encephalomyelitis

Mrs. Currie: The Department has received representations from the ME Association and from the Tayside post viral fatigue syndrome support group.

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many sufferers of myalgic encephalomyelitis are at present being treated in the United Kingdom.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that these figures are not held centrally.

Psychiatric Care

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give details of the total cost to the National Health Service of psychiatric care; and what percentage of the health budget, is attributable to such care.

Mr. Newton: It is estimated that the cost of providing psychiatric care covering the treatment of in-patients, out-patients and day patients for mental illness and mental handicap patients was £1,555·5 million at 1985-86 prices, some 16 per cent. of total expenditure on hospital and community health services. Because of data limitations, this figure does not fully cover all community health service expenditure on this care group, neither does it cover expenditure on the family practitioner services.

Mental Illness

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will give the approximate cost to the National Health Service for an in-patient in a mental hospital for *(a)* three months, *(b)* six months, *(c)* nine months and *(d)* 12 months;

(2) if he will give the approximate cost to the National Health Service for an out-patient in a mental hospital for treatment lasting *(a)* six months, *(b)* 12 months and *(c)* two years.

Mrs. Currie: For information on the average treament costs per inpatient day and per outpatient attendance by type of hospital (including those categorised as "Mental Illness" or "Mental Handicap") for health regions and England as a whole I refer the hon. Member to the Department's annual publication "Health Service Costing Returns" (the latest being for 1986-87)—copies of which are held in the Library.

Health Commissioner

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what financial support he will make available to enable families to meet the costs of bringing matters to the attention of the Health Commissioner.

Mrs. Currie: No costs need to be incurred by complainants in bringing matters to the attention of the Health Service Commissioner.

Benefit Claimants (Banks)

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is Her Majesty's Government's policy on the use by benefit claimants of banks as opposed to post offices; and what weight he gave to the likely impact of his policy on sub-post offices.

Mr. Portillo: Claimants in receipt of benefits paid by computer are offered the choice of payment either by direct credit to a bank account or by order book at a post office. Full consideration was given to the likely impact on the post office network but it is clear that many claimants find payment directly to a bank more convenient.

Family Incomes

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many families with children have incomes in excess of £30,000 in 1988-89.

Mr. Scott: The estimated number of families with children with gross incomes from all sources (including benefits) in excess of £30,000 per annum in 1988-89 is 370,000. This figure is based on projections from the 1985 family expenditure survey, supplemented by information from the survey of personal incomes.

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give for 1978-79 and 1988-89 the average income before and after tax of *(a)* families with children and *(b)* families and individuals without children.

Mr. Scott: Estimates for the financial year 1978-79 can be provided only at disproportionate cost. Only projections are available for 1988-89 which cannot be provided on a basis consistent with historic data. The latest year for which historic data are currently available is 1985; estimates for that year and the calendar year 1979 are as follows:

£ per week

	Families with children	*Families and individuals without children*
Income Before Tax		
1979 (1979 prices)	123	75
1985 (1985 prices)	225	138
Income After Tax		
1979 (1979 prices)	101	62
1985 (1985 prices)	180	112

Notes:

1. Income is the family's total income from all sources including benefits.

2. The figures used for tax include National Insurance Contributions.

Source: Family Expenditure Survey 1979 and 1985.

Women Doctors

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will report on the research project funded by his Department on women doctors' careers.

Mr. Newton: The report "Doctors and their Careers", by Isobel Allen, published today, is the outcome of a research project funded by the Department. We are grateful to Ms. Allen for her work. Women already account for more than 50 per cent. of the intake at several medical schools, and are forming an increasing proportion of the medical work force. It is essential that we make full use of their talents.

We shall of course take account of Ms. Allen's findings in considering the wider report we expect later this year from the national steering group on equal opportunities for women in the National Health Service. Meanwhile, action is already under way, or is being set in hand, on a number of the issues identified by her report. In particular, the "Achieving a Balance" programme for reforming the hospital medical staffing structure addresses the problem of career blockages in the hospital service, and of ensuring better careers guidance and counselling at all stages of training.

We have already reviewed, with representatives of the medical profession and the NHS, the system for part-time training of senior registrars, and a review for the registrar grade has started. We are also examining the doctors' retainer scheme which aims to help doctors with domestic commitments keep in touch with medicine. We recognise the demand for more part-time career posts and will discuss with representatives of the NHS and the medical profession the possibility of increasing these.

I have today announced new measures to reduce the pressures on some junior hospital doctors arising from undesirably long contracted hours of duty.

We will be bringing to the attention of the royal colleges and faculties, and consulting them about how to address, the report's findings of a perception among young doctors that assumptions about appropriate career patterns are too rigid, that patronage is too important in determining advancement, and that certain specialties are seen as unsuitable for women. We shall also discuss with the royal colleges and faculties, with post-graduate deans and with health authorities, ways of eliminating questioning by appointments boards which can be seen as discriminatory.

To assist this process, we are arranging two seminars to promote consideration of Ms. Allen's report by representatives of the health authorities and the medical profession.

Junior Hospital Staff

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps he is taking to reduce the hours of work of junior hospital medical and dental staff.

Mr. Newton: I am today publishing a new scheme to reduce the hours of work of junior hospital doctors and dentists. Under the scheme, local professional working parties will be set up in every district to advise on the elimination, wherever possible, of regular rota commitments which require a junior to be on duty, on average, more than one night and weekend in three. This initiative will be carried forward in conjunction with a systematic review to assess the number of medical staff required in each region to provide essential support for consultants in the acute specialties.

Some progress has already been made as a result of action taken in 1982 to ban regular rota commitments for junior hospital medical staff more onerous than one night or weekend in every two, and to set one night or weekend in every three as the target maximum commitment. The number of rotas more onerous than one in three in England fell from 5,000 in 1982 to 3,500 in 1985, representing in the latter year less than 20 per cent. of junior posts. The average number of contracted hours of duty fell from 87·7 in 1982 to 85·7 in 1986. As reported by juniors themselves, average weekly hours of work (as distinct from hours of duty) fell from 58·3 in 1981 to 57 in 1985.

There remains nevertheless a significant number of juniors whose commitments are undesirably heavy: a recent survey identified 1,463 juniors in England whose contracted hours of duty exceeded 104 per week, which is broadly equivalent to a one in two rota. We have therefore concluded that further measures are needed to reinforce the progress already made.

We are establishing a scheme under which, in every district health authority, local professional working parties will be set up to advise on the elimination wherever possible of regular rota commitments which require a junior to be on duty more than one night or weekend in every three. This will be accompanied by a systematic assessment of the number of medical staff required in each region to provide essential support for consultants in the acute specialties, which is itself part of the "Achieving a Balance" programme for reforming the hospital medical staffing structure.

Details of the scheme are set out in circular EL(88)P82, which is being sent to health authorities this week and of which a copy has been placed in the Library.

Dental Charges (Forms)

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the average cost of processing the four-page form F1D, filled in by patients wishing to claim exemption from National Health Service dental charges; what was the average cost of processing the eight-page revised form F1D that replaced it; and what is now estimated to be the cost of processing the 17-page form AG1 that replaced the revised form F1D on 11 April.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer 29 April 1988]:* I regret that reliable estimates which would provide cost comparisons between the forms F1D, the revised F1D and the AG1 are not available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Form AG1 covers a variety of possible situations and the length of time it will take to process will depend on the circumstances of each individual case. However, as the AG1's new design replaces a number of previous separate claim forms which will now be processed in one central office rather than locally, I do not expect there to be higher processing costs.

Weekly Spending Power

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for

Norfolk, North (Mr. Howell) of 17 May, *Official Report*, columns *402-6*, if he will provide figures for net weekly spending power on the same basis and for the same groups with weekly earnings of £190, £200, £210, £220, £230, £240, £250, £260, £270, £280, £290, £300, £350 and £400.

Mr. Scott: The information requested is provided in the tables. The assumptions are as set out in my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North (Mr. Howell) on 17 May at columns *402-6*. Typically, however, families in these income ranges are unlikely actually to be paying average local authority rents and rates. Income tax is on a post-budget basis.

New System from April 1988

Earnings head	*Tax*	*NI*	*Family credit*	*Child benefit*	*Rent*	*Rent rebate*	*Rates*	*Rate rebate*	*Fares to work*	*Net weekly spending power*
Single person aged 25 or over										
190·00	34·98	17·10	0·00	0·00	15·94	0·00	8·45	0·00	5·85	107·68
200·00	37·48	18·00	0·00	0·00	15·94	0·00	8·45	0·00	5·85	114·28
210·00	39·98	18·90	0·00	0·00	15·94	0·00	8·45	0·00	5·85	120·88
220·00	42·48	19·80	0·00	0·00	15·94	0·00	8·45	0·00	5·85	127·48
230·00	44·98	20·70	0·00	0·00	15·94	0·00	8·45	0·00	5·85	134·08
240·00	47·48	21·60	0·00	0·00	15·94	0·00	8·45	0·00	5·85	140·68
250·00	49·98	22·50	0·00	0·00	15·94	0·00	8·45	0·00	5·85	147·28
260·00	52·48	23·40	0·00	0·00	15·94	0·00	8·45	0·00	5·85	153·88
270·00	54·98	24·30	0·00	0·00	15·94	0·00	8·45	0·00	5·85	160·48
280·00	57·48	25·20	0·00	0·00	15·94	0·00	8·45	0·00	5·85	167·08
290·00	59·98	26·10	0·00	0·00	15·94	0·00	8·45	0·00	5·85	173·68
300·00	62·48	27·00	0·00	0·00	15·94	0·00	8·45	0·00	5·85	180·28
350·00	74·98	27·45	0·00	0·00	15·94	0·00	8·45	0·00	5·85	217·33
400·00	87·48	27·45	0·00	0·00	15·94	0·00	8·45	0·00	5·85	254·83
Married couple										
190·00	27·81	17·10	0·00	0·00	15·94	0·00	8·45	0·00	5·85	114·85
200·00	30·31	18·00	0·00	0·00	15·94	0·00	8·45	0·00	5·85	121·45
210·00	32·81	18·90	0·00	0·00	15·94	0·00	8·45	0·00	5·85	128·05
220·00	35·31	19·80	0·00	0·00	15·94	0·00	8·45	0·00	5·85	134·65
230·00	37·81	20·70	0·00	0·00	15·94	0·00	8·45	0·00	5·85	141·25
240·00	40·31	21·60	0·00	0·00	15·94	0·00	8·45	0·00	5·85	147·85
250·00	42·81	22·50	0·00	0·00	15·94	0·00	8·45	0·00	5·85	154·45
260·00	45·31	23·40	0·00	0·00	15·94	0·00	8·45	0·00	5·85	161·05
270·00	47·81	24·30	0·00	0·00	15·94	0·00	8·45	0·00	5·85	167·65
280·00	50·31	25·20	0·00	0·00	15·94	0·00	8·45	0·00	5·85	174·25
290·00	52·81	26·10	0·00	0·00	15·94	0·00	8·45	0·00	5·85	180·85
300·00	55·31	27·00	0·00	0·00	15·94	0·00	8·45	0·00	5·85	187·45
350·00	67·81	27·45	0·00	0·00	15·94	0·00	8·45	0·00	5·85	224·50
400·00	80·31	27·45	0·00	0·00	15·94	0·00	8·45	0·00	5·85	262·00
Married couple with one child aged 11										
190·00	27·81	17·10	0·00	7·25	17·82	0·00	9·28	0·00	5·85	119·39
200·00	30·31	18·00	0·00	7·25	17·82	0·00	9·28	0·00	5·85	125·99
210·00	32·81	18·90	0·00	7·25	17·82	0·00	9·28	0·00	5·85	132·59
220·00	35·31	19·80	0·00	7·25	17·82	0·00	9·28	0·00	5·85	139·19
230·00	37·81	20·70	0·00	7·25	17·82	0·00	9·28	0·00	5·85	145·79
240·00	40·31	21·60	0·00	7·25	17·82	0·00	9·28	0·00	5·85	152·39
250·00	42·81	22·50	0·00	7·25	17·82	0·00	9·28	0·00	5·85	158·99
260·00	45·31	23·40	0·00	7·25	17·82	0·00	9·28	0·00	5·85	165·59
270·00	47·81	24·30	0·00	7·25	17·82	0·00	9·28	0·00	5·85	172·19
280·00	50·31	25·20	0·00	7·25	17·82	0·00	9·28	0·00	5·85	178·79
290·00	52·81	26·10	0·00	7·25	17·82	0·00	9·28	0·00	5·85	185·39
300·00	55·31	27·00	0·00	7·25	17·82	0·00	9·28	0·00	5·85	191·99
350·00	67·81	27·45	0·00	7·25	17·82	0·00	9·28	0·00	5·85	229·04
400·00	80·31	27·45	0·00	7·25	17·82	0·00	9·28	0·00	5·85	266·54
Married couple with two children aged 8 and 11										
190·00	27·81	17·10	0·00	14·50	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	124·82
200·00	30·31	18·00	0·00	14·50	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	131·42
210·00	32·81	18·90	0·00	14·50	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	138·02
220·00	35·31	19·80	0·00	14·50	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	144·62
230·00	37·81	20·70	0·00	14·50	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	151·22
240·00	40·31	21·60	0·00	14·50	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	157·82
250·00	42·81	22·50	0·00	14·50	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	164·42
260·00	45·31	23·40	0·00	14·50	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	171·02
270·00	47·81	24·30	0·00	14·50	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	177·62
280·00	50·31	25·20	0·00	14·50	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	184·22
290·00	52·81	26·10	0·00	14·50	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	190·82
300·00	55·31	27·00	0·00	14·50	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	197·42
350·00	67·81	27·45	0·00	14·50	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	234·47
400·00	80·31	27·45	0·00	14·50	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	271·97

Earnings head	Tax	NI	Family credit	Child benefit	Rent	Rent rebate	Rates	Rate rebate	Fares to work	Net weekly spending power
Married couple with three children aged 8, 11 and 15										
190·00	27·81	17·10	0·00	21·75	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	132·07
200·00	30·31	18·00	0·00	21·75	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	138·67
210·00	32·81	18·90	0·00	21·75	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	145·27
220·00	35·31	19·80	0·00	21·75	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	151·87
230·00	37·81	20·70	0·00	21·75	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	158·47
240·00	40·31	21·60	0·00	21·75	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	165·07
250·00	42·81	22·50	0·00	21·75	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	171·67
260·00	45·31	23·40	0·00	21·75	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	178·27
270·00	47·81	24·30	0·00	21·75	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	184·87
280·00	50·31	25·20	0·00	21·75	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	191·47
290·00	52·81	26·10	0·00	21·75	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	198·07
300·00	55·31	27·00	0·00	21·75	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	204·67
350·00	67·81	27·45	0·00	21·75	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	241·72
400·00	80·31	27·45	0·00	21·75	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	279·22
Married couple with four children aged 3, 8, 11 and 15										
190·00	27·81	17·10	1·45	29·00	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	140·77
200·00	30·31	18·00	0·00	29·00	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	145·92
210·00	32·81	18·90	0·00	29·00	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	152·52
220·00	35·31	19·80	0·00	29·00	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	159·12
230·00	37·81	20·70	0·00	29·00	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	165·72
240·00	40·31	21·60	0·00	29·00	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	172·32
250·00	42·81	22·50	0·00	29·00	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	178·92
260·00	45·31	23·40	0·00	29·00	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	185·52
270·00	47·81	24·30	0·00	29·00	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	192·12
280·00	50·31	25·20	0·00	29·00	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	198·72
290·00	52·81	26·10	0·00	29·00	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	205·32
300·00	55·31	27·00	0·00	29·00	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	211·92
350·00	67·81	27·45	0·00	29·00	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	248·97
400·00	80·31	27·45	0·00	29·00	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	286·47

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 8 June 1988

ENERGY

Electricity Privatisation

101. **Mr. Stern:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what assessment he has made of the implications for the United Kingdom's international commitments, and their effect on the conduct of foreign policy, of the proposed privatisation of the electricity supply industry.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I do not expect our international commitments to be affected by electricity privatisation.

Television and Press Advertising (Expenditure)

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will give the sums expended on television and press advertising in order to make the general public aware of *(a)* the operations at Sellafield in each of the years since its name was changed and *(b)* the privatisation of British Gas.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The advertising costs incurred by Government during the flotation of British Gas plc amounted to £24·6 million, including VAT, of which TV and press advertising amounted to £21·1 million.

Advertising by British Nuclear Fuels plc is a matter for the company. I am asking the chairman to write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Immigration

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what steps he proposes to take to reduce the period of time between receipt of notices of appeal from people removed from the country and the forwarding of explanatory statements about their removal to the appellate authority;

(2) if he will give for each year since 1979 the minimum delay time and the maximum delay time between the receipt of notices of appeal from people removed from the country and the forwarding of explanatory statements about their removal to the appellate authority;

(3) if he will give for each year since 1979 the total number of immigration officers employed to prepare explanatory statements about removals and the total number of notices of appeal against removal received;

(4) when he expects that an explanatory statement in respect of the removal of Mr. Asaddar Ali, HO Ref. A371529, will be forwarded to the appellate authority.

Mr. Renton *[holding answer 23 May 1988]:* The explanatory statement in respect of the removal of Mr. Asaddar Ali was forwarded to the appellate authority on 23 May. I regret the delay in doing so. Procedural checks have been introduced to ensure that all appeals from abroad against removal are dealt with as quickly as possible. The rest of the information requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

DEFENCE

Howitzer

Mr. Andrew MacKay: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he is yet in a position to make a statement on 155 mm self-propelled howitzers for the Army.

Mr. Sainsbury: Following careful evaluation and extensive discussions of the competitive proposals put forward by industry to replace the 105 mm Abbot self-propelled howitzers, I have decided to place a contract with Vickers Shipbuilding and Engineering Limited for further work on its AS 90 155 mm howitzer. This contract, worth some £4 million, will be to finance additional work designed to demonstrate more fully the performance of VSEL's design to the British Army's specification. It will at the same time secure the Ministry of Defence option prices for any subsequent production orders. Pending a final decision on production we shall, however, continue to monitor the development in the United States of improvements to the current M109 howitzer.

We intend in this way to preserve the benefits of the original competition whilst creating a sound basis on which a decision on full production can be made early next year.

ENVIRONMENT

Television and Press Advertising (Expenditure)

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give the sums expended on television and press advertising to make the public aware of the Nirex document "The Way Forward" and the consultation process it inaugurated.

Mr. Moynihan: This is a matter for Nirex.

Opencast Coal Mining

Mr. Lester: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when new planning guidance on opencast coal mining will be issued; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: My right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for the Environment and for Wales have today issued minerals planning guidance note 3 on opencast coal mining. The advice in this new document replaces guidance set out in DOE circular 3/84 (WO 13/84) on the exercise of planning control over opencast working. The new guidance advises mineral planning authorities on the balance which needs to be struck between the economic benefits of developing this source of low-cost energy and the protection of the environment. The guidelines give details of the national policy considerations and the specific impacts which need to be taken into account when determining planning applications for opencast mining.

The guidelines point out that it is for industry to decide the level of opencast output for which they wish to aim in any period; but it is for mineral planning authorities to determine the acceptability of specific projects having

regard to both the benefits of opencast coal and the particular proposal, and the environmental and other material considerations relating to the specific site.

The guidelines emphasise the role that opencasting can play in clearing dereliction and improving other despoiled land and encourage the industry and mineral planning authorities to discuss and agree a forward programme of sites within which individual proposals can be considered on their merits.

I hope these guidelines will mark the start of a new chapter of positive and constructive co-operation between the industry and mineral planning authorities to ensure this important resource is extracted in an environmentally acceptable way.

Housing Stock

Mr. Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will make a statement on the Government's policy towards the plans of some local authorities to dispose of their entire housing stock.

Mr. Ridley: In principle, I welcome proposals by local authorities to transfer their housing into alternative ownership, as long as the terms are right.

I have today sent guidelines to local authorities, describing the terms on which I might be prepared to grant consent to an application from a local authority to dispose of all or a substantial part of its housing. Copies of the guidelines have been placed in the Library of the House and in the Vote Office.

Sewage Discharges

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will place in the Library copies of water authorities' reports for 1986 detailing works which failed to comply with discharge consent conditions.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 7 June 1988]:* Individual returns from water authorities detailing sewage treatment works which failed to comply with numerical discharge consent conditions in 1986 were not considered suitable for placement in the Library. However, a summary of the returns detailing numbers of non-compliant works per water authority was published by the Department in chapter 3 of the 1987 edition of the "Digest of Environmental Protection and Water Statistics", issue no. 10

For 1987 water authorities were asked to provide more detailed returns in a format which should permit a more rigorous analysis of a causes of failure and proposals for remedial action.

Environmental Research and Protection

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give figures in real terms at 1987 prices for his Department's expenditure on environmental research and protection in total and broken down into expenditure related to *(a)* radioactive waste, *(b)* air pollution, *(c)* water and *(d)* countryside for each year since 1974 for which figures are available.

Mr. Ridley *[pursuant to his answer, 19 May 1988, c. 580]:* The figures for 1981-82, 1982-83, 1983-84 and 1984-85 are as follows:

£ million at 1987-88 prices

	1981-82	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*
Radioactive waste	11·9	9·8	10·2	10·3
Air pollution	2·9	2·2	2·3	2·2
Water	4·5	4·5	4·2	3·7
Countryside	0·4	0·7	0·5	0·5
Other environmental protection	1·9	2·7	2·1	2·4
TOTAL	21·6	19·9	19·3	19·1

Note: Figures for previous years are not available.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Sub-post Offices

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many sub-post offices were closed *(a)* in 1986 and *(b)* in 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Butcher: This is an operational matter for the Post Office. However, I understand that in 1986, a total of 179 sub-post offices were closed and in 1987 the number was 186.

Radio Surveillance Equipment

Mr. Cran: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, pursuant to his answer of 17 May, *Official Report*, column *377*, what are *(a)* the necessary equipment performance requirements laid down by his Department and *(b)* the frequencies made available to users of radio surveillance equipment.

Mr. Butcher: There is a range of equipment performance specifications published by the Department and made available from its radiocommunications division's library. The appropriate specifications and frequencies available would depend on the precise purpose to which the equipment is to be put. For example, surveillance equipment may be used to counter criminal activities—by anti-theft devices in retail outlets for instance—or for monitoring the performance of malfunctioning of machinery and industrial processes.

Mr. Cran: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what measures are taken by his Department to establish that licensed radio surveillance equipment is being used for legal purposes.

Mr. Butcher: The Wireless Telegraphy Acts are primarily concerned with preventing radio interference. Illegal surveillance of the kind that I think my hon. Friend has in mind is intended to go undetected and, therefore, would be unlikely to cause interference. The investigation of offences under other legislation would be a matter for the police.

WALES

Farmland

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the percentage of farmland in each grade in each Welsh county.

Mr. Peter Walker: The information requested is given in the table:

Percentage of Agricultural Land, by Grade

	Grade 1	*Grade 2*	*Grade 3*	*Grade 4*	*Grade 5*
Clwyd	0·9	7·8	32·2	36·8	22·3
Dyfed	—	0·4	19·0	58·0	22·6
Gwent	0·1	1·5	34·6	45·0	18·8
Gwynedd	—	0·6	14·5	29·4	55·5
Mid Glamorgan	0·3	6·0	12·1	32·3	49·3
Powys	—	—	5·3	47·7	47·0
South Glamorgan	1·9	40·2	45·0	10·9	2·0
West Glamorgan	1·7	1·8	22·0	35·8	38·7
Wales	0·2	2·3	17·5	44·2	35·8

Consumer Advisory Committees

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement about the terms and conditions of members of local consumer advisory committees in Wales.

Mr. Peter Walker: The Select Committee on Welsh Affairs recommended in its report "Establishment of Local Consumer Advisory Committees (HCP 335 Session 1981-82)" that the maximum period of continuous service for a member of a local consumer advisory committee in Wales should be six years. This was accepted by the Government when the committees were established in November 1982. However, following representations from the Welsh Water Authority, I have decided to utilise powers available to me under section 24A(6) and (7) of the 1973 Water Act to revoke this requirement—which I feel is an unnecessary restriction of Welsh local consumer advisory committees as compared to the consumer consultative committees in England.

In addition I have also agreed to an amendment to schedule 2, paragraphs 2 and 3, to describe more adequately the category of members intended to represent fishing interests and an amendment to paragraph 3 of the report to remove an anomaly which existed between that paragraph and paragraph 4 of schedule 2. This latter amendment will allow a representative other than the chairman of each of the water company consumer committees to be appointed to the Dee and Clwyd local consumer advisory committee. A copy of the report as modified has been placed in the Library of the House.

TRANSPORT

Ribblehead Viaduct

Mr. Martlew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport in what ways he expects that the repair by British Rail of one of the 24 arches on the Ribblehead viaduct will help to end the uncertainty about the cost of restoring the viaduct.

Mr. David Mitchell: I hope that it will enable more precise estimates to be made of the work required, and hence the costs of repairing the viaduct as a whole. British Rail is keeping English Heritage and Cumbria county council informed.

Motorways (Financing)

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether his Department has made any studies of the options for combining private sector finance and tolls in the provision of fast lanes on United Kingdom motorways.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: No.

Channel Tunnel (BR Rolling Stock)

Ms. Quin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what amount of room the authorities will require in a train using the Channel tunnel; and whether any special construction of rolling stock will be required.

Mr. David Mitchell: I understand that customs and immigration authorities are currently discussing with BR their requirements for accommodation and facilities on trains proceeding via Olympia to points beyond London. The agreed requirements will be taken into account in the specification for the new rolling stock that BR and their French and Belgian counterparts intend to order for services through the tunnel. Present planning is for customs and immigration controls on services to Waterloo to be exercised at the terminal.

Mr. Robert Gee

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to hold a public inquiry under the Merchant Shipping Act 1894 into the death of Robert Gee of 72 Rotterdam road, Lowestoft, in an offshore standby vessel accident in 1987 in Morecambe Bay; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: On 19 January a coroner's inquest returned a verdict of death by misadventure having taken account of investigations by one of my Department's marine surveyors. Revised safety procedures have been brought into operation which should prevent a repetition of the tragic accident and further inquiry would serve no useful purpose.

British Rail

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if anyone has been commissioned by the Government to consider options for the sale of British Rail.

Mr. David Mitchell: No.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Mentally Ill Patients

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what arrangements his Department has made to ensure satisfactory levels of day care for mentally ill and mentally handicapped patients leaving long-stay hospital care; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: Responsibility for determining the level of local day care needs rests with individual health and local authorities.

The table indicates the increase in day care places for mentally ill and mentally handicapped people over the period 31 March 1981 to 31 March 1986 (the latest date for which figures are centrally available).

	1981	*1986*
Mental Illness		
Day hospital places	15,300	18,660
Local authority and voluntary day centre places	[1]7,600	[1]9,200

	1981	1986
Mental Handicap		
Local authority adult training centre places	43,620	50,370

[1] Includes estimate of places in mixed centres.

NHS (Cornwall)

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the state of the National Health Service in Cornwall.

Mrs. Currie: Health services in Cornwall are improving markedly. Over the four years to 1986 the number of in-patient cases has risen from 36,400 to 41,600; the number of out-patient attendances from 199,800 to 223,400; and day cases from 6,400 to 9,800. Major developments are planned or in progress at Trelisk and West Cornwall hospitals. The care of patients requiring long-term care is being taken out of institutions into small community-based units.

All these measures have been made possible by the increased allocation of resources to the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly health authority—revenue spending has increased from £56·7 million in 1982-83 to £74·8 million in 1986-87, 10·7 per cent. in real terms, and the initial revenue allocation for 1988-89 is £84·418 million—and by the health authority's own efforts in sustaining significant cost improvement programmes including some rationalisation of services.

Ambulance Service

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what proportion of ambulance service personnel in England and Wales have received training in intravenous infusion, intrubation, cardiac defibrillation and other advanced life-saving skills.

Mrs. Currie: Health authorities are responsible for the extended training of ambulance crews, the provision of appropriate equipment, and the extent to which this is implemented taking account of local resources, circumstances and priorities. The information requested is not available centrally, and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many ambulance service personnel are employed in England and Wales; and what proportion of these are emergency ambulance crews.

Mrs. Currie: At 30 September 1986 the number of whole-time equivalent ambulance staff (including officers) in post in England was approximately 19,000. Information on the number or proportion of these who are emergency crews is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. The ambulance service in Wales is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Hearing Aids

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what is the average cost of a National Health Service issued hearing aid;

(2) how many hearing aids are currently issued annually by the National Health Service *(a)* in total and *(b)* free of charge; and what is the total cost of this service;

(3) if he will make a statement outlining the range and quality of hearing aids which are currently available under the National Health Service.

Mr. Scott: I am afraid that the information my hon. Friend seeks is not available centrally. Responsibility for the central purchase of NHS hearing aids and their supply to hearing aid centres throughout the United Kingdom was transferred to the Mersey regional health authority in April 1985. My hon. Friend may therefore care to contact the regional chairman direct.

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will make it his policy to allow users of hearing aids to put towards the cost of an aid of their choice a voucher from the National Health Service equal to the average cost of a hearing aid issued free by the National Health Service.

Mr. Scott: We will bear my hon. Friend's suggestion in mind.

Single Payments

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many applications for single payments were made in *(a)* Shetland and *(b)* Orkney in each financial year since 1984-85; and how many were refused.

Mr. Portillo: The Department's office at Lerwick is responsible exclusively for Shetland, but Wick office, which is responsible for Orkney, serves in addition part of the mainland. The numbers of single payment decisions made representing awards and refusals in the last four statistical years are given in the table.

	1984-85[1]	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88[2]
Wick				
Awards	3,364	4,637	5,032	4,936
Refusals	467	956	1,771	1,951
Lerwick				
Awards	362	607	792	527
Refusals	59	130	303	234

[1] The Department's statistical years run from April to April.
[2] The figures for 1987-88 are provisional and subject to amendment.

Oral Tobacco Products

Mr. Sims: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations have been received by his Department in respect of the proposed safety regulation under the Consumer Protection Act 1987 to ban oral tobacco products; what proportion of these were in support of and against the proposals; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: A total of 274 representations have been received, of which 248 were in support of the Government's proposals and 26 were against. United States Tobacco International Inc. has indicated a wish to make further representations and has been offered until 27 June to do so. A similar offer has been made to Svenska Tobaks. A decision on the proposals will be made when all the responses have been fully considered.

Attendance Allowance

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he has any plans in relation to the

six-months qualifying period for attendance allowance, in the light of the abolition of the attendance needs addition, previously available to supplementary benefit claimants; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: We have no plans to change the six-months' qualifying period for attendance allowance. Severely disabled people who have claimed the allowance and are waiting to qualify can apply to the Independent Living Fund for help with the cost of domestic assistance or personal care.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what information is available to his Department concerning the number of people who die each year whilst awaiting a decision on their attendance allowance.

Mr. Scott: I regret that the requested information is not available.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will give for each of his Department's local offices the latest available figure for the average length of time it takes to decide an attendance allowance claim;

(2) what is the combined average length of time taken by his Department's local offices to decide an attendance allowance claim; and what standards are laid down by his Department on the turnaround time which offices should aim to achieve.

Mr. Scott: Attendance allowance claims are processed centrally and figures are not kept on a local basis. Since 1983 the average time taken to decide claims has been reduced from 12·5 weeks to 9·8 weeks. Our aim is further to reduce this time to eight weeks.

Prader-Willi Syndrome

Mr. Dunnachie: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what financial assistance is currently given to parents whose children suffer from Prader-Willi Syndrome; and if he will make a statement about any help that is proposed.

Mr. Scott: The disability benefits available for children are attendance allowance and mobility allowance. Entitlement to these allowances is not related to the specific diagnostic condition, but children who suffer from Prader-Willi Syndrome may qualify if they satisfy the eligibility criteria in terms of their need for attendance or their inability to walk.

St. Peter's Hospital, London

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will make a statement about the recent meeting between the Minister for Health, the right hon. Member for Braintree (Mr. Newton) and consultants from St. Peter's hospital, Henrietta street, London WC2.

Mr. Newton: On 26 May I met representatives of the St. Peter's group of hospitals, with the general manager of North East Thames regional health authority, about proposals by Bloomsbury health authority to relocate the hospitals in the group on the site of the Middlesex hospital.

In the light of the concerns expressed, we have asked regional officers to satisfy us that the proposed timetable for the relocation of St. Peter's hospital is feasible. At the same time we wish all those concerned to complete as soon as possible the details of the plans for the St. Peter's group as a whole to move on to the site of the Middlesex hospital, while maintaining the group's identity and corporate spirit, and ensuring that it continues to flourish as a national and international centre of excellence in urology and nephrology.

Independent Living Fund

Mr. Miscampbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects the Independent Living Fund to being operations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: The trust deed was signed this morning and the Independent Living Fund is now formally established. The trustees have already begun work on determining how the fund will operate. Payments from the fund can be made immediately.

I have today laid regulations before the House which will have the effect of disregarding, for the purposes of family credit and income support, payments of income or capital from the fund. A similar regulation in respect of housing benefit will be laid as soon as possible but arrangements have been made to ensure that no beneficiary of the fund will suffer a financial loss because of this unavoidable delay.

I have placed in the Library a copy of the press release issued by the Department. This contains a copy of the trust deed and biographical notes on the 10 trustees.

Breastfeeding

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will support the breastfeeding promotion initiative being developed by the National Childbirth Trust Breastfeeding Promotion Group, La Leche League and the Association of Breastfeeding Mothers.

Mrs. Currie: The Government have been concerned at recent evidence that breastfeeding, which is best for both mother and baby, has become less popular, particularly among poorer women. We warmly welcome the new initiative, which has been actively encouraged by the Department, to form local breastfeeding groups. It is intended to recruit volunteer helpers among mothers and health and education professionals to support and promote breastfeeding, and to explain and promote breastfeeding to young people including through health education in schools.

This is a gratifyingly early response to the key recommendations in "Present day practice in Infant Feeding: Third Report" from the chief medical officer's Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy (COMA) which was published in January. The initiative will be launched in detail at a seminar in October, the costs of which are to be underwritten by the Government.

We consider that breastfeeding is very important for the health of future generations. The total estimated funding for the breastfeeding activities of the organisations concerned—the National Childbirth Trust Breastfeeding Promotion Group, La Leche League and the Association of Breastfeeding Mothers, for the next two years is expected to rise to at least £100,000 and will be reviewed in 1990. Further measures in line with the COMA recommendations will be announced shortly.

British Pensioners (Canada)

Sir John Farr: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the calculations on which he based the figure of £25 million for the first year cost of paying future increases to British pensioners living in Canada, which was contained in his observations on the parliamentary petition of the hon. Member for Harborough dated 12 April.

Mr. Nicholas Scott *[holding answer 26 May]:* The figure of £2·5 million in observations on this petition for the first year cost at 1988 rates of paying pension increases to British pensioners in Canada was wrongly printed on the Order Paper as £25 million.

I regret that the figure of £2·5 million was itself incorrect. The cost has now been recalculated on the basis of statistics for December 1987 at which date the number of pensioners in Canada was 76,152. The current cost of the pensions payable to these pensioners is estimated, on the basis of a sample, to be approximately £61·5 million, while the cost if the pensions were not frozen would have been about £106 million before the last uprating. The hypothetical cost of the 1988 uprating has been calculated by applying this year's uprating factor of 4·2 per cent. to this nominal cost of £106 million, giving a figure of £4·4 million. This recosting also shows that to pay full United Kingdom rates of pension immediately to all British pensioners in Canada would cost an extra £48·6 million and to do the same for all pensioners abroad would cost about £205 million.

EMPLOYMENT

Age Discrimination

Mr. Cran: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment, what guidance is given to jobcentres to discourage age discrimination by employers; what evidence there is that employers abide by requests not to indulge in such discrimination; and what plans he has to ensure that employees are employed on the basis of ability rather than date of birth.

Mr. Lee: Jobcentre staff are instructed to encourage employers, where appropriate, to remove or broaden age limits attached to notified vacancies. If an employer insists on an age limit the vacancy will be accepted, but jobcentre staff may subsequently approach the employer on behalf of an otherwise eminently suitable jobseeker who is outside the stated limits. Information is not available on the number of employers who accede to these requests.

The Government will continue to point out to employers that it is not in their interests to impose unnecessary age restrictions when recruiting staff.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list in the *Official Report* the number of employees in employment for each year since 1965, broken down into all manufacturing and non-manufacturing groups, for the north-west region and for England, together with the year-on-year percentage changes in employment patterns.

Mr. Lee: The Department's statistics are arranged according to the standard industrial classification 1980 and a consistent series is only available from June 1971. Figures prior to that date are classified according to the standard industrial classification 1968. The available information is as follows. The figures have not been adjusted for the effects of seasonal variations.

Employees in Employment—June of each year

thousands

	Manufacturing industries	*Percentage change since previous year*	*Non manufacturing industries*	*Percentage change since previous year*
		1. North West Region		
1965	1252	n/a	1593	n/a
1966	1251	−0·1	1611	1·1
1967	1203	−3·8	1589	−1·4
1968	1199	−0·3	1569	−1·3
1969	1199	—	1556	−0·8
1970	1186	−1·1	1525	−2·0
1971	1155	n/a	1564	n/a
1972	1107	−4·2	1592	1·8
1973	1110	0·3	1643	3·2
1974	1083	−2·4	1619	−1·5
1975	1035	−4·4	1639	1·2
1976	999	−3·5	1639	—
1977	999	—	1647	0·5
1978	991	−0·8	1660	0·8
1979	971	−2·0	1705	2·7
1980	931	−4·1	1713	0·5
1981	810	−13·0	1656	−3·3
1982	744	−8·1	1627	−1·8
1983	694	−6·7	1608	−1·2
1984	669	−3·6	1620	0·7
1985	653	−2·4	1632	0·7
1986	626	−4·1	1636	0·2
1987	612	−2·2	1650	0·9
1987[1]	607	—	1680	—
		2. England		
1965	7,354	n/a	12,121	n/a

	Manufacturing industries	Percentage change since previous year	Non manufacturing industries	Percentage change since previous year
1966	7,365	0·1	12,274	1·3
1967	7,142	−3·0	12,131	−1·2
1968	7,058	−1·2	12,071	−0·5
1969	7146	1·2	11,952	−1·0
1970	7,124	−0·3	11,844	−0·9
1971	6,890	n/a	11,793	n/a
1972	6,653	−3·4	12,035	2·1
1973	6,680	0·4	12,452	3·5
1974	6,703	0·3	12,517	0·5
1975	6,389	−4·7	12,749	1·9
1976	6,200	−3·0	12,781	0·3
1977	6,241	0·7	12,816	0·3
1978	6,215	-0·4	12,975	1·2
1979	6,188	−0·4	13,315	2·6
1980	5,947	−3·9	13,424	0·8
1981	5,349	−10·1	13,096	−2·4
1982	5,048	−5·6	13,011	−0·6
1983	4,761	−5·7	13,024	0·1
1984	4,656	−2·2	13,299	2·1
1985	4,619	−0·8	13,606	2·3
1986	4,520	−2·1	13,821	1·6
1987	4,443	−1·7	14,126	2·2
1987[1]	4452	—	14,355	—

n/a—Not available.
[1] December—The latest date for which figures are available.

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the percentage of *(a)* female and *(b)* male unemployment in 1985, 1986 and 1987 in each of the English regions.

Mr. Lee: The following information is in the Library. The table shows the average number of unemployed male and female claimants, seasonally adjusted and excluding school leavers, expressed as a percentage of the working population for each of the years requested and for each of the English regions.

Unemployed adult claimants: seasonally adjusted
Annual Average Rates: percentage of working population

Region	1985		1986		1987	
	Male per cent.	Female per cent.	Male per cent.	Female per cent.	Male per cent.	Female per cent.
South East	9·5	6·5	9·7	6·6	8·5	5·5
Greater London	10·5	6·9	10·9	7·1	9·9	6·1
East Anglia	8·9	7·3	9·0	7·6	7·8	6·1
South West	10·6	8·3	10·7	8·6	9·4	7·3
West Midlands	15·1	10·0	14·9	10·0	13·3	8·8
East Midlands	11·6	8·3	11·6	8·3	10·8	7·3
Yorkshire and Humberside	14·6	9·2	15·1	9·5	14·1	8·4
North West	17·1	10·1	17·4	10·2	16·2	9·1
North	18·8	11·2	18·8	10·9	17·8	9·6

Job Training Scheme

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give the total cost of the job training scheme; and if he will also express this figure as a per capita cost of each *(a)* entrant to the job training scheme, *(b)* person leaving the job training scheme and *(c)* person obtaining a vocational qualification from the job training scheme.

Mr. Nicholls *[holding answer 17 May 1988]:* In 1987-88 the provisional total cost of the job training scheme, excluding administrative costs, was £64·7 million. On that basis, the per capita cost was £646 per entrant and £939 per leaver. Information on the per capita cost of people leaving the job training scheme with a vocational qualification is not available.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Mr. John M. Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last discussed with the National Farmers Union the stewardship of ancient monuments and sites of special scientific interest on agricultural land.

Mr. Gummer: My officials and I are in frequent contact with the National Farmers Union to discuss a wide range of subjects, including the good stewardship of ancient monuments and sites of special scientific interest on agricultural land.

SCOTLAND

AIDS

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) how many babies born in Scotland were HIV positive at birth;

(2) how many babies have been born in Scotland to mothers who are HIV positive.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Babies are not routinely tested at birth for HIV antibodies. However, to the end of March 1988, reports had been received of a total of 66 infants-children, excluding haemophiliacs, born in Scotland, who have antibodies to HIV. Of this total, 38 were born to mothers who are known to be HIV positive.

Ministerial Replies

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what criteria are applied by his Department with regard to the disclosure to third parties of ministerial replies to hon. Members, without the consent of the hon. Member concerned.

Mr. Rifkind: I would hope to avoid disclosing to third parties any correspondence with an hon. Member which might cause him or his constituents embarrassment, for example because it dealt with personal matters or with other matters that had been raised on a confidential basis. But where a number of Members have written to me about an issue which has aroused wide interest, there have been occasions when copies of replies sent by me or on my behalf have been distributed quite widely. If a particular case is causing the hon. Member concern, he may care to write to me.

Housing (Shetland)

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a copy of the letter sent by the chairman of the Scottish Special Housing Association to him dated 20 April regarding the association's housing stock in Shetland;

(2) whether he has received a formal request from the chairman of the Scottish Special Housing Association for consent to the transfer to Shetland islands council of 55 of the association's houses in Shetland.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The chairman of the Scottish Special Housing Association, Mr. Derek Mason, wrote to my right hon. and learned Friend on 20 April about the future ownership of the association's houses in Shetland, in the light of representations which had been made by a number of tenants, and I have replied to Mr. Mason's letter. It is not normal practice to publish correspondence between Government Ministers and chairmen of non-departmental public bodies.

As the hon. Member is aware, the original proposal put forward by the SSHA for the future of their housing stock in Shetland involved complete withdrawal from ownership. Tenants were offered the option of having their houses transferred into the ownership of Hjaltland housing association. If a majority of tenants had wished to pursue that option, the SSHA wished to be able to offer the remaining minority of tenants the option of having their houses transferred into the ownership of Shetland islands council.

Circumstances have changed. In the light of their tenants' views, the SSHA no longer plans complete withdrawal from Shetland. The question of sales to the islands council to facilitate that withdrawal no longer arises therefore. I understand that Mr. Mason is writing to all the association's tenants in Shetland, informing them of the position and explaining the background.

Maternity Units (Elgin)

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many representations he has now received from people in Moray about the case for retaining local general practitioners' maternity units and for establishing a specialist obstetric unit in Elgin.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: My right hon. and learned Friend and I have received 62 representations from people in Moray about the future of maternity services provision there.

Education Reform

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list in the *Official Report*, the latest total number of representations he has received advising him of support for a provision for opting out within the Scottish school system, showing, where possible, where these representations have come from *(a)* recognised official organisations, or *(b)* individuals within each district council area.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I have nothing to add to the reply which I gave to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Rutherglen (Mr. McAvoy) on 25 May at columns *185-86*.

Dounreay (Leukaemia)

Mr. Bill Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when the report by the Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment on the incidence of leukaemia around Dounreay will be published.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The report has been published today and copies placed in the Library. The committee has emphasised both the small numbers of leukaemia cases involved, and that any conclusion based on these numbers must be subject to a degree of uncertainty. Nevertheless it concludes that there is evidence of a raised incidence of leukaemia among young people living in the vicinity of Dounreay. In the committee's view, this evidence, taken in conjunction with that relating to the area around Sellafield, tends to support the hypothesis that some feature of the two nuclear plants that the committee has examined leads to an increased risk of leukaemia in young people living in the vicinity of those plants.

The committee does, however, point out that conventional dose and risk estimates suggest that neither authorised nor accidental discharges could be responsible. Estimates of radiation doses to young people resident in Thurso have been made by the NRPB, on behalf of the committee. These estimates suggest that, using conventional dose modelling procedures, the risk attributable to the doses received by local young people from the discharges is very small indeed, being of the order of only 0·005 of a case.

The committee does, however note uncertainties about dose and risk calculations especially in respect to exposure

of the foetus and small child. The report identifies a number of possible explanations, but does not point to any particular one, and therefore considers all possible explanations need to be investigated further. Recommendations for these further investigations are made.

The Government are grateful to the committee for its report. A great deal of work is already being done to investigate this problem. There are clearly uncertainties in relation to the causes of elevated rates of leukaemia which can occur in a variety of locations. The Government accept, in principle, all the committee's recommendations for further work. It is hoped that this work will advance our knowledge in this area.

The recommendations specific to Scotland are:

Recommendation 1
a retrospective case control study of leukaemia occurring in young people in Caithness in the period 1968-1986. This study is already underway;

Recommendation 4d
a detailed survey to identify the extent to which radioactive contamination is present in household dust in the Dounreay area. Plans are already being made on how best to carry out this survey;

Recommendation 2
birth cohort, and school cohort studies. Consideration is currently being given on how to undertake this last recommendation.

The other recommendations relate to various aspects of monitoring and research and the relevant United Kingdom Departments are considering how best to implement them.

Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many representations he has received regarding the reduction in grant to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 27 May 1988]:* I have received 64 representations, most of which clearly derive from contacts initiated by the council itself. I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Renfrew, West and Inverclyde (Mr. Graham) on Tuesday 12 April at column *46*.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Labour Market (Regions)

Mr. Oppenheim: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effect on the labour markets in the regions of recent economic trends.

Mr. Major: The recent favourable performance of the United Kingdom economy has benefited the labour market in all regions. Unemployment has fallen significantly in all regions over the past year.

Manufactures (World Trade)

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the current United Kingdom volume share of world trade in manufactures.

Mr. Major: In 1987 the estimated United Kingdom volume share of total world trade in manufactures was about 7½ per cent. As chart 3·5 in the FSBR shows this share has been broadly stable since 1981, after previous decades of decline.

Merseyside

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans his Department has to assist the economic development of Merseyside.

Mr. Major: The Government's economic policies, continued in my right hon. Friend's latest Budget, promote an environment for business to prosper and provide strong encouragement to economic development in all areas of the United Kingdom. Over the last year the north-west has seen one of the largest falls in unemployment in the United Kingdom.

Regions (Economic Development)

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the differential impact of Government policy on economic development in the regions.

Mr. Major: The best way to encourage economic development in the regions is through sound economic policies, designed to promote healthy, non-inflationary growth in the national economy, backed up by an effective regional policy. These are the policies the Government are pursuing.

European Commission (Cash Position)

Dr. Twinn: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement about the European Commission's latest cash position and the implications for the United Kingdom.

Mr. Brooke: The European Commission estimates that its spending obligations under provisional twelfths this month will exceed the available resources. The Commission has informed us that it expects to have to overdraw its accounts with member states in accordance with article 12(2) of Council regulation 2891/77. The amount involved for the United Kingdom is expected to be of the order of £98 million. As I explained to the House on 19 May at column 1151 the Government are obliged to meet an article 12(2) request provided it is genuinely needed to cover a prospective cash deficit and provided that it would not involve exceeding the own resources known to be available for the year. We will accordingly meet this request directly from the Consolidated Fund, in accordance with section 2(3) of the European Communities Act 1972. Repayment of any drawing under this facility will be made by deduction from future own resources payments.

The article 12(2) facility does not affect the total amount which the Community is authorised to spend during the year. The Commission's request does not, therefore, involve any net addition to public expenditure.

Civil Servants (Northern Ireland)

Mr. McCusker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many Home Civil Service staff are employed by United Kingdom Government Departments in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Brooke *[holding answer 7 June 1988]:* Five thousand and one, as at 1 April 1987. In addition there were some 29,500 staff in the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

Departmental Officials (Language Qualifications)

Mr. Holland: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many of his officials at administrative grade are qualified, respectively, at *(a)* O level, *(b)* A or S level, *(c)* diploma and *(d)* university degree level in (i) French and (ii) another European Community language; and what procedures are operated by his Department to ensure that documents of the European Communities placed before the House are properly translated.

Mr. Brooke *[holding answer 7 June 1988]:* Qualifications in French and other European Community languages held by Treasury staff are as follows:

	French	*Other Community language*
O-level	212	67
A/S level	89	54
Diploma	—	—
University degree	12	8

The figures for O and A-levels take no account of qualifications held by those whose schooldays predate the GCE. Responsibility for the translation of European Community documents placed before the House rests with the Commission and Council Secretariat of the European Communities.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Hong Kong (Expo 1997)

10. **Mr. Alexander:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what support he is giving to the proposal that Hong Kong should host Expo 1997; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: We are aware of interest in Hong Kong in the idea of a world exhibition in 1997. Discussions are still at a very preliminary stage.

Namibia (South African Troops)

14. **Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he intends to take to encourage an early withdrawal of South African troops from Namibia.

Mrs. Chalker: We shall continue to press South Africa to agree to the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 435. We believe that the current United States-led negotiations offer the best prospect of such a settlement.

Falkland Islands (Ministerial Visits)

15. **Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what visits have been made by Foreign Office Ministers to the Falklands since 1979.

Mr. Eggar: Since 1979 there have been eight visits by Ministers at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

China

16. **Mr. Baldry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what further steps he is taking to improve the United Kingdom's relations with China.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Relations between Her Majesty's Government and China are good. We were pleased to entertain Mr. Wu Xuegian in March and I met the new Foreign Minister Mr. Qian Qichen at the United Nations yesterday.

Hong Kong (Basic Law)

17. **Dr. Bray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Chinese Government about the consistency of the draft Basic Law for Hong Kong with the joint declaration on the future of Hong Kong.

82. **Mr. Haynes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he plans to make to the Government of China in relation to the Basic Law of Hong Kong.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The drafting of the Basic Law is the responsibility of the Chinese Government. If there are points which we consider are inconsistent with the joint declaration, we shall make our views known to the Chinese authorities clearly and firmly.

Denmark (Prime Minister)

19. **Mr. William Powell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next intends to meet the Prime Minister of Denmark.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend hopes to meet the Prime Minister of Denmark at the European Council at Hanover on 27-28 June.

Hungary

20. **Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent contacts he has had with the Hungarian Government.

Mr. Mellor: My right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary had the pleasure of meeting the Hungarian Prime Minister, Mr. Karoly Grosz, during his successful visit to London in May. He also met the Deputy Foreign Minister, Mr. Kovacs, in February.

Mr. Charles Powell

21. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he now expects Mr. Charles Powell to return to the Foreign Office from his secondment to No. 10 Downing street.

Mrs. Chalker: In due course.

Belize

22. **Mr. Page:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when last he visited Belize.

Mr. Tim Eggar: My right hon. and learned Friend has yet to visit Belize. I visited Belize on 7-9 May this year.

51. **Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what items were discussed during the visit of the Under-Secretary of State to Belize.

Mr. Eggar: A wide range of subjects were discussed at my meetings with Belize Government Ministers and business men including the Belize/Guatemala territorial dispute, the British garrison, the international drugs problem and prospects for the Belize banana industry.

Esquipulas II Peace Accord

26. **Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has received a request from the Central American Governments for the Government to send civilian or military personnel to monitor the Esquipulas peace plan.

Mr. Eggar: No.

25. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations have been made by Her Majesty's Government regarding the failure of Honduras to meet the terms of the Esquipulas II peace accord.

Mr. Eggar: We and our EC partners have on a number of occasions called on all the signatories of the Esquipulas II peace accord to fulfil their outstanding obligations under the accord without delay.

Conventional Force Levels (Eastern Europe)

27. **Mr. Madel:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he expects to meet the Soviet Foreign Minister to discuss conventional force levels in eastern Europe before 31 October; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: My right hon. and learned Friend met Mr. Shevardnadze in New York on 6 June. They discussed a range of issues including arms control. The Warsaw pact's superiority in conventional forces is at the heart of the security situation in Europe. Highly asymmetrical reductions—including reductions of forward-deployed Soviet forces—will be need to redress the conventional imbalance and establish stability.

Bermuda

28. **Mr. John M. Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last visited Bermuda.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. and learned Friend last visited Bermuda on 6-7 January 1987. I visited on 10-12 May 1988.

Refuseniks

29. **Mr. Burt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what response he has received from the Soviet authorities following his most recent representations in Moscow on further releases of Jewish refuseniks.

Mr. Mellor: Of the 47 refuseniks on the list handed to Mr. Shevardnadze in February this year 11 have so far been given permission to leave the Soviet Union. Seventy-nine of the 117 refuseniks on lists handed over in 1987 have been given permission to leave, including Vladimir Tufeld, whose pleas to be allowed to join his critically ill wife in the United States were taken up personally by my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary on several occasions.

98. **Mr. Lawrence:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will seek a further opportunity of raising with the Soviet Foreign Minister the plight of long-term refuseniks including Inna and Yuly Kosharovsky, Vladimir and Bella Kislik and Vladimir and Carmella Raiz who are still waiting for exit visas.

Mr. Mellor: Members of the Kosharovsky, Kislik and Raiz families have all been included on lists of refuseniks which my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary has on various occasions handed to the Soviet Foreign Minister, Mr. Shevardnadze. We shall be drawing attention to these and all other unresolved cases on our lists during the forthcoming bilateral human rights consultations at official level.

Solidarity

31. **Mr. Tim Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has any plans to meet representatives of the Polish Solidarity movement; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans at present to meet representatives of the Polish Solidarity movement. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister hopes that circumstances will make it possible for her to visit Poland later this year. She would expect to meet Solidarity representatives then. We continue to urge on the Polish authorities the need to ensure freedom of association and individual liberties.

President of the USA

32. **Mr. Simon Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next plans to meet the President of the United States of America.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. and learned Friend met President Reagan during his recent visit to London and expects to meet him again later this month at the Toronto economic summit.

Mexico

33. **Miss Emma Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last visited Mexico.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. and learned Friend last visited Mexico from 4-6 January 1987. I visited on 1-3 June 1988.

Acid Rain (Norway)

34. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has any plans to meet the Prime Minister of Norway to discuss the implications for Anglo-Norwegian relations of the issue of acid rain.

Mr. Eggar: No. But my right hon. and learned Friend met the Norwegian Foreign Minister on 16 March. We maintain close contact at all levels with the Norwegian Government on environmental issues.

UK-Soviet Relations

35. **Mr. Chapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the current state of United Kingdom-Soviet relations.

Mr. Mellor: Relations are at their best for many years, with an active high level political dialogue. Fundamental differences remain but these are discussed frankly with the aim of finding solutions wherever possible. We shall continue to work for further improvements in all areas of bilateral relations and in particular for increased informal exchanges of all kinds between our peoples.

Senor Clodomiro Almeyda

36. **Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he intends to make to the Government of Chile in relation to the continued imprisonment of the Socialist party leader, Clodomiro Almeyda.

69. **Mr. Wareing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he intends to make to the Government of Chile in relation to the continued imprisonment of the Socialist party leader, Clodomiro Almeyda.

Mr. Eggar: The Chilean Government have been told on several occasions of our concern and that of our European Community partners about Senor Almeyda since his arrest in 1987. We remain in touch with our European Community partners on this issue.

West Indies

37. **Mr. Ian Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last visited the West Indies.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans at present to pay an official visit to the West Indies. I paid an official visit to Jamaica on 12-15 May.

UN Special Session on Disarmament

38. **Mr. Day:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the United Nations special session on disarmament in New York.

Mr. Mellor: The third United Nations special session on disarmament began on 31 May and will continue until 25 June. It provides an opportunity for all countries to take part in full discussion of arms control and disarmament issues. My right hon. and learned Friend addressed the special session on 7 June. We shall be working for a consensus to build on the momentum created by recent agreements, and to encourage further progress in arms control.

I have arranged for a copy of a memorandum that sets out the approach of the British Government to the special session to be deposited in the Library of the House.

Turkey

39. **Mr. Mans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when next he plans to meet the Head of State of Turkey.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend looks forward to meeting President Evren when he pays his state visit to the United Kingdom from 12 to 15 July, at the invitation of Her Majesty the Queen.

Canadian High Commissioner

40. **Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met the Canadian high commissioner; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. and learned Friend has frequently met the Canadian high commissioner. They have discussed a wide range of topics of mutual interest.

Anglo-Irish Relations

41. **Mr. Gerald Howarth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent factors and events have influenced Anglo-Irish relations.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Many factors, including ties of geography and history, and our membership of the European Communities influence the United Kingdom's relations with the Republic of Ireland. There is a broad range of important mutual interests. We are able to discuss events affecting Anglo-Irish relations including the need for the closest possible co-operation against terrorism as they arise in the framework of the Anglo-Irish Agreement and through other channels.

24. **Sir Fergus Montgomery:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what further measures he is taking to improve Anglo-Irish relations.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: We continue to take every opportunity to develop closer relations with the Republic of Ireland, in constructive pursuit of our many shared interests. In particular, we are fully committed to the Anglo-Irish Agreement. It provides a firm basis on which to continue to develop detailed co-operation in a variety of areas of high priority concern to both countries, including further resolute action against terrorism.

Ethiopia

43. **Mr. Cormack:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what further representations he has received on human rights violations in Ethiopia.

Mrs. Chalker: We are well aware of the public concern about human rights violations in Ethiopia and receive frequent representations. We have raised the matter on numerous occasions with the Ethiopian Government and shall continue to do so. We warmly welcome the recent release from detention of the seven female members of the former royal family. We hope very much that this will be followed by the release of the three male members of the royal family and other political prisoners.

Austria

44. **Mr. Janner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to develop relations between Britain and Austria.

Mrs. Chalker: We shall continue to develop contacts between Britain and Austria in ways which appropriately reflect the good relations between our nations and Governments.

Human Rights

45. **Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what items have been included on the agenda of the forthcoming bilateral commission on human rights with the Soviets.

Mr. Mellor: For our part, we propose to discuss freedom of expression, religious tolerance, the right to leave and re-enter one's own country, the political abuse of psychiatry, legal reform and other CSCE-related humanitarian issues. We shall be pressing for recent improvements in Soviet practice to be codified into effective legislation, as well as raising all those human rights cases on our lists which remain unresolved and other individual problems. The Soviet side will no doubt raise aspects of concern to them about human rights in Britain.

Toronto World Economic Summit

46. **Mr. Cash:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the agenda of the forthcoming Toronto world economic summit.

Mrs. Chalker: As in previous years, summit participants are likely to discuss macroeconomic policies, structural adjustment, debt, trade and agriculture. We hope that summit leaders will emphasise the vital need for progress on agricultural reform, the need to strengthen the effectiveness of the GATT system, and the importance of a productive mid-term meeting of the Uruguay round. We expect East-West relations, the middle east and terrorism to be the main political issues.

Chile (Plebiscite)

47. **Mr. Illsley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has made any representations to the Government of Chile concerning the conditions under which the impending plebiscite will be held.

Mr. Eggar: Yes, we make frequent representations. The large number of Chileans registering to vote is encouraging, as is the access which democratic opposition parties now have to television. We hope this will continue, and that the people of Chile will be able to vote in a climate of calm, free from violence or intimidation from whatever source. We welcome Admiral Merino's commitment to lift the state of emergency 30 days before the plebiscite.

Hong Kong

48. **Mr. Couchman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when next he plans to visit Hong Kong.

73. **Mr. Andrew MacKay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next intends to visit Hong Kong.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. and learned Friend visited Hong Kong from 29 to 31 May, where he reviewed recent developments in Hong Kong with the governor and members of the Executive and Legislative Councils, and met a wide range of representatives of the community. He also visited a number of major development projects and both a closed camp and a reception centre for Vietnamese boat people.

Western European Union

49. **Mr. Wood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when last he visited the Western European Union; and what subjects were discussed.

Mr. Mellor: Meetings of the WEU ministerial council are held in the country holding the presidency. The last such meeting took place in The Hague on 18-19 April when Ministers discussed European security, the Gulf, enlargement, the follow-up to the platform and institutional questions.

Reagan-Gorbachev Summit

50. **Mr. Moss:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about the implications for the United Kingdom of the outcome of the Reagan-Gorbachev summit.

Mr. Mellor: We welcome the Moscow summit as a valuable contribution to the establishment and maintenance of stable and predictable East-West relations. President Reagan was able to put across to a wide Soviet audience western democratic values and views, on the basis of allied resolve and unity.

Berlin

42. **Mr. Robert G. Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress is being made towards ending the physical division of the city of Berlin.

Mrs. Chalker: Some progress has been made to alleviate the consequences of the city's division. In particular, there has recently been an increase in the number of visits between east and west by Berliners. The Berlin wall remains however a grim reminder that the underlying problem is far from resolved.

Cyprus

52. **Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next plans to pay an official visit to Cyprus.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans to visit Cyprus at the present time.

Hungarian Prime Minister

53. **Mr. Alex Carlile:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonweath Affairs if he will make a statement on his recent meeting with the Prime Minister of Hungary, Mr. Grosz.

Mr. Mellor: My right hon. and learned Friend had a lively and useful discussion covering international

subjects, bilateral matters including trade, and the negotiations for an agreement between Hungary and the EC. They also discussed respective experiences of industrial restructuring and financial and economic management.

Cote d'Ivoire

54. **Mr. Michael Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next plans to visit Cote d'Ivoire.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend has no present plans to visit Cote d'Ivoire. I plan to visit Cote d'Ivoire at the invitation of President Houphouet-Boigny on 9–12 July.

Council of Europe

55. **Mr. Summerson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last attended the Council of Europe; and for what purpose.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend last attended the Council of Europe on 19 November 1986 for the Committee of Ministers' meeting (79th Session).

Southern Africa

78. **Mr. Anderson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a further statement on the ongoing regional peace initiatives in southern Africa.

Mrs. Chalker: We welcome the progress made at meetings between United States, South African, Angolan and Cuban representatives in London on 3-4 May, and the agreement of all parties to hold a further meeting soon. We are encouraging all those involved in the search for peace in Angola and independence for Namibia to show flexibility and restraint.

Soviet Union (Gulf War)

57. **Mr. Temple-Morris:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government policy towards the present and future role of the Soviet Union, at the United Nations, in the Persian Gulf, and generally in achieving an end to the Gulf war.

Mr. Mellor: We urge all states to continue to work together for a peaceful solution through a negotiated settlement based on UN Security Council resolution 598. The Soviet Union, as a superpower and a permanent member of the Security Council, has an important role to play.

Third World Debt

58. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the answer of 4 May, *Official Report*, column *459*, when he last met other Foreign Ministers to discuss Third world debt; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: I have nothing to add to the reply I gave the hon. Member on 4 May at column *459*.

Kuwait

59. **Mr. Pawsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what further measures he proposes to take to improve relations with Kuwait; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: Our relations with Kuwait are long established and very good.

Angola

60. **Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government intend to play any role in future talks between representatives of the South African, Angolan, United States of America and Cuban Governments with regard to a settlement in Angola.

Mrs. Chalker: We are not directly involved in the talks.

95. **Mr. Graham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the current level of British Government assistance to the Government of Angola; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: Expenditure under the bilateral aid programme for Angola in 1988-89 is expected to amount to about £400,000 mainly on English language teaching and teacher education and training projects locally, and on training in Britain. I have also approved this year contributions of £820,000 towards UNICEF activities in Angola and £750,000 for emergency relief operations. In addition, our commitment towards the provision of European Community food aid for 1988 amounts to £930,000; and our commitment towards all development projects currently being financed by the European Community is approximately £4·6 million.

96. **Mr. McTaggart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what further information he has about progress made following the recent talks between the parties involved in the war in Angola; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: The parties to the talks in London on 3 and 4 May intend to hold a further round shortly. We hope that all involved will make full use of the present opportunity for a settlement of the conflict in Angola and of the problem of Namibia.

Sudan (Slavery)

63. **Mr. Leadbitter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Sudanese Government concerning slavery in the Sudan; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: Slavery is among recently reported human rights violations about which we, our European partners and other aid donors have made strong representations to the Sudanese authorities.

Anglo-French Relations

64. **Mr. Evennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessments he has made of the prospects for improved Anglo-French relations.

Mrs. Chalker: In recent years there has been a marked intensification of co-operation between Britain and France, symbolised by the launch of the Channel tunnel project. We now look forward to developing this co-operation still further in such areas as the creation of the EC single market by 1992 and our defence relationship within the Alliance.

Gulf War (Shipping)

65. **Mrs. Dunwoody:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what protests have been made by Her Majesty's Government to the Iraqi authorities concerning the bombing of neutral ships in the Gulf.

Mr. Mellor: We have protested to both Iraq and Iran on a number of occasions about attacks on neutral shipping in the Gulf which we regard as unlawful and in contravention of mandatory UNSCR 598. The last occasion was on 18 May when the Iraqi ambassador was summoned to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to receive a protest following the Iraqi attack on 14 May on a British-registered tanker—the Burmah Endeavour.

83. **Mr. Dennis Howell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many British seamen have been killed or injured in attacks on shipping in the Persian Gulf.

Mr. Mellor: It is not possible to give definitive figures. Shipping companies do not report fatalities automatically and the precise whereabouts of British seamen and the circumstances of specific incidents are sometimes unclear. However, as far as we are aware, 11 British seamen have been killed in attacks on shipping in the Gulf. No figure is available for the number of injured.

Sharpeville Six

67. **Miss Lestor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to monitor developments on the applications by the Sharpeville Six for a retrial.

Mrs. Chalker: Her Majesty's embassy continues to follow the legal proceedings closely. It is in touch both with the South African Government and lawyers for the defence.

Occupied Territories

68. **Ms. Mowlam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has as to the number of Palestinian men, women and children killed since the outbreak of the current troubles on the West Bank and Gaza strip; and if he will make representations to the Israeli Goverment thereon.

Mr. Mellor: We understand that over 200 Palestinians have been killed in the unrest of the last six months. We repeatedly make clear to the Israeli authorities our concern that they should administer the occupied territories in accordance with international law and observing human rights standards.

70. **Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has any plans to meet the Secretary of State of the United States of America to discuss the response of the Israeli Government to the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories.

Mr. Mellor: We remain in close and frequent contact with Secretary of State Shultz about the need for an early negotiated settlement to the Arab-Israel conflict.

Trade Volumes

71. **Mr. Favell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what account is taken in the conduct of foreign policy of the volume of trade between the United Kingdom and other countries; and how this is reflected in current relations with *(a)* Europe and *(b)* the Commonwealth.

Mrs. Chalker: The overall objective of our relations with any country in Europe, the Commonwealth or elsewhere, is to enhance the security and prosperity of the United Kingdom. The volume of trade between the United Kingdom and another country is only one of the factors which is taken into account in framing a policy designed to achieve that objective.

Panama

72. **Mr. Meale:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether there have been any discussions with the Government of the United States of America in connection with the situation in Panama.

Mr. Eggar: We have regular discussions with the United States on a wide range of subjects.

Guatemala

74. **Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made, or intends to make to the Government of Guatemala in relation to the proposed closure of the human rights office in that country.

Mr. Eggar: We understand that budgetary difficulties may lead to restrictions on the scale of activities of the Guatemalan human rights procurator although we have no information suggesting the complete closure of his office. The procurator is funded by the Guatemalan Congress and not the Government. It would be inappropriate for us to become involved in an internal Guatemalan budgetary issue.

East-West Relations

75. **Mr. Sumberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what factors are currently influencing East-West relations.

Mr. Mellor: Stability and mutual understanding in East-West relations are developing well, on the basis of the West's strong and united stance. The Soviet Union is increasingly willing to acknowledge its past mistakes and the need for change abroad to match that at home. We welcome this, but look forward to further progress in arms control, particularly in the conventional and chemical weapons fields, in the peaceful settlement of regional conflicts and in respect for human rights.

92. **Mr. McKelvey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the current state of East-West relations.

93. **Mr. Ernie Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the current state of East-West relations.

94. **Mr. Dunnachie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the current state of East-West relations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: East-West relations are in better shape than for many years. Thanks to the West's resolute and united stance, significant progress has been made (Afghanistan, INF treaty). Much however remains to be done in the fields of arms control, particularly the conventional imbalance, the settlement of regional conflicts and human rights. The United States-Soviet summit in Moscow was a further major contribution to the maintenance of a stable and predictable United States-Soviet and wider East-West relationship.

Phnom Penh

76. **Mr. Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received about Her Majesty's Government's policy towards relations with the regime in Phnom Penh; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: None. It is our policy to recognise states, not Governments. We have no dealings with either of the two rival Cambodian regimes as Governments.

Disarmament

77. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on recent progress in the mutual and balanced arms reduction talks.

Mr. Mellor: I have nothing further to report since my hon. Friend last raised the subject on 2 March. However, I draw his attention to the reference to MBFR contained in the communiqué of the ministerial meeting of NATO's defence planning committee of 26-27 May, a copy of which has been placed in the Library of the House.

Nicaragua

56. **Ms. Fyfe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has any plans to visit Nicaragua.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans at present to visit Nicaragua.

79. **Mr. Home Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of the United States of America in relation to the cease-fire in Nicaragua.

88. **Dr. Reid:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions Her Majesty's Government have had with the Government of the United States of America in relation to the cease-fire in Nicaragua.

Mr. Eggar: We have regular discussions with the United States Government on a whole range of issues including the situation in Central America. We welcome the cease-fire in Nicaragua.

Polish Government

80. **Mr. Ken Hargreaves:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when next he plans to meet members of the Polish Government.

Mr. Mellor: My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans at present to meet members of the Polish Government.

Chinese Foreign Minister

81. **Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met the Foreign Minister of China; and what was discussed.

Mr. Eggar: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 4 May 1988 at column *468*.

Cameroon

66. **Mr. Jacques Arnold:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next plans to visit Cameroon.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend has no present plans to visit Cameroon. I plan to visit Cameroon on 12-14 July.

Anglo-Mexican Relations

84. **Mr. Gerald Bowden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about Anglo-Mexican relations.

Mr. Eggar: We enjoy excellent bilateral relations with Mexico. This is reflected in regular ministerial exchanges, most recently with my visit to Mexico City from 1-3 June.

United States Ambassador

85. **Mr. Devlin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met the United States ambassador; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. and learned Friend regularly meets Ambassador Price and last did so during President Reagan's recent visit to London. They discussed a wide range of international and bilateral topics.

United Nations Session on Disarmament

86. **Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made at the United Nations session on disarmament.

Mr. Mellor: The third United Nations special session on disarmament began on 31 May and will end on 25 June. The plenary debate continues until 14 June.

My right hon. and learned Friend delivered the United Kingdom national statement on 7 June and a copy of this has been placed in the Library of the House. We are looking for balanced and constructive discussion of all aspects of arms control and disarmament and look forward to a final document which reflects this.

United Kingdom (International Organisations)

87. **Mr. Forth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has made any assessment of the United Kingdom's membership of international organisations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: United Kingdom membership of the majority of international organisations is naturally governed by international law but subject to these constraints our position is under continuous review.

Common European Foreign Policies

89. **Mr. Knox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his answer of 4 May, *Official Report*, column *459*, what specific subjects he expects to be raised when he next meets his European Community partners on 13 June to discuss development of common European foreign policies.

Mrs. Chalker: A wide range of current international issues is normally discussed at meetings of the sort to which the hon. Gentleman refers. Individual partners are free to raise any subject. On 13 June we expect discussion to include East-West relations, the middle east and Afghanistan.

Togo

90. **Mr. Neil Hamilton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next plans to visit the Republic of Togo.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend has no present plans to visit Togo.

Czechoslovakia

91. **Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the United Kingdom's relations with Czechoslovakia.

Mr. Mellor: Relations have not developed in recent months as we had hoped. We have had to protest twice to the Czechoslovak Government about violent police actions. We are concerned about Czechoslovakia's failure to honour all its commitments in the field of human rights. However, we continue to attach importance to relations with Czechoslovakia. I plan to visit Prague in June, and look forward to a full discussion of all aspects of our relations.

WEU Assembly

61. **Mr. Stevens:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the outcome of the Western European Union Assembly of 6-9 June.

Mr. Mellor: I refer my hon. Friend to the full record of the proceedings of the Western European Union Assembly, published by the Assembly, a copy of which will be placed in the Library of the House.

El Salvador

62. **Mr. Doran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has concerning the progress of peace talks in El Salvador.

Mr. Eggar: We have had no information to suggest any further progress has been made since the FMLN guerrillas withdrew from the peace talks in October last year.

Mr. Nelson Mandela

97. **Mr. Galloway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will ask Her Majesty's ambassador in Pretoria to seek to visit Mr. Nelson Mandela on the occasion of his 70 birthday; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: We have made clear, most recently in my right hon. and learned Friend's speech to the Royal Commonwealth Society on 17 May, our wish to see Mr. Mandela released unconditionally. The South African Government are aware of our views.

Middle East

30. **Mr. Walters:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on progress towards a peace settlement in the middle east.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: We continue to work for the convening of an international conference as a framework for negotiations to resolve the conflict and we urge all parties to respond positively to Secretary Shultz's continuing initiative.

Anglo-South Africa Relations

99. **Mr. John Carlisle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what further measures he is considering to improve Anglo-South Africa relations.

Mrs. Chalker: I refer my hon. Friend to the speech my right hon. and learned Friend made on 17 May to the Royal Commonwealth Society, a copy of which has been placed in the House of Commons Library.

French Revolution (Bicentenary Painting)

100. **Mr. Hood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give details of any communications he or his Department has had with the French Government concerning the cancellation of the work of the Scottish artist, Ian Hamilton Finlay commissioned by the French Government to commemorate the bicentenary of the French Revolution; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: We have had no formal contact with the French Government about this matter, although we have been following it closely. I understand that the French Ministry of Culture had written to Mr. Ian Hamilton Finlay with a detailed explanation of its decision.

British Hostages (Lebanon)

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action is being taken by Her Majesty's Government in respect of the disappearance in the Lebanon of Mr. Terry Waite and Mr. John McCarthy.

Mr. Mellor: We continue to call on those Governments or organisations with influence over the hostage-takers to use their influence to secure the unconditional release of those held. We follow up every lead in the search for news of our hostages. Her Majesty's embassy in Beirut is doing all it can, in very difficult circumstances. We also remain in touch with middle eastern and other Governments.

European Council of Ministers (Meetings)

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will next be attending a European Council of Ministers meeting; and what subjects he expects to discuss.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I expect to attend the next Foreign Affairs Council in Luxembourg on 13-14 June. The agenda includes items on Community financing, the Lomé convention, food aid, dates for next year's European Parliament elections and relations with CMEA and EFTA countries. The full agenda has been deposited in the Library of the House.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Fair Employment

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Irish Republic made representations to the Government of the United Kingdom on behalf of persons holding membership of the Fair Employment Trust against whom action had been instituted by the Housing Executive; and what responses were made by the Government to such representations.

Mr. Needham: Any such exchanges, as is usual with communications between Governments, would be confidential. But in the case to which I believe the hon. Lady refers, I understand from the Housing Executive, which is responsible for the recruitment and management of its own staff, that no punitive action has been instituted in respect of the two persons concerned.

Development (Newtownards)

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made to ensure that the new development adjacent to 35 Ballygeleagh road, Kircubbin, Newtownards complies with the conditions of its planning permission; what further action he proposes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: Apart from the failure to erect a screen fence which was required as a condition, the new development has been carried out in accordance with the planning permission granted on 17 July 1987. The Department of the Environment (Northern Ireland), as planning authority, has taken action to secure the erection of the fence. However, the developer has indicated that he wishes to apply for planning permission for the removal of the fencing condition.

Boards (Elected Representatives)

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he has any plans to increase the number of elected representatives on Government boards in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Needham: My right hon. Friend has no current plans to do so.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he has any plans to increase the number of elected representatives on education boards to the point where they no longer form a minority of members.

Dr. Mawhinney: No.

Hospitals

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will provide an estimate of the cost of employing a project manager, commissioning engineer, commissioning nurse, and commissioning supplies officer to form the core of a commissioning team for the proposed Antrim area hospital.

Mr. Needham: The estimated cost of employing the core commissioning team at 1987-88 pay and prices levels is £95,150 a year. It is expected that the team will be required for approximately three years.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will provide details of the number of hospital beds available in hospitals in East Antrim, by hospital, for each of the past 10 years.

Mr. Needham: The available information is as follows:

Average available beds 1980-87 for hospitals in East Antrim

Hospital	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*
Moyle	192	190	180	199	199	199	199	199
Dixon	62	62	62	58	56	62	26	closed
Smiley	26	26	26	13	26	26	25	24
Carrickfergus	33	35	35	35	35	35	34	34
Greenisland	79	79	79	79	79	79	79	79
Whiteabbey	222	231	235	235	235	235	235	235

Labour Statistics

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many persons are presently employed in manufacturing industries; and how many of these are employed by employers from the United States of America.

Mr. Viggers: At December 1987 (the latest date for which figures are available) there were 101,810 employees in employment in manufacturing in Northern Ireland. At present United States-owned companies account for 10,136 employees in manufacturing industries.

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many persons are presently in full employment; and how many of these employees are employed by employers from the United States of America.

Mr. Viggers: Information on full-time and part-time employment is obtained from the census of employment, held every three years. The most recent census results available relate to September 1984. At that time there were 392,925 full-time employees in employment in Northern Ireland. Numbers of full-time employees in United States-owned companies on a comparable basis to this figure are not available.

Newtownards (Parking Places)

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to provide additional parking places in Newtownards which will be *(a)* free and *(b)* pay parking.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 7 June 1988]*: The Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland is currently negotiating to purchase the old gasworks site in Mill street, Newtownards to construct a new 208-space car park. No decision on charging will be taken until it is purchased and is fully operational.

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, pursuant to his reply of 6 May, *Official Report*, columns *615-16*, how many free parking places there are at present in Newtownards; and how many free parking places there will be after the introduction of parking charges in the towns.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 7 June 1988]:* The Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland currently provides approximately 530 free off-street parking spaces in Newtownards. In addition there are approximately 900 on-street parking spaces available. After the introduction of parking charges in the town approximately 200 off-street parking spaces will remain free in addition to the on-street parking.

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will take steps to allow Ards borough council authority to provide *(a)* free car parks and *(b)* pay car parks in Newtownards.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 7 June 1988]:* The Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland is the sole road authority in Northern Ireland and has no statutory powers to enable the borough council to provide town centre parking in Newtownards.

Urban Development Grant

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what was the total allocation of funds under the urban development grant for Armagh;

(2) how many applications have been made for funding under the urban development grant for the town of Newry; how many of these applications have been successful; and what is the total sum paid to date on the successful applications;

(3) how many applications have been made for funding under the urban development grant for Armagh city; how many of these applications have been successful; and what is the total sum paid to date on the successful applications;

(4) what has been the total cost to date of the administration of the urban development grant in Northern Ireland;

(5) what was the total allocation of funds under the urban development grant for Newry;

(6) how many applications have been received for funding under the urban development grant scheme for each of the designated district towns in Northern Ireland; how many have been successful for each town; and what is the total sum which has been allocated to these successful applications in each designated town.

Mr. Needham *[holding answers 7 June 1988]:* These are matters for the board of the International Fund for Ireland. I have arranged to have the questions referred to the chairman.

Nursing Home Residents (Financial Assistance)

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what financial assistance is available from the Department of Health and Social Services for elderly people resident in private nursing homes.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 7 June 1988]:* Patients in private nursing homes whose capital does not exceed £6,000 may have their income including, for example, retirement pension and attendance allowance, supplemented by income support up to a maximum of £230 a week, depending on the type of care involved, to enable them to contribute to the cost of their maintenance. A personal expenses allowance of £9.55 a week is also payable.

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what additional financial assistance is available from the Department of Health and Social Services for elderly people currently resident in private nursing homes where the fees are in excess of the assistance currently available under income support regulations, particularly in areas where there are no beds available in area health board nursing homes.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 7 June 1988]:* None. However, health and social services boards have general responsibility for the welfare of persons in need including the accommodation needs of those elderly people who are unable to meet the financial charges for private nursing home care.

Milk Quotas

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what benefits are available from the Department of Health and Social Services to farmers who have no income for varying periods of time as a result of having exceeded their allocated milk quotas.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 7 June 1988]:* Farmers who work at least 24 hours a week on average may be eligible for family credit provided that they have at least one dependent child. Income support may be payable to those who work for less than 24 hours on average. Housing benefit may also be available to farmers, regardless of the number of hours worked, and they may be eligible for help with, for example, prescription and other Health Service charges. Social fund crisis loans may be considered for immediate short-term needs in an emergency where a loan is the only means of avoiding serious damage or serious risk to the health or safety of the applicant or a member of the family.

Newry and Armagh (Street Lighting)

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the total expenditure by the Department of the Environment on street lighting in the constituency of Newry and Armagh in the years 1984-85, 1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987-88.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 7 June 1988]:* Figures for street lighting expenditure by the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland are held by district council area and not by constituency as requested.

Total expenditure for the district council areas of Armagh and Newry and Mourne, including the council electoral areas, The Fews, Crotlieve and the Mournes wholly or partly outside the constituency of Newry and Armagh, was as follows:

	£
1984-85	652,000
1985-86	707,000
1986-87	724,000
1987-88	816,000

AI Services (N.I.) Society Ltd

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, pursuant to his reply of 11 May, how much AI Services (N.I.) Society Ltd. paid for his Department's assets; and whether this was the highest offer received for the assets.

Mr. Viggers *[holding answer 7 June 1988]:* Negotiations are presently under way with AI Services (N.I.) Society Ltd. on the terms and conditions for acquisition of the assets of the Department of Agriculture's AI service. As stated in the reply of 11 May, the grant of the licence to provide an AI service was not conditional on acquisition of the Department's assets and offers were not sought from applicants for the assets.

Crime Statistics

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many persons were charged with non-scheduled offences; how many were charged with scheduled offences; and how many persons were found not guilty of all or some of the offences with which they were charged in each six-month period of 1987.

Mr. Stanley *[holding answer 26 May 1988]:* Statistics are not available in the precise form requested. The number of persons tried in the Crown court for scheduled and non-scheduled offences and the number of those people found not guilty of all offences in each half of 1987 were as follows:

	First half	*Second half*
Numbers tried		
(a) Non-scheduled offences	689	504
(b) Scheduled offences	397	316
Numbers found not guilty of all offences		
(a) Non-scheduled offences	47	28
(b) Scheduled offences	18	15

Security Forces (Offences)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list separately for the Royal Ulster Constabulary and Reserve, the Ulster Defence Regiment and Army, the number of members and ex-members of these forces charged with and the number convicted of, scheduled offences committed, or allegedly committed, by members of the security forces while using firearms, for each year since 1969.

Mr. Stanley *[holding answer 26 May 1988]:* Comprehensive records of security forces personnel convicted of offences involving the use of firearms were not kept before 1980. Details of the numbers charged with scheduled offences involving the use of firearms are not available, but the information about convictions for such offences is as follows:

Number of convictions[1] of members of the security forces where firearms were used

	1980	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*[2]1988*
Regular Army	7	6	3	3	2	1	3	0	0
Ulster Defence Regiment	4	1	1	3	2	3	11	11	6
Royal Ulster Constabulary and Royal Ulster Constabulary (Reserve)	3	0	2	0	0	3	3	1	2
TOTALS	14	7	6	6	4	7	17	12	8

[1] (i) Convictions cover offences committed both on and off duty.
(ii) Information is not available where a person is discharged or his engagement is terminated before conviction or where he has left the service before committing the offence.

[2] Up to 30 April.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 9th June 1988

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Teachers' Pay and Conditions

Mr. Rowe: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he will be in a position to publish his proposals for teachers' negotiating machinery for pay and conditions of service.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend has received various responses from interested parties to the Green Paper "Teachers' Pay and Conditions: A Consultative Document". He will be undertaking discussions with those parties in the course of the next few months.

Burnage High School

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether, further to his answer to the hon. Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) of 23 May, *Official Report*, column *13*, he has now obtained a complete copy of the MacDonald inquiry into Burnage high school; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I have received a copy of the published report from Manchester city council and have placed copies in the Library. I have not seen a copy of the complete text. I consider that the report raises issues of public interest and should be published in full, unless the council can demonstrate overwhelming arguments to the contrary. I do not believe that considered conclusions can be drawn on the basis of the present severely foreshortened report. Accordingly I have asked the council for a clear statement of the specific difficulties which it sees in publishing the report in full and why these cannot be met if necessary by excising only particular and limited passages.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Nicaragua

Miss Lestor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* showing in ranked order the contributions, as a percentage of their total aid budget, made by the development assistance committee donor countries to Nicaragua, for the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Chris Patten: Net official development assistance from Development Assistance Committee donor countries to Nicaragua in 1986 as a percentage of their total official development assistance was as follows:

Donor	*per cent.*
Finland	2·28
Sweden	1·61
Norway	1·44
Netherlands	1·10
Switzerland	0·86
Austria	0·65
Italy	0·57
Denmark	0·46
France	0·28
Canada	0·25
Germany	0·21
Belgium	0·12
Australia	0·01
United Kingdom	0·01
Japan	0·00

Source: DAC Chairman's report

The figures are based on bilateral aid to Nicaragua as a percentage of each donor's total bilateral plus multilateral aid. The United Kingdom's share of multilateral, mainly European Community, aid to Nicaragua in 1985, the latest year for which this figure is available, amounted to about 0·2 per cent. of our total aid; statistics are not available which would show the amount which other DAC countries provided to Nicaragua through multilateral channels.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Social Security Commissioners

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Attorney-General how many days on average each social security commissioner has conducted oral hearings in *(a)* London, *(b)* Edinburgh, *(c)* Northern Ireland and *(d)* Cardiff (non-resident) in the period from January to the end of April 1988.

The Attorney-General: The table shows the average number of days over that period on which each of the resident commissioners conducted oral hearings in each of the places mentioned, except for Cardiff for which the table shows the average number of days on which each of the visiting, non-resident commissioners conducted oral hearings.

	London	*Edinburgh*	*Northern Ireland*	*Cardiff*
Number of resident commissioners	13	2	2	0[1]
Total number of days devoted to oral hearings	54	12	9	9·5
Average number of days on which each resident commissioner conducted oral hearings	4·15	6	4·5	2·38[2]

[1] Over the period, four different commissioners visited Cardiff from London to conduct oral hearings as required.
[2] This figure is reached by dividing the total number of days by the number of non-resident commissioners who sat at Cardiff over the period, that is 9·5/4.

"Spycatcher"

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Attorney-General if, in the light of the judgment of the High Court in Australia, he will give the latest total amount spent by Her Majesty's Government on all aspects, including legal, travelling, administrative and other costs, relating to the Government's legal action on "Spycatcher" in the United Kingdom and elsewhere.

The Attorney-General: The total amount expended to date on legal costs both here and abroad in respect of litigation and advice and on travelling and subsistence is about £848,000. To seek to quantify administrative costs would involve disproportionate expense.

TRANSPORT

Driving Instructors Licences

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information his Department holds on the numbers of approved driving instructors licences issued for each of the last 10 years; and at what level of regional disaggregation this information is available.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The national figures for the numbers of approved driving instructors on the Department's compulsory register and for the numbers of trainee licences to give instruction are as follows:

	ADIs at year end	*Trainee licences issued*
1977	20,897	4,355
1978	21,670	5,358
1979	22,511	5,635
1980	23,562	5,414
1981	25,098	5,496
1982	26,101	5,054
1983	26,942	5,142
1984	28,090	5,643
1985	28,675	4,203
1986	30,069	2,350
1987	31,336	2,518
[1]1988	32,090	1,377

[1] To May.
Regional figures are not available.

Plutonium

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what requirements have recently been imposed by *(a)* the United States Government and *(b)* the international Atomic Energy Agency regarding the transport of plutonium by air.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I refer the hon. Member to the reply which I gave to the hon. Member for Brent, East (Mr. Livingstone) on 1 February 1988, at column 509.

Motorways (Double-decking)

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans for double-decking motorways.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: None at present.

Road Schemes (Specifications)

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list those road schemes which have been built to the same specification as the M25 between Leatherhead and Reigate and identify any defects in the concrete construction of these carriageways which required rectification.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The information requested, for national roads, is as follows:

Road constructed in C40 concrete (jointed unreinforced)

Scheme	*Date of Construction*	*Approximate length (miles)*	*Defects*
M25 Leatherhead-Reigate	July 1984-May 1985	4·80	142 full depth cracks 73 mid-bay cracks 4 longitudinal cracks 7,632 joint arris spalling
M25 Wisley-Leatherhead	1984	4·70	6 full depth cracks in 1st rip and 16 full depth cracks in the 2nd rip behind dowel bars 326 thin bonded repairs
A55 Hawarden Bypass (Welsh Office)	1984	6·0	None reported
A11 Barton Mills	1985	1·5	None reported
M4 Link Culverhouse Cross to Capel Llanilltern (Welsh Office)	1984	3·3	None reported
A45 Ipswich Bypass (West)	April-July 1985 (approx)	4·5	None reported
M42 Tamworth (Kingsbury)	June 1985-August 1985	5·8	Very few minor cracks

Scheme	*Date of Construction*	*Approximate length (miles)*	*Defects*
M3 Popham-Bar End Contract 1	1984	6·3	52 longitudinal, diagonal or corner cracks 17 transverse cracks
A564 Blythe Bridge to Uttoxeter	July-October 1984	8·5	1 mid-bay crack
M42 Bromsgrove (Alvechurch)	June-October 1984	2·4	8 cracks in 2nd rip behind dowel bars
M42 Bromsgrove (Umberslade)	June 1984-May 1985	5·5	2 cracks in 1st rip and 35 in 2nd rip behind dowel bars
A30 Long Rock Bypass	1986	1·0	None reported
A12 Chelmsford Bypass	April-June 1986	8·8	None reported
A43 Towcester Bypass	September-October 1987	3·5	None reported
A11 Wymondham Bypass	June-July 1987	4·3	None reported
A303 Ilminster Bypass	July-October 1987	8·8	None reported
A30 Whiddon Down to Okehampton	September 1986-January 1987	4·1	None reported
A10 Buntingford Bypass	September-December 1986	2·8	None reported
A27 Chichester Bypass	1987-May 1988	8·30	A small area of road surface was rain damaged

Road Construction Contracts (Consulting Engineers)

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made on the proposed introduction of the changes in the role of the consulting engineer in motorway and trunk road construction contracts which he announced in the House on 23 July 1987, *Official Report*, column 288-89.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Details of the proposed amendments to the conditions of contract to give effect to the changes have recently been sent to the professional bodies for comment. The proposals maintain an important role for the consulting engineer, within a framework which places responsibility for major decisions on the Department as employer. Initially, the Department plans to let three contracts under the new arrangements, for which tenders are expected to be invited this autumn.

M25 (Leatherhead-Reigate)

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he is now in a position to make a statement on the progress made in establishing responsibility for the issues arising out of the construction of the M25 between Leatherhead and Reigate.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We have commissioned a leading consulting and testing engineer to undertake an independent investigation of the important and complex issues underlying the views reached by the engineer to this contract. The investigation will cover other concrete roads built to the same specification, which have apparently not suffered from such extensive problems. We expect to reach a view on the question of responsibility by about the end of the year.

Traffic Counts

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the highest traffic count of *(a)* all vehicles and *(b)* heavy commercial vehicles on urban roads that has been reported to his Department in the last two years; what was the date of the count; and where was the road.

Mr. Peter Bottomley *[pursuant to his reply, 25 March 1988, c. 267-68]:* I made a mistake in my answer. The information given regarding the highest "all vehicle" traffic count on a built-up road in 1987 was incorrect. The highest recorded 12-hour count was:

	Date of count	*12-hour count*	*Road*	*Location*	*Grid reference*
All vehicles	13 April 1987	64,874 (64,952 including pedal-cycles)	A4	Great-West Road Chiswick West London	52001780

The correct count at Woodford new road was 36,690 rather than the 73,380 quoted. I apologise for the error.

ENERGY

Plutonium (Shipments)

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how many shipments of plutonium have taken place *(a)* by air from and *(b)* by surface, within the United Kingdom, over the past two years; and if he will give details of airports and routes used.

Mr. Michael Spicer: For consignments of plutonium by air, I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) on 16 February 1988 at column 592. Plutonium is normally sent from Carlisle airport but small samples for safeguards purposes go from Manchester airport.

Surface consignments are primarily shipments from Dounreay to Sellafield. For this I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Member for Hampshire, North-West (Mr. Mitchell) to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Dr. Thomas) on 9 March 1988 at column 205-206.

Information relating to such movements over a short period and to specific shipments is confidential, for reasons of security and commercial sensitivity.

THORP

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when it is expected that THORP will begin commercial scale reprocessing; and what its expected lifetime will be.

Mr. Michael Spicer: THORP is expected to begin commercial reprocessing in late 1992. The lifetime of the plant will be governed by a combination of economic, commercial and operational factors. Experience of other reprocessing plants suggests that THORP can be expected to operate well into the second decade of the 21st century.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has as to what countries currently send spent fuel to Sellafield for reprocessing; what countries are expected to use THORP; and what countries are currently in negotiations for its use.

Mr. Michael Spicer: British Nuclear Fuels plc currently receives spent magnox fuel from Italy and Japan. Utilities in the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland have entered into contracts for reprocessing in THORP. Ongoing negotiations with potential customers are commercially confidential.

Energy Efficiency

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he plans any future initiatives to promote energy efficiency in the home; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: My Department's Energy Efficiency Office, in collaboration with the Building Societies Association, is now launching a new initiative to help building societies to promote energy efficiency to their customers.

For the purpose of this initiative, the Energy Efficiency Office and the Building Societies Association have together published a new leaflet, "Monergy in Your New Home", which building societies will be able to make available to their new and existing borrowers. The leaflet gives basic information on energy efficiency measures and finance, and invites the householder to ask the Energy Efficiency Office for a monergy pack. The pack gives more detailed advice, including a home energy survey checklist and a set of energy saving guides. I am placing a copy of the leaflet and the pack in the Library of the House.

I very much welcome this new initiative, and I am grateful to the Building Societies Association and the participating building societies for making it possible.

Electricity Privatisation

Mr. Butterfill: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what arrangements have been made in preparing the Central Electricity Generating Board for privatisation.

Mr. Peter Morrison: In his statement to the House on 25 February at column 454, my right hon. Friend set out the Government's proposals for the privatisation of the electricity supply industry in England and Wales. Subject to the passage of the appropriate legislation, it is his intention to make the following appointments to the companies which will emerge from the Central Electricity Generating Board.

The first company will own some 70 per cent. of the CEGB's generating capacity, both fossil-fuelled and nuclear. Lord Marshall, chairman of the CEGB, is also to be chairman-designate of this new company and Mr. John Baker, managing director of the CEGB, is to be the chief executive-designate.

The second new generating company will own the remaining 30 per cent. of the CEGB's capacity, all of it non-nuclear. Mr Robert Malpas CBE, currently a managing director of BP, will be taking up the appointment of chairman-designate of this company when he leaves BP in mid-1989. Between now and then he will be available for consultation. Mr. Ed Wallis, presently director of operations for the CEGB, is to be the chief executive-designate of the new company.

The chairman-designate of the national grid company is to be Mr. David Jefferies, the current deputy chairman of the Electricity Council. The chief executive-designate is to be Mr. Bill Kerss at present deputy chairman of the South Wales electricity board.

The chairmen and chief executives-designate will be involved in the work which is now beginning within the CEGB to plan for the transfer of the existing business to the new companies once the legislation to restructure and privatise the industry has been approved.

Energy Efficiency Office

Mr. Andrew MacKay: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he is in a position to announce his decision on the future role of the Energy Efficiency Office.

Mr. Peter Morrison [*pursuant to his reply* 22 January 1988, c. 885-86]: As I indicated in my answer of 22 January at columns 885-86, consumers are now well aware of the case for energy efficiency. The Energy Efficiency Office is therefore entering a fresh phase. I have decided that its aims will now be to run specific and targeted services backed by technical support, including guidance on the use of the energy efficiency industries; and to ensure that builders and property managers have the necessary technical advice.

Accordingly, from 1989-90, the main areas of the EEO's work will be:

(a) a better regional service offering specific advice and RD and D support to industrial and commercial firms;
(b) continuing support for community insulation projects targeted on pensioners and low income households;
(c) new ways of improving the energy efficiency of housing.

As part of the conclusion of the first phase of the EEO's work, I have decided to bring an end to the energy efficiency survey scheme. There is now wide public appreciation of the potential value of energy surveys, and grants for this purpose are no longer justified. Applications for approval to undertake a survey under the scheme will therefore be considered only if they are received by 24 June 1988.

WALES

Local Education Authorities

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what plans he has to enable local education authorities in Wales to have the freedom to experiment with new concepts and ideas that are not imposed by the centre, consequent upon his statement to the Welsh Grand Committee on 25 May; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: My right hon. Friend has no plans to prevent them from so experimenting. The Education Reform Bill proposes specific powers to enable him to disapply or modify the national curriculum requirements in a school for the purpose of development or experiment.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Manufactured Goods

Mr. Canavan: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the latest balance of trade in manufactured goods.

Mr. Alan Clark: In the first four months of 1988, there was an estimated deficit on trade in manufactures of £3·9 billion.

Citizens Advice Bureaux

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many citizens advice bureaux have legal aid panels.

Mr. Butcher: I understand that about 450 of the 74 main citizens advice bureaux in the United Kingdom currently operate solicitors' rota schemes. Another eight bureaux directly employ salaried lawyers.

Volume Car Production

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what estimate he has made of the trend in volume car production over the next five years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: There are no official estimates available.

Tropical Forests

Ms. Walley: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) if the Government are proposing or supporting any special projects related to tropical forest conservation at the forthcoming meeting of the International Tropical Timber Organisation Council session, 22 June to 1 July, in Rio de Janeiro;

(2) when he last met representatives of the International Tropical Timber Organisation; what support has been given to the International Tropical Timber Organisation in its administration of funding for tropical reforestation, conservation and management of tropical forests and market research relating to the international trade in tropical hardwoods; and if he will make a statement;

(3) pursuant to the answer of 21 April, *Official Report*, column *534*, what further action he has taken to implement a code of conduct for the international tropical timber trade; and if he will take steps to ensure that the conservation of tropical forests and their genetic resources will be an essential prerequisite for the future development of the international tropical timber trade.

Mr. Atkins: We will be represented at the forthcoming council session of the International Tropical Timber Organisation, which is expected to discuss the organisation's future role and work programme, including project assessment. We are currently considering our position on the various questions raised as we prepare for this meeting.

Ms. Walley: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the division of responsibility between the Department of Trade and Industry and the Overseas Development Administration with regard to the International Tropical Timber Organisation, particularly in relation to the tropical forestry action plan.

Mr. Atkins: The International Tropical Timber Organisation was established under what is primarily a trade-related commodity agreement; the Department of Trade and Industry has lead responsibility, particularly on trade-related matters. The Overseas Development Administration is responsible for the tropical forestry action plan, co-ordinated by the Food and Agriculture Organisation. The TFAP's overall framework for action in the field of tropical forestry extends to such areas as forestry and land use, conservation and fuel and energy. The tropical timber agreement requires the ITTO to avoid duplication of efforts and co-operate with United Nations organisations such as the FAO. We would expect to see this reflected in the ITTO's future activities.

Chlorofluorocarbons

Ms. Walley: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what specific initiatives his Department has already taken and plans to take, in support of the Montreal protocol for reducing the production of chlorofluorocarbons; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: The Secretary of State for the Environment has lead policy responsibility in respect of the United Kingdom's obligations under the Montreal protocol, in consultation with my right hon. and noble Friend.

Her Majesty's Government were an initial signatory to the protocol last September and have actively participated in the subsequent discussions on the proposed EC implementing measures, in particular the provisions relating to the scheduled freeze and cuts in production and consumption, and to identify scope for substitutes and

increased opportunities for recycling and recovery. We are also supporting the initiatives being taken by industry at a European level to reduce dependance on these chemicals.

Foxley Wood Planning Inquiry

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if his Department's submission to the Foxley wood planning inquiry in Hampshire represents his policy in respect of proposals for large-scale housing developments in the south and south-east of England.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: My Department does not have policies in respect of housing developments in south-east England or anywhere else. Whether the Department considers it has something to contribute depends on the merits of each case.

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will publish his Department's submission to the planning inquiry being held into the housing proposals at Foxley wood, Hampshire.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Under normal DOE procedures, copies have been sent to the appellant and to the local authority. In addition I have arranged for a copy of the submission to be placed in the Library of the House.

Film Industry

Mr. Dixon: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what are the implications for his policy towards the future of the film industry of the reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission of alleged restrictive labour practices in that industry.

Mr. Maude: The reference is intended to establish whether certain specified restrictive labour practices exist in the broadcasting and film industries and, if so, whether they operate against the public interest. The Government will consider whether action is appropriate in the light of the MMC's report.

Insurance Brokers Registration Council

Mr. Page: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will make a statement on the position of the Insurance Brokers Registration Council as a recognised professional body under the Financial Services Act.

Mr. Maude: Recognition of professional bodies under the Financial Services Act is a matter for the Securities and Investments Board. In January the board made an interim recognition order in respect of the council pending the making and coming into effect of the council's new rules on investment business. An order approving the Insurance Brokers Registration Council (Conduct of Investment Business) Rules 1988 has been laid before Parliament and copies of the rules have been placed in the Library. The order and with it the rules will come into effect on 21 June 1988.

Tin Mining (Cornwall)

Mr. Harris: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, if he will make a statement on the current position of the Rio Tinto Zinc Corporation plc tin mining operations in Cornwall.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke *[pursant to his answer, 22 March 1988.]:* The loan of £15 million offered in 1986 to Carnon Consolidated Ltd., then a subsidiary of RTZ Corporation plc, is repayable in the years 1996-2001. The loan of £10 million offered this year to Carnon Holdings Ltd., (the new parent company of Carnon Consolidated Ltd.) replaces guarantees of £10 million commercial loans under the 1986 offer. This loan is repayable from 1993 onwards. Both loans are interest-free and both are linked to capital expenditure. Repayments of both loans are related to the after-tax profits of the preceding year above a minimum level. There are provisions for repayments to be waived if profits are insufficient.

Companies Registration Office

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the proposed increase in the charge for searches at the Companies Registration Office and as to why the request for a duplicate of the roll film of information received at the office each day as a cost-effective service to the public and to the Companies Registration Office was not accepted.

Mr. Maude *[holding answer 7 June 1988]:* The proposed increase in the fee for searches at the Companies Registration Offices is intended to ensure that the full cost of providing this service is met by those using it. The Registrar of Companies has been discussing with major users the possibility of supplying them with roll film copies of company documents and expects to write to them shortly about such a service.

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many searches were undertaken by the Companies Registration Office during 1987 on behalf of Government and other public authorities listed as major users.

Mr. Maude *[holding answer 7 June 1988]:* No Government Department or other public authority is among the major users of search facilities at the Companies Registration Offices. In 1987, some 170,000 searches were carried out for the CROs' own working purposes and those of other parts of the Department of Trade and Industry. Searches for other Government Departments and other public authorities attract the normal search fee and are therefore not always separately identified, but total at least 70,000.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Value Added Tax

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of businesses with a turnover of £250,000 or less are currently subject to a surcharge as a result of late submission of their quarterly value added tax returns.

Mr. Lilley: Customs do not keep separate surcharge statistics for businesses with a turnover of £250,000 or less.

At the end of May 1988 approximately 20 per cent. of all businesses registered for VAT were in receipt of extant surcharge liability notices. About half of these had not yet incurred a surcharge.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the nature of representations he has

received from small businesses concerning the restriction on companies taking advantage of the new instalment system for value added tax payments to those which are up to date on payments; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley: No such representations have been received.

Consumer Credit

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the rate of growth in consumer credit over the past year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley: In the 12 months to 31 March 1988, the amount outstanding on all consumer credit agreements rose by 18·1 per cent.

CIVIL SERVICE

Staff Exchanges

Mr. Baldry: To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what was the level of interchange between the Civil Service and industry and commerce in 1987.

Mr. Luce: Returns from Departments show that there were 278 outward and 195 inward secondments in 1987, a total of 473. This is more than double the figure in 1979 and is 1 per cent. higher than in 1986. The figure for secondments to other bodies rose by 5 per cent.

I welcome this high level of interchange and will be reviewing ways of strengthening the links still further. A copy of the 1987 interchange report has been placed in both Libraries of Parliament.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Litter-related Offences

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* prosecutions and *(b)* convictions were made for each of the last five years in (i) the United Kingdom, by region, and (ii) Basildon for litter-related offences; and how much was recovered in fines.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information available to me, which may be incomplete, is brought together in the following tables. Data is not collected centrally on moneys recovered in fines for individual offences.

Table 1 Defendants proceeded against and found guilty of litter-related offences[1] by police force area

England and Wales — *Number of defendants*

Police Force Area	*1982*		*1983*		*1984*		*1985*		*1986*	
	Total proceeded against	*Total found guilty*	*Total proceeded against*	*Total found guilty*	*Total proceeded against*	*Total found guilty*	*Total proceeded against*	*Total found guilty*	*Total proceeded against*	*Total found guilty*
Avon and Somerset	47	36	46	41	54	45	47	47	34	27
Bedfordshire	15	14	18	17	11	10	13	13	10	10
Cambridgeshire	22	21	24	24	23	21	15	15	18	16
Cheshire	23	20	33	31	29	27	33	30	31	30
Cleveland	30	29	41	36	30	30	20	18	33	30
Cumbria	156	148	141	128	155	140	185	174	229	209
Derbyshire	105	92	67	54	65	58	57	52	73	66
Devon and Cornwall	60	58	84	81	69	60	66	63	56	49
Dorset	15	14	36	33	29	24	27	27	24	24
Durham	12	12	29	26	14	14	18	17	24	21
Essex	59	57	72	68	63	58	46	45	44	39
Gloucester	26	26	28	28	32	32	30	27	36	34
Greater Manchester	103	96	100	97	76	73	65	59	47	45
Hampshire	41	35	48	44	51	50	57	54	69	54
Hertfordshire	109	103	94	82	90	87	85	79	53	52
Humberside	33	33	39	38	53	50	26	23	16	13
Kent	67	63	60	57	53	48	41	36	29	23
Lancashire	78	71	87	79	89	82	80	72	61	58
Leicestershire	37	36	36	35	36	33	23	20	27	21
Lincolnshire	30	28	47	45	49	48	39	35	48	44
City of London	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	1	1	1
Merseyside	66	59	55	46	77	61	48	31	39	27
Metropolitan Police	91	77	56	43	71	58	73	66	74	64
Norfolk	42	42	42	41	24	23	26	24	34	28
Northamptonshire	22	22	27	24	36	35	22	21	11	10
Northumbria	55	54	46	41	29	25	23	21	40	34
North Yorkshire	37	36	41	33	37	31	30	28	23	20
Nottinghamshire	102	97	73	73	48	47	76	75	93	92
South Yorkshire	162	152	126	114	114	99	91	86	101	83
Staffordshire	73	69	59	58	35	34	46	43	55	51
Suffolk	25	20	28	26	40	31	29	23	28	26
Surrey	51	46	62	59	56	51	34	28	26	24
Sussex	68	63	68	66	43	41	44	42	31	26
Thames Valley	54	48	42	39	37	36	46	45	46	41
Warwickshire	28	26	32	31	20	16	18	15	27	26
West Mercia	59	54	77	65	59	57	55	52	79	69
West Midlands	98	90	99	91	92	82	53	46	58	51
West Yorkshire	130	118	128	113	79	66	78	63	48	43
Wiltshire	31	30	44	44	24	23	23	23	18	18
Dyfed Powys	22	22	22	20	18	18	32	30	49	45
Gwent	90	88	51	50	64	61	33	32	81	72
North Wales	33	31	34	34	20	18	17	17	14	13

Police Force Area	1982 Total proceeded against	1982 Total found guilty	1983 Total proceeded against	1983 Total found guilty	1984 Total proceeded against	1984 Total found guilty	1985 Total proceeded against	1985 Total found guilty	1986 Total proceeded against	1986 Total found guilty
South Wales	126	115	117	113	96	83	83	73	84	76
England and Wales	2,533	2,351	2,459	2,268	2,191	1,987	1,954	1,791	2,022	1,805

[1] Offences under the Litter Acts 1958, 1971 and 1983 and the Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978.

Table 2
Defendants proceeded against and found guilty of litter-related offences[1]

Billericay[2]	Number of defendants[3]				
	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Total proceeded against	3	2	8	1	1
Total found guilty	3	2	8	1	1

[1] Offences under the Litter Acts 1958, 1971 and 1983 and the Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978.
[2] Data is not collected centrally for Basildon alone but for the whole of the Billericay petty sessional division.
[3] Figures are those recorded centrally and are approximate: detailed checking of individual cases would involve disproportionate cost.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many offenders already convicted of litter-related offences were *(a)* re-prosecuted and *(b)* re-convicted at later dates for similar offences in the United Kingdom, by region, and in Basildon, in each of the last five years.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many *(a)* prosecutions and *(b)* convictions there were for litter-related offences on British Rail property for each of the last five years;

(2) how many *(a)* prosecutions and *(b)* convictions there were for litter-related offences for each of the last five years for each of the United Kingdom's national parks.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information requested is not available. Details of the precise location of such offences are not collected centrally.

Industrial Waste

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* prosecutions and *(b)* convictions there were in connection with the illegal dumping of industrial waste (i) in rivers and seas and (ii) by other methods in the United Kingdom, by region, and in Basildon for each of the last five years.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: It is not possible to distinguish prosecutions for the unlawful disposal of industrial waste from the records of court proceedings held centrally.

Isle of Man, Guernsey and Jersey

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what provisions of the single European market in 1992 will apply to *(a)* the Isle of Man, *(b)* Guernsey and *(c)* Jersey; and under what powers.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The provisions of the treaty of Rome which apply to the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man are governed by articles 25-27 and protocol 3 to the treaty of accession. Provisions for achieving the completion of the internal market will apply to the islands only within this framework. They are primarily concerned with the harmonisation of custom controls and the free movement of agricultural and animal produce.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what are the arrangements for the issue of the common European passport in *(a)* the Isle of Man, *(b)* Guernsey and *(c)* Jersey; and how this will affect the right of movement, work and abode in the United Kingdom and other European countries of residents of the islands.

Mr. Renton: Passports will continue to be issued in the islands through the lieutenants-governor in exercise of the royal prerogative. The common format passport, which is not a European Community passport as such, will merely bring about changes in form to the present passport. The status, entitlements and privileges of the holder are in no way affected.

Immigration

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether there will be any change to the scope of the definition of public funds, as contained in the statement of changes in immigration rules July 1985, when the wording is revised to take into account the Social Security Act 1986.

Mr. Renton: There will be a slight change of scope but only insofar as family credit and income support, which are to be included in the definition, do not cover precisely the same ground as supplementary benefit and family income supplement, which they replace.

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the revised definition of public funds in the statement of changes in immigration rules July 1985 will allow overseas students to be exempt from 80 per cent. of the community charge, on the same basis as students from the United Kingdom.

Mr. Renton: Yes, in that whatever criteria are decided for this concession will apply equally to overseas and home students.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the cost to a person appealing against the decision of an entry clearance officer; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: There is no charge for exercising any statutory right of appeal provided under the Immigration Act 1971.

Residence Periods

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if there has been any change in the period of residence in the United Kingdom required before indefinite leave to remain can be granted at the discretion of his Department.

Mr. Renton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to a question from the hon. Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser) on 5 November 1987, at columns 833-34. There have been no subsequent changes.

Haverigg Prison, Millom

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Copeland of 17 December 1987, *Official Report*, column *626*, he will publish the report and recommendations of the inquiry into security arrangements at Haverigg prison, Millom, Cumbria;

(2) if, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Copeland of 17 December 1987, *Official Report*, column *626*, he will state whether any security arrangements have been changed at Haverigg prison, Millom, Cumbria;

(3) if he will list all those occasions in the last twenty years on which prisoners have escaped, or attempted to escape, from Haverigg prison, Millom, Cumbria.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Statistics on escapes are published in annual reports on the work of the prison department, copies of which are available in the Library, and show that the following numbers of prisoners escaped from Haverigg:

	Number
1969	—
1970	1
1971	3
1972	9
1973	6
1974	—
1975	2
1976	4
1977	6
1978	2
1979	6
1980	2
1981	1
1982	5
1983	3
1984-85	14
1985-86	5
1986-87	5

The 1984-85 figure is for the 15-month period from 1 January 1984—31 March 1985. Subsequent reports relate to the year from 1 April. Between 1 April 1987 and 31 May 1988, five prisoners escaped.

As to attempted escapes, the readily available information relates to 1986-88. During these years, the following numbers of prisoners were caught while in the process of attempting to escape, or were apprehended or seen in circumstances which suggested that they were about to make an attempt:

Year	*Number*
1986	30
1987	18
[1]1988	4

[1]To 31 May.

In accordance with standard practice, inquiries were made for internal management purposes into particular incidents at Haverigg to which the hon. Member's question answered on 17 December 1987 related. No changes arising specifically out of those incidents were deemed necessary but the experience of escapes at Haverigg and elsewhere is in forming a general review of security arrangements in medium-low security establishments which is in progress.

Work has been carried out on the installation of a new fence around the sportsfield at Haverigg, which will bring this area up to current security standards in keeping with the main perimeter of the prison; and work to install a similar fence around the prison's farm was scheduled to start in the near future.

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the various categories and numbers of prisoners held at Haverigg prison, Millom, Cumbria, in each year since 1979.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The readily available information is given in the table.

Population of Haverigg closed training prison on 31 March: by security category, 1979-88

	Security category[1]					
	A	*B*	*C*	*D*	*not recorded centrally*	*Total population in establishment*
1979	—	—	435	10	60	506
1980	—	—	370	15	145	534
1981	—	—	470	10	40	522
1982	—	—	495	10	10	518
1983	—	—	475	20	45	539
1984	—	—	490	15	15	522
1985	—	—	465	15	40	521
1986	—	—	495	10	35	533
1987	—	—	480	10	20	512
1988	—	—	465	10	45	518

[1] The figures are those recorded centrally and are approximate, detailed checking of individual cases would involve disproportionate cost. All figures are rounded estimates and therefore may not add to the totals.

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what investigations have been carried out into alleged drugs abuse at Haverigg prison, Millom, Cumbria, in the last 10 years.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We attach much importance to keeping illicit drugs out of prison establishments and are determined that counter-measures are taken. The regular monitoring of the incidence of drugs is a normal management function. Following the issue of further guidance last autumn, governors were required to review and report upon the situation in their establishment and the need for additional measures to be taken. A full search by drug dogs took place at Haverigg on 23 March, when some cannabis was found. Allegations concerning the

availability of drugs at Haverigg will be investigated by the deputy director general of the prison service as part of his inquiry into the recent incidents at the prison.

Vietnamese Refugees

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will reconsider the limit on Vietnamese refugees allowed into the United Kingdom from Hong Kong, in the light of the recent additional influx of refugees to the colony.

Mr. Renton: I have nothing to add to the reply given to the hon. Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek) on 26 April at columns 85-86.

DNA Fingerprinting

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will now consider DNA fingerprinting as conclusive evidence of parentage; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: Due weight is already given to the results of DNA tests submitted by applicants in support of entry clearance applications. The results of the pilot trial to evaluate the role of DNA testing in immigration procedures will be available shortly.

Mrs. N. Goodman (Passport Application)

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department why the application of Mrs. Nanette Ida Goodman of 12 Avenue terrace, Southend-on-Sea, to the Petty France office for a passport renewal on 19 April, explaining the urgency of her application, has still not been dealt with; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: Without Mrs. Goodman's date of birth, the London Passport Office is unable to trace her application on the computerised record of postal applications awaiting processing. If my hon. Friend will let me have this information, we will do all we can to ensure that the application is expedited. The passport department has tried to contact Mrs. Goodman by telephone, but her number is unavailable.

Ministerial Meeting, Munich

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the recent ministerial meetings he attended in Munich.

Mr. Hurd: The Ministers of the States of the European Community responsible for counter-terrorism and immigration met on 3 June in Munich under the chairmanship of Dr. Zimmermann, the Minister of the Interior of the Federal Republic of Germany. Lord Cockfield, a Vice-President of the European Commission, was present for the discussion of immigration matters.

In the immigration meeting we reviewed the position on possible changes in controls at the internal borders of the Community in the light of the Single European Act. Some of my colleagues envisaged that it might become possible to abolish immigration frontier controls within the Community if a series of conditions were fulfilled. These conditions would include the strengthening of controls at the external frontiers of the Community, including the full harmonisation of visa requirements. Others agreed with the United Kingdom that it was not possible to envisage the abolition within the foreseeable future of all immigration controls over third country nationals at intra-Community borders. All the Ministers present endorsed the statement by the presidency that no decision to abolish these controls had been taken.

Frontier controls were also discussed, at my initiative, in the Trevi meeting in view of their importance in continued international cross-border co-operation to combat terrorism, drug trafficking and other crime. My colleagues unanimously accepted my suggestion that the Trevi machinery should be used to consider the implications of changes in frontier controls and the kind of measures which could be taken to off-set potential security disadvantages which might otherwise result from the implementation of the European internal market.

At the immigration meeting, we had before us a further report from the ad hoc group of senior officials established in 1986 during the United Kingdom presidency. We endorsed the recommendations made by that group, including recommendations for improved co-ordination between the representatives of member states in third countries, in assessing conditions in those countries which are relevant to the grant of visas, and to the consideration of applications for asylum.

My colleagues and I continue to be concerned at the considerable increase in some member states of the European Communities in the number of applications for asylum from persons who do not satisfy the criteria laid down in the 1951 Geneva refugee convention and appear to be exploiting the asylum procedure for purposes for which it is not intended. We therefore reaffirmed our aim of guaranteeing every asylum seeking the right to have his application examined in one of the member states but equally the aim of preventing the abuse whereby the same foreign national made different asylum applications in several member states. We welcomed the progress made towards establishing the necessary criteria for determining which state should be responsible for considering any individual application.

In the Trevi meeting we also discussed events since our previous meeting in Copenhagen in December, including the recent murderous attacks by the Provisional IRA in the Netherlands. There was unanimous and wholehearted condemnation of the Provisional IRA and my colleagues supported my suggestion that this should be recorded in the presidency press statement issued after the meeting.

Various measures to intensify co-operation were agreed including priority search measures for major terrorists, improved gathering of information on terrorist movements and the immediate exchange of information following a major terrorist incident. Proposals for greater co-operation between Trevi states in the forensic field will be developed by officials. We also agreed a refined and updated assessment of the terrorist threat to Community countries.

Further co-operation to combat drug trafficking using the drug liaison officer network was agreed.

My colleagues also agreed to my proposal that we should study ways of confiscating funds intended to support terrorism. The United Kingdom Government's proposals for legislation to replace the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984, which expires in March 1989, will provide a starting point for that study.

Prisons (Mother and Baby Units)

Mrs. Ann Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many women in prison mother and baby units on the most recent convenient date had not previously served a custodial sentence; what were their ages; and for what offences they had been sentenced.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[pursuant to his reply, 23 May]:* I regret that incorrect information was contained in that answer. The reply should have read as follows:

Forty-two women including seven remand prisoners in mother and baby units on 13 May 1988 had not previously served a custodial sentence. Their ages are shown in table 1. Table 2 lists the primary offences for each of the 35 sentenced women.

Table 1

Age	*Number of women*
16	1
18	4
19	3
20	4
21	1
23	7
24	2
25	6
26	4
27	1
29	1
30	1
31	2
32	2
33	1
35	1
36	1
Total	42

Table 2

Offence	*Number of women*
Drugs offences	10
Theft	9
Assault	2
Wounding	2
Robbery	3
Burglary	3
Fraud	2
Handling stolen goods	3
Arson	1
Total	35

NORTHERN IRELAND

Hospitals

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what overall savings will be obtained by the proposal in the Northern health board operational plan to replace ward accommodation at Holywell hospital by provision of local psychogeriatric units in Larne and Whiteabbey.

Mr. Needham: This is primarily a matter for the Northern Health and Social Services Board. Rather than achieve savings, however, I understand that the proposal, which is only at the planning stage, is intended to improve services for elderly people in the areas mentioned.

Fair Employment

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the employers in Northern Ireland which the Fair Employment Agency has *(a)* chosen or *(b)* had discussions with to revoke or modify directions previously given under subsection 2(i) or 2(ii) under Part II, section 13 (5)(a) or (b) of the Fair Employment Act (NI) 1976.

Mr. Viggers *[holding answer 20 May 1988]:* The information is as follows:

Cookstown District council;
Armagh district council;
Lough Neagh Fishermen's Co-operative.

ENVIRONMENT

Waste Disposal

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to introduce legislation to ensure that the producers of waste are responsible for its disposal; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: We intend, following our September 1986 consultation paper, to announce our conclusions on waste disposal law amendment very shortly.

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when the Government propose to compile a register of persons authorised to handle waste.

Mr. Moynihan: Our consultation paper on amendments to the law relating to waste disposal included a proposal to register waste handlers. We plan to make an announcement on the results of the consultation very shortly.

Litter and Industrial Waste

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how many tonnes of *(a)* domestic litter and *(b)* industrial waste were legally disposed of for each of the last five years in (i) the United Kingdom, by region and (ii) Basildon;

(2) if he will estimate how many tonnes of *(a)* domestic litter and *(b)* industrial waste were illegally disposed of in each of the last five years in (i) the United Kingdom, by region and (ii) Basildon;

(3) what was the total cost to *(a)* taxpayers and *(b)* ratepayers of the disposal of (i) domestic litter and (ii) industrial waste for each of the last five years in *(x)* the United Kingdom, by region and *(y)* Basildon;

(4) how many tonnes of *(a)* biodegradable and *(b)* non-biodegradable waste were (i) legally and (ii) illegally disposed of for each of the last five years in the United Kingdom, by region, and in Basildon;

(5) if he will list the various methods by which *(a)* domestic litter and *(b)* industrial waste are disposed of; if he will list the total number of tonnes disposed of by each method for each of the last five years in the United Kingdom, by region, and in Basildon; and if he will express the total for each method as a percentage of the overall total;

(6) how many tonnes of *(a)* industrial waste and *(b)* domestic litter were disposed of other than in seas or rivers in the United Kingdom, by region, and in Basildon, for each of the last five years;

(7) how many tonnes of *(a)* biodegradable and *(b)* non-biodegradable waste were disposed other than in seas and rivers in the United Kingdom, by region, and in Basildon, for each of the last five years.

Mr. Moynihan: Responsibility for the regulation of waste disposal lies with waste disposal authorities. Statistics on the amounts of waste disposed of by the authorities or by the private sector under licence, and the costs to local authorities, are not collected centrally.

The two major methods of disposal of domestic and industrial waste are incineration and landfill, with or without prior treatment. It is estimated that about 100 million tonnes of controlled waste is generated in England and Wales annually. Of this 50 million tonnes is industrial waste, 28 million tonnes is domestic and commercial and the remainder is ash, slag and building waste. Within this total, about 1·5 million tonnes is defined as special waste under the Control of Pollution (Special Waste) Regulations 1980 as being dangerous or difficult to dispose of.

Industrial waste is disposed of almost entirely by the private sector and the costs are borne by the industry generating the waste.

Approximately 10 per cent. of the domestic and commercial waste collected by local authorities is incinerated; the rest is landfilled.

No valid estimates are available of the volume of waste disposed of illegally throughout the country but the London Waste Regulatory Authority estimates that about 1 million tonnes are dumped in the London area at any one time.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how many tonnes of *(a)* domestic litter and *(b)* industrial waste were disposed of in the sea or in rivers for each of the last five years in the United Kingdom, by region, and in Basildon; and if he will make a statement;

(2) how many tonnes of *(a)* biodegradable and *(b)* non-biodegradable waste were disposed of in the sea or in rivers for each of the last five years in the United Kingdom, by region, and in Basildon.

Mr. Moynihan: Waste disposal at sea is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Quantities and types of waste disposed of in United Kingdom sea areas from 1981-85, the last five years for which published figures are available, are given in the 8th-12 annual reports of the Oslo commission, copies of which are available in the Library of the House. Data for 1986 will be available shortly. Wastes are normally licensed for disposal at sea only if they are biodegradable or inert and non-toxic. Discharges of waste to internal waters is a matter for water authorities and figures are not kept centrally.

Landfill Waste Sites

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment who is responsible for monitoring landfill waste sites once local authority responsibility ceases after they are closed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: The obligations of a waste disposal authority under the Control of Pollution Act 1974 to monitor landfill sites cease when the licence expires. However, district councils retain their duties under section 91 of the Public Health Act 1936 to inspect their districts for the occurrence of any statutory nuisance which may be caused by the deposit.

Housing Density

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he is satisfied that provisions relating to the density of house and other building and the provision of drainage and sewerage are not being exceeded on land in the vicinity of Cortons brook and the Brent river; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: Decisions concerning the density of development in Ealing, as elsewhere, are a matter for the local planning authority taking into account any general guidance. My Department's circular 17/82 emphasises that, where land drainage considerations arise, they should always be taken into account in determining planning applications. The adequacy of infrastructure is also a consideration for the local planning authority in consultation with the relevant utilities.

Nuclear Waste

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what high level nuclear waste of United Kingdom origin has been dumped in drums in the sea.

Mr. Moynihan: None. High level nuclear waste is being stored for at least 50 years before disposal is envisaged. In any case such waste is unsuitable for disposal in drums at sea.

Newcastle Recreational Project

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to make funds available to Newcastle under Lyme borough council for Newcastle recreational project 1746/88 and to finance similar projects in operation throughout the United Kingdom now and in the future; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: Government money specifically allocated to sport and recreation is channelled through the Sports Council. The council dispenses these funds in accordance with its own policies on a regional and national basis. Priority is given to projects which provide sport and recreation opportunities for areas and groups of special need including the unemployed. I understand that the council's west midlands region provided some financial support last year for the Newcastle recreation project and that similar projects in other regions are also assisted by the council. The Government fully support the Sports Council's "areas of special need" policies and increased the council's grant by over £2 million for this purpose in 1988-89, to a total of £39 million.

Chlorine

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will take account of the projected rise in chlorine levels in the atmosphere from 3 parts per million to 5 parts per million by the end of the century, in deciding whether to support a ban on the use of aerosol sprays containing chlorofluorocarbons; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: The Government believe that emissions of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) are best limited through

controlling supply rather than specific uses, such as aerosols. The European Commission's proposals for implementing the Montreal protocol in the European Community also reflect this overall approach. We nevertheless welcome the recent announcement by the British aerosol industry that it will voluntarily phase out non-essential use of CFCs in aerosols by the end of 1989. The Government are keen to encourage voluntary reductions in CFC use by all sectors of industry.

Environmental Impact Assessments

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will explain how the system for including environmental impact assessments in the planning process will operate in enterprise zones and simplified planning zones; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: I shall shortly be laying before Parliament regulations applying the requirements of the EC directive on environmental assessment to projects subject to development control. Further provision will be required to ensure that the directive's requirements are complied with in enterprise zones and simplified planning zones, without unnecessarily restricting the broad freedom to undertake development in such zones. The necessary instruments will be made as soon as possible.

London Docklands (Housing)

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will estimate the average weekly rent of a private unit of housing in the area of the London Docklands development corporation for each year since its establishment.

Mr. Trippier: The only information available is for rents registered by the rent officer in the year in question in each of the three dockland boroughs, as follows:

Year	*Newham*		*Southwark*		*Tower Hamlets*	
	Unfurnished £	*Furnished* £	*Unfurnished* £	*Furnished* £	*Unfurnished* £	*Furnished* £
1981	9·71	13·36	12·11	18·04	9·61	10·40
1982	11·31	14·81	14·07	20·96	11·46	17·58
1983	11·35	17·61	14·19	28·86	11·83	36·96
1984	13·02	23·27	16·25	21·04	13·58	23·04
1985	13·46	24·17	16·75	36·21	13·71	18·19
1986	15·19	26·11	19·21	30·88	17·36	22·60
1987[1]	15·60	27·81	19·83	32·44	16·85	22·69

[1] First half.

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will estimate the average construction costs of a unit of housing association housing *(a)* in the area of the London Docklands development corporation and *(b)* in that part of the London borough of Southwark for which the planning authority is the London Docklands development corporation;

(2) if he will estimate the change in investment on public housing in real terms in the area of the London Docklands development corporation since 1981.

Mr. Trippier: I will write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will estimate the average construction costs of a unit of new housing for private sale *(a)* in the area of the London Docklands development corporation and *(b)* in that part of the London borough of Southwark for which the planning authority is the London Docklands development corporation.

Mr. Trippier: Information on average construction cost is not available, but average sale prices between October 1986 and September 1987 have been estimated as follows for the LDDC part of each of the three docklands boroughs:

	Newham £	*Southwark* £	*Tower Hamlets* £
1 bed unit	45,000	57,500	65,000
2 bed unit	55,000	70,000	100,000
3 bed unit	70,000	80,000	120,000
4 bed unit	115,000	150,000	150,000
5 bed unit	—	200,000	—

Agricultural Dwellings

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will take steps to ensure that, as a prerequisite to the granting of planning permission for an agricultural dwelling, the future economic viability of the farm is established beyond reasonable doubt.

Mr. Waldegrave: No. Guidance about the viability of a farming enterprise is given in the annex to DOE circular 24/73. Each planning application for an agricultural dwelling is decided on its merits in the light of this guidance, the other factors listed in the annex, and all other material planning considerations.

London Docklands Development Corporation

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much public money has been spent and how much private investment attracted to the London Docklands development corporation in *(a)* Southwark, *(b)* Newham and *(c)* Tower Hamlets, for each year since the London Docklands development corporation was established.

Mr. Trippier: I will write to the hon. Member.

London Docklands (Population)

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will estimate the population within the area of the London Docklands development corporation for each year since its establishment, and the predicted population for the 1990s.

Mr. Trippier: Population estimates and projections for the LDDC area since 1981 are as follows:

Year	Population
1981	39,429
1982	40,700
1983	41,100
1984	42,000
1985	43,820
1986	45,749
1987	[1]46,564
1991	[2]86,700
1996	[2]95,100

[1] Provisional
[2] Projection

Widdicombe Committee

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when the Government will publish their response to the Widdicombe committee of inquiry into the conduct of local authority business.

Mr. Chope: Soon.

Council House Sales

Mr. Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will update the table giving information on sales of dwellings by each local authority in England, referred to in the answer given to the hon. Member for Banbury on 2 March, *Official Report*, column *580*.

Mr. Waldegrave: I have today placed in the Library the latest version of table 2 giving information reported by each local authority in England on the progress of council house sales up to the end of December 1987.

Tenants' Choice

Mr. Squire: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he intends to issue further explanatory material on tenants' choice; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: The tenants' choice scheme, provided for in part IV of the Housing Bill, is designed to broaden the choices open to secure public sector tenants; to give tenants better services, whether by changing landlord or through the effect of competition on existing landlords; and further to open up very large stocks of rented housing held by local housing authorities to diversity, competition and best housing management practices. As I undertook at the Committee stage of the Bill to do, I have today placed in the Libraries of both Houses a paper, "Tenants' Choice", which explains how we propose to achieve this, including the part that we propose will be played by secondary legislation and by administrative arrangements. It explains in particular the important responsibilities we propose for the Housing Corporation, not only to approve prospective new landlords, but also to act as enabler and provider of information and assistance to tenants and prospective landlords wishing to operate the scheme: amendments to the Bill, tabled yesterday, provide for this extended role. The paper, additional copies of which will be available in the Vote Office, is being sent to the local authority associations and others with a major interest, but is considered primarily to assist this House in its further consideration of part IV of the Bill.

Domestic Waste (Imports)

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to the particular danger to human, animal and plant health arising from the disposal of domestic waste imported from the United States of America.

Mr. Moynihan: My officials in consultation with the MAFF and DHSS are considering whether any dangers are posed to human, animal or plant health by the import of domestic waste from the USA.

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to the amount of domestic waste imported into the United Kingdom from the United States of America in each of the last five years.

Mr. Moynihan: We are not aware of any imports of domestic waste from the USA in the last five years.

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will seek powers to prohibit the import of domestic waste from the United States of America into the United Kingdom.

Mr. Moynihan: The provision of waste disposal services is a legitimate business provided it is carried out in accordance with proper environmental safeguards, does not involve risks to public health and does not jeopardise the availability of suitable facilities for the disposal of United Kingdom waste. I am aware of public concern about proposals to import large quantities of domestic wastes from the United States of America and am considering whether any action may be necessary.

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has on the proposed dumping of domestic waste from the United States of America at Arpley Meadows, Warrington.

Mr. Moynihan: I understand that a British Company, Power, Water and Waste, Ltd., have approached the Manchester Ship Canal Company with proposals to landfill United States domestic waste at one of their facilities. I believe negotiations are continuing.

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has on the content of the proposed imports of waste from the United States of America into the United Kingdom for disposal at Arpley Meadows, Warrington.

Mr. Moynihan: I understand that the proposal to import waste from the United States of America concerns normal domestic refuse.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Refugee Camp, Hong Kong

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about his recent visit to the Vietnamese refugee camp in Hong Kong.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. and learned Friend visited the Green Island reception centre and the Chi Ma Wan closed centre in Hong Kong. He was impressed by the

efficiency with which both centres are run by the Hong Kong Government, and by the great efforts made to ensure that conditions are as humane as possible.

There has been a dramatic increase in the numbers of Vietnamese boat people arriving in Hong Kong in recent months. The population in the camps has risen to some 15,000, compared with about 8,000 a year ago. More than 1,500 of these have arrived in June. There is little realistic prospect of resettling people on this scale. The great majority are leaving Vietnam for essentially economic reasons, not because of political persecution.

This situation cannot go on indefinitely. We are considering urgently with the Hong Kong Government whether their current policy of treating all Vietnamese boat people arriving in Hong Kong as refugees should be changed.

My right hon. and learned Friend took the opportunity to raise the problem of the Vietnamese boat people with the Vietnamese, Chinese and Soviet Foreign Ministers in New York on 7 June. We will continue to take every opportunity to emphasise to all Governments concerned the need to find appropriate durable solutions to the problem.

Exercise Purple Venture

Sir Antony Buck: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the effects of Exercise Purple Venture on the United Kingdom's relations with the countries in Latin America.

Mr. Eggar: Exercise Purple Venture has no relevance to our relations with countries in Latin America. Purple Venture is essentially a paper exercise, although a command and communications element will deploy to Ascension Island. It is a routine command post exercise designed to test command and control procedures. It has nothing whatever to do with the Falkland Islands.

SCOTLAND

Clyde Herring

82. **Mr. McKelvey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans to review the current total allowable catch for Clyde herring; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: There are no plans to review the current total allowable catch for Clyde herring. The most recent advice from the advisory committee on fishery management suggests that the catch in 1989 should be set at the level of landings in recent years.

Fish Stocks

83. **Mr. Foulkes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has recently received information from the advisory committee for fisheries management about the current condition of fish stocks in United Kingdom waters; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The most recent advice from the advisory committee on fishery management has been received only this week and is still being considered. Advice for some important stocks, notably cod, haddock and whiting in the North sea, has been deferred until the November meeting of ACFM.

North Sea Cod

84. **Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if it is his intention to seek a review of the state of the stock of North sea cod before the end of June; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The state of the North sea cod stock is reviewed each year by the advisory committee on fishery management. At their latest meeting, ACFM decided to defer until November their advice on North sea cod when further information should be available.

Artificial Limbs

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what profit margin his Department has agreed with the companies which supply artificial limbs to the National Health Service.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The supply of artificial limbs is to be put to competitive tender from 1 January 1989.

Prosthetists

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the cost to the National Health Service if all prosthetists currently employed by health boards became contractor employed.

Mr Michael Forsyth: The trade union representing the prosthetists gave notice in March to the Scottish Home and Health Department that their members intended to resign from the National Health Service, and take up employment with the contractors who manufacture artificial limbs, from the summer. The cost of this change cannot yet be precisely estimated, but is unlikely to be substantial, in view of the saving of the salaries of prosthetists who resign, (and the overheads, such as national insurance and superannuation, associated with their employment) and in view of the competitive tendering, for the supply of artificial limbs from 1 January 1989.

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the salaries for prosthetists in the National Health Service who are *(a)* contractor employed and *(b)* employed by health boards.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The NHS salary ranges (effective from 1 November 1987) for the grades of prosthetists employed by health boards are as follows:

	Minimum £	*Maximum* £
Intern	6,680	7,800
Basic Grade (non-National Centre qualified)	7,800	10,020
Basic Grade (National Centre qualified)	9,470	12,250
Senior/Manager	11,690	14,750

Prosthetists who transfered to the NHS from the commercial companies in 1980 retained as part of that transfer agreement their commercial rates of pay which (effective from 1 July 1987) are as follows:

	£
Over 30 years service	14,240
15-30 years service	14,210

	£
10-15 years service	14,035
Up to 10 years service	13,985

In addition to the salaries of the staff involved, the NHS is of course liable for national insurance contributions, and other overheads.

Legal Aid

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many applications have been considered by the Scottish Legal Aid Board since its foundation to the latest convenient date; how many of these have been dealt with by the board; what percentage has been granted; and, of those refused, what have been the reasons for refusal, broken down into percentages in each category.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Provisional figures for applications to the board in its first year of operation are given in the table. Some of the applications determined were submitted under the arrangements obtaining prior to the assumption of its responsibilities by the board on 1 April 1987. Figures for applications for an increase in authorised expenditure for advice and assistance are not yet available.

Civil Legal Aid

	Number	
Applications received	31,390	
Applications determined	31,589	
	Percentage	*Percentage*
Granted	68·9	
Refused	31·1	
Reasons for refusal:		
Means		2·3
Merits		12·1
Abandoned by applicant		16·7
	100	

Criminal Legal Aid (Summary causes)

	Number	
Applications received	52,450	
Applications determined	50,972	
	Percentage	*Percentage*
Granted	89·3	
Refused	10·7	
Reasons for refusal:		
Not in the interests of justice		7·6
Means		1·4
Not timeous		1·7
	100	

Criminal Appeal Applications

	Number
Applications received	1,414
Applications determined	1,303
	Percentage
Refused	55

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many complaints he has received from *(a)* the general public, *(b)* solicitors and *(c)* right hon. and hon. Members regarding delays or difficulties in the consideration of applications for legal aid by the Scottish Legal Aid Board.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Since 1 April 1987 when the Scottish Legal Aid Board assumed responsibility for the administration of legal aid my right hon. and learned Friend has received *(a)* 13 complaints from the general public and various bodies, *(b)* 24 from solicitors, including representative bodies of the profession and *(c)* 22 from right hon. and hon. Members.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the current number of staff working in the Scottish Legal Aid Board; what is the approved establishment figure; whether he has received representations from the board for additional staffing; what his response has been; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: On 31 May 1988 the Scottish Legal Aid Board employed 345 persons, including temporary staff. Control over staffing costs is achieved by determination of the grant in aid for the board's administration rather than by setting a limit to the numbers employed. No representations have been received from the board for additional staff, but the numbers and grading of staff are the subject of a normal efficiency scrutiny which has just begun.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the total sum approved for legal aid by the Scottish Legal Aid Board since is establishment; what were the comparable figures for equivalent periods in previous years.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: During its first year (1987-88) the Scottish Legal Aid Board sought and received £44·577 million from the Vote for the Scottish Legal Aid Fund. In 1984-85 comparable expenditure was £31·75 million; in 1985-86, £38·525 million; and in 1986-87, £44·025 million.

Housing Statistics

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has as to how many houses in the Dundee district authority area are *(a)* below tolerable standard; *(b)* require comprehensive modernisation; *(c)* require major repairs and *(d)* are affected by dampness, in the public and private sectors, respectively, on the latest available figures; and what are the corresponding figures for each year since 1979.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The available information is set out in the table:

Dwellings

Year position at 31 March	*(a) Below tolerable standard*		*(b) Local authority Requiring comprehensive modernisation*	*(c) Local authority Requiring major repairs*	*(d) Local authority Affected by dampness*
	Public	*Private*			
1979	1,734	6,078	n/a	n/a	n/a
1980	1,233	5,779	n/a	n/a	n/a
1981	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	100
1982	1,027	3,776	n/a	n/a	[1]40
1983	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1984	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1,000
1985	70	2,074	n/a	n/a	1,341
1986	12	1,458	10,366	11,810	2,900
1987	50	2,650	13,825	n/a	2,680

Notes:
n/a—Not available.
[1] Estimate.
The information is taken from returns submitted to the Scottish Development by Dundee District.
Information on *(b)*, *(c)* and *(d)* was not collected prior to 1981.
No returns received on BTS in 1981, 1983 and 1984.
No returns received on the other categories in 1983.

Rating Reform

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish in the *Official Report* the local authorities in Scotland ranked according to the percentage and number of *(a)* losers and *(b)* gainers under the poll tax proposals, showing those figures alongside that ranking; and if he will express these figures for both households and individuals.

Mr. Lang: The information is not available by local authority.

Sawmills, Pulp and Board Mills

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will provide an estimate of the number of people employed in Scottish sawmills, pulp and board mills wholly or partly using home-produced timber.

Mr. Lang: I am unable to add anything to the replies I gave to the hon. Member on 31 March 1988 and 22 April 1988.

Labour Statistics

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give, for each month since January for which figures are available, the number of job vacancies in Dundee.

Mr. Lang: The number of job vacancies (excluding community programme vacancies) notified and remaining unfilled in the Dundee jobcentre area for each month from January 1988 to April 1988 (the latest month for which information is available) is as follows:

1988	*Number*
January	350
February	379
March	452
April	462

It is estimated that only around one third of all vacancies are notified to jobcentres.

This information is available in the Library.

DEFENCE

United States Military Constructions

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has about United States military construction projects in the United Kingdom and its dependent territories for which funding approval is being sought for the United States fiscal years 1989 and 1990, giving for each project its location, the nature of the facilities to be constructed and the project cost.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Funding approval for United States military construction projects for fiscal year 1989 is currently being sought for the following projects:

RAF Alconbury
Dormitories

RAF Bentwaters
Add to and upgrade fire station
Security police operations facility
Sound suppressor support facility
Central Post Office
Airmen's community centre

RAF Fairford
Add to and alter physical fitness centre

RAF Feltwell
Passive defence equipment storage facility

High Wycombe Air Station
Medical aid station replacement

RAF Lakenheath
Semi-hardened communications facility
Digital European backbone facility
Chemical warfare protection squadron operations facility
Dormitory
Composite medical facility

Menwith Hill Station
Expansion of operations facility

RAF Mildenhall
Add to and alter operations facility
Child development centre
Upgrade water storage and distribution system
Administration support facility

RAF Upper Heyford
Add to and upgrade vehicle maintenance shop
Combat ammunition control centre

Passive defence equipment storage facility

RAF Welford
Fire station
Munitions storage igloos

Antigua
Boat shop and pier construction

United States military construction projects in fiscal year 1990 for which funding is currently being sought:

RAF Alconbury
Alternate combat runway
Deputy commander: operations complex
Squadron operations facility
Aircraft maintenance facility
Conventional munitions shop
Combat repair equipment storage
Passive defence equipment storage warehouse
Combat readiness centre
Add to and alter physical training facility

RAF Bentwaters
Semi-hardened telecommunications facility
Chemical warfare protection—avionics maintenance facility
Dormitory

RAF Chessington
Add to and upgrade contingency hospital

RAF Fairford
Jet fuel storage and hydrant refuelling system
Upgrade water storage and distribution system

High Wycombe air station
Dormitory
Add to civil engineering building
Physical protection upgrade (at various sites administered by High Wycombe air station)

RAF Lakenheath
Chemical warfare protection—squadron operations facility
Chemical warfare protection—squadron operations facility
Chemical warfare protection—ready crew facility
Combat repair equipment storage facility
Alter dormitory
Storm drainage disposal

RAF Lanark
Contingency hospital

RAF Locking
Contingency hospital

RAF Machrihanish
Dining facility expansion
Enhance physical protection for combined operations Centre

Menwith Hill station
Administration building and cafeteria

RAF Mildenhall
Combat repair equipment storage facility
Add to and alter gymnasium
Alter sewage treatment plant
Operations intelligence facility

RAF Upper Heyford
Chemical warfare protection—squadron operations facility
Alter munitions storage facilities
Combat repair equipment storage facility
Dormitory

Ascension Island
HF antenna installation
Ground installation for satellite navigation system

Diego Garcia
Ground installation for satellite navigation system

Budgetary estimates are a matter for the United States authorities.

HMS Sturdy (Incident)

Mr. Ian Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department has now completed its investigation of the wartime incident involving HMS Sturdy; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: On 25 November 1944 HMS Sturdy sighted a 350-ton coaster, flying the Japanese flag, off Laut island to the south-east of Borneo. As the water was too shallow for torpedoes to be launched, Sturdy surfaced and opened fire on the ship. When this did not succeed in sinking the coaster, the submarine came alongside and a party boarded her. They found the ship to be carrying a cargo of oil, a legitimate target. About 50 men had already abandoned ship and the boarding party attempted to persuade a number of women and children still on board to do likewise. They refused to do so, although a boat was available and, in addition, there was a quantity of floating wreckage nearby. The sea was flat calm and land was less than 5 miles away.

The boarding party then placed demolition charges with four minute fuses and returned to the submarine, which drew away from the coaster. At this point Sturdy's commanding officer, Lt. W. St. G. Anderson RNR, who had been able to see about eight people on the ship when she was boarded, and who had concluded that there could be no more than about 15 still aboard, learned that there were in fact 40 to 50. By then it would have been too late to return to the coaster. The charges exploded, setting the ship on fire, and she was left as a total loss.

After he reported this action, Lt. Anderson was relieved of command, and the question whether he should face a court martial was raised at a senior level. In examining the case a number of factors were taken into consideration. Lt. Anderson was a young officer—he was 24—bearing a considerable burden of responsibility who had otherwise served with some distinction. The action in question took place in shallow water where Sturdy could not dive. There was a significant risk of air attack from which the submarine would have had no means of escape, and Lt. Anderson would have been placing his boat and crew in additional danger by remaining on the surface longer than was absolutely necessary. Decisions therefore had to be taken very rapidly. Moreover, had the ship, which was readily indentifiable as an enemy vessel by her flag, been in water deep enough to allow the launching of torpedoes, Lt. Anderson would have been fully entitled under the normal conventions of war to sink her by this means without warning, and without regard to the fate of those on board. In these circumstances, while Lt. Anderson was held to have made a serious error of judgment, a court martial was not considered appropriate. He was subsequently returned to command in another submarine. The deaths of civilians involuntarily caught up in war as a result of a foreign occupation is of course a matter of regret.

Gibraltar (Shootings)

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has given permission for any Army personnel based in the United Kingdom to be summoned by the Gibraltar coroner; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I have nothing to add to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden) on 17 May, at column 370.

Pilot Training

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what pilot training he proposes to contract out to British Aerospace; what arrangements there will be in relation to costs, security and standard of training; what are the implications for the acquisition of Tucano aircraft for basic pilot training; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: We have no plans to contract out any of our pilot training; therefore, there are no implications for the acquisition of Tucano aircraft for basic pilot training by the Royal Air Force.

EMPLOYMENT

Job Training Scheme

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he proposes to make any changes in the job training scheme.

Mr. Nicholls: As was announced in the White Paper, "Training for Employment", the new and the old job training schemes, together with all our other training programmes for adults and the community programme will be replaced by employment training from 5 September. There will be transitional arrangements as the current schemes are replaced by the new programme, and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State recently announced that a £10 premium is now payable to new JTS participants in line with plans for employment training.

Employment Patterns

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what are the implications for the north-west region of current changes in national employment patterns.

Mr. Lee: The north-west is sharing in the growth in employment in the service sector, self-employment and part-time jobs. These sectors comprise a similar share of employment in the north-west as in Great Britain as a whole.

YTS

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many young people went into employment, full-time education or further training on leaving youth training schemes.

Mr. Cope: The latest results from the 100 per cent. follow-up survey of YTS leavers in the period April 1986 to November 1987 show that three months after leaving YTS 191,686 (59 per cent.) young people were in a job, 35,982 (12 per cent.) were on another YTS scheme and 11,893 (4 per cent.) were on a full-time course.

Employment Agencies

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans to introduce legislation to amend the licensing requirements in respect of employment agencies.

Mr. Nicholls: We have no plans to introduce such legislation.

Trades Union Congress

Mr. Watts: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what plans he has to meet the general secretary of the Trades Union Congress to discuss industrial relations.

Mr. Nicholls: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has no current plans to meet the general secretary of the Trades Union Congress to discuss industrial relations.

European Social Charter

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on progress in implementing article 4 of the European social charter.

Mr. Cope: The United Kingdom has accepted all of the provisions of article 4 of the European social charter, except paragraph 3.

Dock Workers

Mr. Jacques Arnold: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the ratio between the numbers of staff employed by the National Dock Labour Board and the total numbers of registered dock workers for each year between 1979 and 1987.

Mr. Nicholls: At 31 December of each year the totals were:

	A *Staff employed by the National Dock Labour Board*	*B* *Total number of registered dock workers*	*Ratio A:B*
1979	527	25,770	1:49
1980	500	23,110	1:46
1981	433	18,219	1:42
1982	309	15,340	1:50
1983	296	13,813	1:47
1984	277	12,505	1:45
1985	269	11,892	1:44
1986	259	10,482	1:40
1987	245	9,965	1:41

Factory Inspectorate

Mr. Flannery: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish in the *Official Report* for each of the Health and Safety Executive offices *(a)* the number of sites under the control of Industrial Major Accident Hazards Regulations, *(b)* the number of such sites under the jurisdiction of the Chemical Group of Her Majesty's factory inspectorate, *(c)* the number of Her Majesty's factory inspectors in each chemicals group of Her Majesty's factory inspectorate and *(d)* the total number of premises under the jurisdiction of each chemicals group of Her Majesty's factory inspectorate.

Mr. Nicholls: The information requested is not available. The Health and Safety Executive does not hold information on the number of sites subject to the Control of Industrial Major Accident Hazards Regulations. No HSE area office has a group of inspectors solely for inspection in the chemicals industry.

Enterprise Allowance Scheme

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will revise the regulations concerning the enterprise allowance scheme to enable unemployed persons not in receipt of income support to be considered for assistance under the scheme.

Mr. Nicholls: No. The specific purpose of the enterprise allowance scheme is to help those unemployed people who would like to set up in business but are deterred from doing so because they would lose their entitlement to unemployment benefit or income support. I have no plans to change the purpose of this scheme.

Community Programme

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he will review the regulations regarding entry to the community programme so that unemployed persons not in receipt of benefit may be considered for placements.

Mr. Nicholls: We have no plans to change the present arrangements. From 5 September all current programmes for unemployed adults, including the community programme, will be replaced by the new adult programme, "Employment Training". Benefit receipt will not be an eligibility condition for employment training.

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what action he proposes to take to ensure that recreational opportunities for the unwaged section of the community will not be adversely affected by the discontinuation of the community programme in September in favour of the new adult training scheme.

Mr. Nicholls: The community programme will be replaced from 5 September by "Employment Training". Project-based training will be an important part of the new programme with some 194,000 project-based opportunities in the first year, broadly the present level of community programme provision. I hope that most current community programme projects will move forward into employment training.

Poultry Industry (Tenosynovitis)

81. **Mr. Strang:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will take steps to seek to reduce tenosynovitis in the poultry industry.

Mr. Nicholls: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible and place a copy of my reply in the Library.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palace of Westminster (Labour Statistics)

Ms. Walley: To ask the Lord President of the Council how many people are employed in the Palace of Westminster.

Mr. Wakeham: With the exception of Members and the 917 staff employed by the House of Commons Commission, the varying nature of attendance of those employed in the precincts of this House makes it impossible to provide any meaningful total.

It is understood that the political parties, the police, the security and fire authorities, the press and broadcasting authorities, the Property Services Agency and Crown Suppliers, the Post Office and British Telecom, and other authorities have approximately 950 officers and staff whose employment involves some attendance at the House of Commons. Some of these, however, serve both Houses.

In addition, 1,327 passes have been issued to Members' secretaries and research assistants, but not all are regularly employed in the House. Officials from Government Departments also attend the House from time to time as required.

Palace of Westminster (Accidents)

Ms. Walley: To ask the Lord President of the Council how many accidents have occurred at the Palace of Westminster to members of the public, outside contractors and employees of the Palace of Westminster in each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Wakeham: The information requested prior to 1981 is not available. The numbers of reported accidents from 1981 to date is as follows:

	Members of the public	*Outside contractors*	*Staff of the House of Commons*
1981	22	2	64
1982	29	3	40
1983	20	1	49
1984	22	—	67
1985	35	—	45
1986	18	—	47
1987	14	1	29
1988 to date	8	—	20

Palace of Westminster (Visits)

Ms. Walley: To ask the Lord President of the Council what information he has as to how many people visit the Palace of Westminster each year *(a)* for the Line of Route or the Public Gallery *(b)* to attend meetings or attend dinners and *(c)* to attend lobbies of Parliament.

Mr. Wakeham: In 1987, the estimated numbers of visitors admitted to the House of Commons were as follows:

	Number
(a) Line of Route	112,176
Public Galleries	147,439
(b) Meetings	69,880
Dinners	77,058
(c) Lobbies	15,058

Vote (Delivery)

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Lord President of the Council on how many days in the current parliamentary Session the Deliverer of the Vote has failed to deliver the Vote to recipients outside the House on the day of publication; what the reasons for the late or postal deliveries are; and what steps are being taken to ensure same day delivery.

Mr. Wakeham: The Vote has not been delivered to Members' addresses outside the House on the day of publication on 16 occasions during this Session due to printing delays. In addition, of all the morning deliveries ordered by Members this Session, not all of which include the Vote, 3·3 per cent. have had to be posted due to sickness, transport breakdowns or staff resignations.

I am advised the HMSO has markedly improved the time of delivery to the House of documents for the morning delivery and that all possible steps are being taken by the Deliverer of the Vote and his staff to ensure regular delivery of the Vote to Members on the day of publication.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Food Regulations

80. **Ms. Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if, in view of recent salmonella incidents, he has any plans to review his policy on food regulation.

Mrs. Currie: My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food had already announced on 30 October 1987 that officials had been asked to have further consultations with interested parties to consider the detail of any necessary revisions to current food legislation. I understand that these consultations are continuing, but are expected to be completed by late summer.

Psychiatric Hospitals

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of those psychiatric hospitals caring for long-stay patients in every region showing *(a)* those which have been approved for closure, *(b)* those which have been proposed for closure by their regional health authority, *(c)* those which have been listed in regional strategic plans as possible candidates for closure and *(d)* the number of patients in each hospital.

Mrs. Currie: The table lists every mental illness hospital in England which discharged (in 1986) one or more in-patients after a stay of five years of more. Some sites listed are mixed mental illness and mental handicap but have a predominance of mentally ill patients. The number of in-patients resident at each site is at 31 December 1986. The closure status is annotated according to the classifications set out in the question. Those under *(a)* are linked to a specified target closure date.

Mental illness hospitals and units in England by DHA with long term patients ie with a stay of 5 years or more, and number of resident patients at 31 December 1986.

Hospital	Resident patients at 31 December 1966	Closure status
Northern Regional Health Authority		
North Tees General	113	—
St. Lukes	294	—
Garlands	579	—
Darlington Memorial	68	—
Shotley Bridge	21	—
Sedgefield Community	105	—
Winterton	783	—
St. Georges Morpeth	649	—
St. Mary's	536	—
St. Nicholas	496	—
South Shields General	100	—
Cherry Knowle	554	—
Yorkshire Regional Health Authority		
De La Pole	318	—
Broadgate	240	c
Thorpe Road Howden	20	—
Clifton	469	a
Naburn	176	c
Lynfield Mount	110	—
Bingley	9	—
Scalebor Park	270	c
Raikeswood	21	—
Storthes Hall	759	c
High Royds	730	c
Stanley Royd	642	c
Trent		
Scarsdale	120	a
The Pastures	572	b
Kingsway	323	b
The Towers, Regional Secure Unit	380	b
Carlton Hayes	496	b
St. John's Lincoln	457	b
Rauceby	338	b
Newstead	67	a
Mapperley	278	b
St. Francis	152	
Saxondale	317	a
Kendray	133	c
Tickhill Road	97	
Loversall	105	
Rotherham District General	101	
Sheffield Mental Illness Unit	816	
East Anglian Regional Health Authority		
Fulbourn	325	
Peterborough District	6	
St. Audry's	393	b
St. Clements Ipswich	173	
Hellesdon	309	One of these
St. Andrew's	354	will close—b
St. Nicholas	154	b
North West Thames Regional Health Authority		
Fairfield	609	b
Lister	58	
Hill End	376	c
Napsbury	775	b
St. Bernard's Wing, Ealing	798	
Shenley	805	b
Horton	915	
North East Thames Regional Health Authority		
Basildon	103	
Severalls	556	c
Herts and Essex General	42	

Hospital	Resident patients at 31 December 1966	Closure status
Princess Alexandra	104	
Rochford	67	
Runwell	508	c
Friarn	754	a
Warley	686	c
Whittington London	86	
German	105	
The London Hospital St. Clement's	129	c
Goodmayes	661	c
Thorpe Coombe	53	
Whipps Cross	2	
Claybury	792	a
South East Thames Regional Health Authority		
Brighton General	36	
Hellingley	260	b
St. Mary's, Etchinghill	18	
St. Augustine's	379	b
Stone House	282	b
Maidstone	645	b
Sundridge	65	
Bexley	703	b
Greenwich District	39	
Farnborough	116	
Cane Hill	576	b
Tooting Bec	662	b
North Wing Dulwich	82	
Guy's	82	
New Cross	32	
South West Thames Regional Health Authority		
Abraham Cowley Unit, St. Peter's	102	
Ottershaw	78	
Frimley Park	50	
Brookwood	675	b
West Park	576	
Netherne and Fairdene	530	
Graylingwell	444	
St. Francis, Haywards Heath	389	
Warlingham Park	362	c
Long Grove	611	b
Springfield	777	
Chiltern Wing Sutton Hospital	84	
Wessex Regional Health Authority		
St. Ann's Poole	73	
Herrison	346	b
St. James's Portsmouth	294	
Knowle	337	b
Basingstoke District Park Prewett	523	
The Old Manor	198	
St. Margarets	17	
Roundway	455	
St. Martin's Bath	59	
Whitecroft	96	b
Oxford Regional Health Authority		
Hungerford	25	
Fair Mile	329	
Smith	24	
Borocourt	305	
St. John's Stone	374	a
Kettering & Dist General	21	
St Crispin	350	c
Littlemore	292	
Warneford	58	
South Western Regional Health Authority		
Barrow	209	
Glenside	391	c
Penrice	45	
Bomcoose	28	
St Lawrence's Bodmin	526	c
Trevillis House	26	
Moorhaven	260	a
Tone Vale	430	c
Mendip	336	a
West Midlands Regional Health Authority		
Barnsley Hall	291	b
Stonebow Unit, County Hospital	33	
St Mary's Burghill	95	b
Worcester Royal (Newtown)	158	
Powick	147	a
Royal Shrewsbury (Shelton)	323	
St George's Stafford	424	
St Edwards	583	
St Matthews Burntwood	656	
Central, Warwick	418	b
Highcroft	424	
Rubery Hill	301	b
All Saints	557	
Walsgrave	176	
Burton Road	102	
Hollymoor	290	b
New Cross, Wolverhampton	137	
Mersey Regional Health Authority		
Countess of Chester (Psych Wing)	644	To be reduced in size
Barony	58	
Arclid	51	
Crossley	55	
Parkside	536	c
Winwick	1,115	To be agreed
Sefton General	137	
Park	49	
Whiston	85	
Rainhill	902	a
Greaves Hall	131	
Walton, Liverpool	38	
St. Catherine's Birkenhead	70	
North Western Regional Health Authority[1]		
Lancaster Moor	664	
Victoria Blackpool	122	
Wesham Park	72	
Lytham	50	
Whittingham	705	
Queen's Park	116	
Accrington Victoria	34	
Burnley General	147	
Rossendale General	67	
Ormskirk and District General	73	
Bolton General	151	
Ball Birch	42	
Fairfield General	75	
North Manchester General	341	
Withington	192	
Oldham and District General	148	
Edwards ESMI Unit	43	
Birch Hill	63	
Peel Hall	33	
Prestwich	912	
Stepping Hill	134	
Ollersett View	57	
Tameside General	147	
Bridgewater	115	

[1] North Western Region is developing a long-term strategy which may inyolve the closure of some of these hospitals.

Hospital Visits

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received concerning

the difficulties encountered by people dependent on social security benefits in securing assistance towards travelling costs for journeys to visit close relatives in hospital; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: A few representations have been received. Community care grants are available to income support claimants in certain circumstances for the cost of fares to visit a relative in hospital. Guidance and directions for the award of such payments appear in the social fund manual which was published in November 1987. A copy is in the Library.

Mental Illness

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many patients suffering from mental illness, discharged from hospital in the last two years, have an individual case worker assigned to them; and if he will make a statement;

(2) how many patients suffering from mental illness have been discharged from hospital in each health authority for the past two years.

Mrs. Currie: The table provides the available information on discharges, by health authority, from National Health Service mental illness hospitals and units in England for the two latest available years. The figures on discharges exclude transfers to other National Health Service hospitals and the special hospitals, and do not relate to individual patients as a patient may be admitted and discharged more than once during the year. Statistics on the numbers of patients suffering from mental illness who have an individual case worker assigned to them after discharge from hospital are not centrally collected.

Discharges from National Health Service mental illness hospitals and units in England, excluding transfers

Health authority	*1985*	*1986*
Northern	12,759	12,664
Yorkshire	15,481	15,317
Trent	14,582	14,853
East Anglian	6,358	6,574
North West Thames	12,881	12,394
North East Thames	13,844	13,543
South East Thames	12,858	12,896
South West Thames	11,002	11,249
Wessex	10,468	10,729
Oxford	6,931	6,786
South Western	11,046	10,731
West Midlands	17,344	17,630
Mersey	10,603	10,961
North Western	18,593	18,074
Bethlem Royal and Maudsley	1,436	1,538
Hospitals for Sick Children	14	12
England total	176,200	175,951

Mr. Joseph Gillam

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he will submit to the pensions appeal tribunal the statement of case in respect of Joseph Gillam, of 58 Meadowfield close, Rock Ferry, Birkenhead, as indicated in the joint Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State's letter to the hon. Member for Birkenhead dated 22 July 1986.

Mr. Portillo: The statement of case was originally submitted to the pension appeal tribunal on 9 November 1987. The appeal was returned without action on receipt of additional evidence from Mr. Gillam's representative on 12 February 1988. A supplementary statement of case incorporating this evidence and the Department's response was submitted on 1 June 1988.

War Pensions

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the average length of time between the receipt of an appeal by the war pensions unit and the submission of the statement of case to the pensions appeal tribunal; and how this compares with past years.

Mr. Portillo: Information is not kept in the form requested. The average time between receipt of an appeal and the despatch of the statement of case to the appellant is currently 54 weeks. For 1987, 1986 and 1985 the times were 52 weeks, 48 weeks and 40 weeks respectively.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many appeals by war pensioners have been awaiting a submission of a statement of case to the pensions appeal tribunal for more than three months.

Mr. Portillo: About 4,700 appeals have been outstanding for more than three months.

Post-neonatal Death Rates

Dr. Moonie: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the post-neonatal death rates separately for England and Wales for 1985, 1986 and 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to him on 18 May at columns *500-1*.

Benefit Regulations

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will review the new regulations introduced on 11 April in the reference to the removal of benefit from households without dependent children where one partner is working 24 hours a week or more; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: No. Income support is not payable where either partner works on average 24 hours or more a week. However, claimants in vulnerable groups who are affected by the changes to full-time work rules will be provided with transitional protection as outlined in my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Saffron Walden (Mr. Haselhurst) on 28 April at columns *253-54*. In addition, housing benefit is available to people on low income if they are responsible for rent or rates.

Cervical Cancer

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many people were trained in the specialised use of laser equipment to treat cervical cancer in the previous 12 months; and if he will give a regional breakdown of how many people are currently employed in this work;

(2) if he will list those district health authorities which do and do not have laser equipment to treat cervical cancer.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that this information is not available centrally.

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make additional money available to the West Midlands regional health authority for the purchase of laser equipment by the North Staffordshire district health authority.

Mrs. Currie: The allocation of resources by regions and districts is a matter for the health authorities concerned. This year's revenue allocation to the West Midlands is 10·39 per cent. higher in cash terms and 5·64 per cent. higher in real terms than last year's, and I understand that the initial revenue allocation to North Staffordshire district health authority for 1988-89 now stands at £103,906,000, compared with £93,337,000 in 1987-88.

Benefit Fraud

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how much was spent by his Department to recover illegally claimed benefits in each year since 1979, in cash and real terms, at 1987-88 prices.

Mr. Portillo: I regret that the information requested is not available.

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give his estimate of *(a)* the amount recovered and *(b)* the amount illegally claimed but not recovered from social security claimants for each year since 1979, in cash terms and at 1987-88 prices.

Mr. Portillo: Information on which to base an estimate is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Claimants (Medical Examinations)

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services on what basis doctors are recruited and trained to carry out examinations on attendance and mobility allowance claimants; and to what extent their work is monitored.

Mr. Scott: Claimants for the attendance allowance and mobility allowances are examined by doctors who are selected and trained by the regional office senior medical officer from registered medical practitioners who will have either made an application to be considered for this role or been nominated by their peers as suitable for the task.

The doctors selected are usually recruited from among general practitioners within the locality who will have demonstrable knowledge of local socio-economic conditions, established experience in general medical practice and evident expertise in the conducting of medical examinations. Before a doctor is permitted to carry out examinations on attendance and mobility allowance claimants formal instruction is given by the regional office senior medical officer on the background of, and requirements for, the particular benefit. This instruction is supplemented by written guidance notes. Initially, the performance of the examining doctors is closely monitored by the regional office senior medical officer who will institute further training sessions as appropriate; thereafter the doctors' work is regularly monitored by the regional office senior medical officer; but the form and pattern of such monitoring may vary and are dictated by the individual regional office senior medical officer.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the rate of pay for doctors who carry out examinations on attendance and mobility allowance claimants.

Mr. Scott: The fees currently payable for medical examinations for attendance allowance and mobility allowance are as follows:

	Mobility allowance £	*Attendance allowance* £
In surgery examination	22·30	—
Examination by domiciliary visit (including travelling time)		
Up to including 1½ hours	25·70	25·70
Over 1½ hours up to including 2½ hours	38·50	38·50
Over 2½ hours	59·90	59·90

For joint Attendance and Mobility Allowance examinations carried out by domiciliary visit a fee of £48·00 is payable. Where the time taken exceeds 1½ hours £59·90 is payable.

In some Mobility allowance cases claimants are examined by two doctors at a medical boarding centre. Fees are payable on a sessional basis (2½-3½ hours) at £59·90 for the chairman of the medical board, and £52·30 for the member.

Women's Health

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what plans he has to focus medical and public attention on women's health problems; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: I am pleased to report that plans for the Department to host a one-day conference on women's health on 22 June this year are now well advanced. The conference will be opened by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and will be attended by an invited audience composed mainly of members of voluntary organisations and media dealing with women's health.

Hon. and noble Members of both Houses who are known to have an interest in health matters have also been invited. Applications for tickets have been very high and reflect the level of interest in women's health.

The subjects to be discussed are of considerable interest to women in this country today and cover a wide range of killer diseases and conditions which cause considerable suffering amongst women. The main subjects will be cancers, mental illness, the menopause and osteoporosis. The conference will provide an opportunity for those involved in promoting women's health to meet and hear from eminent speakers. It will also profide a forum for dispelling some of the myths and correcting some of the misunderstandings about women's health.

The media have been invited to attend, so that messages from the conference will be disseminated to women, and those interested in women's health, throughout the country.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Sheepmeat Industry

2. **Mr. Speller:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the future of the sheepmeat industry with special reference to the less-favoured areas, including Exmoor.

Mr. Gummer: The sheep sector is buoyant; LFA farmers are making a key contribution to our success and, in the forthcoming negotiations, we shall be seeking to ensure that they continue to do so.

Diversification

16. **Mr. Kennedy:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on progress towards diversification in agriculture.

Mr. Gummer: Capital grants for farm diversification were introduced at the beginning of the year and have attracted an encouraging amount of interest from farmers. They will shortly be complemented by grants for enterprise feasibility studies and marketing costs.

Competition

18. **Mr. David Martin:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures he is taking to assist the food industry to adjust to the increased level of competition in 1992.

42. **Dr. Michael Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures he is taking to assist the food industry to adjust to the increased level of competition in the European single market.

49. **Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what further action his Department proposes to take in preparation for the single European market in 1992.

Mr. Gummer: My Department will continue to keep in close touch with the agriculture, food and related industries on the progress of proposals in the single market programme, many of which continue the process of harmonising member states' laws to remove barriers to trade. Our objectives are to ensure that harmonisation takes place without discrimination and without imposing greater burdens than it removes; to protect our health status in the animal, plant and fish sectors; and to ensure that British companies have all the information they need with which to meet the challenge and take full advantage of the opportunities which harmonisation will bring.

Home Grown Cereals Authority

19. **Mr. John Carlisle:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Home Grown Cereals Authority; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. MacGregor: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Boothferry (Mr. Davis).

North Sea (Demersal Fishing)

20. **Mr. Patchett:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any plans to review the management strategy for the control of demersal fishing in the North sea; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: The management arrangements are determined in consultation with the industry and we shall shortly be consulting it about the detailed arrangements for next year.

Meat and Livestock Commission

21. **Mr. Devlin:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Meat and Livestock Commission; and what matters were discussed.

53. **Mr. Jack:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Meat and Livestock Commission; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Donald Thompson: My right hon. Friend and I maintain regular contacts with the chairman of the Meat and Livestock Commission to discuss matters of mutual interest.

Wool Marketing Board

22. **Mr. Kirkhope:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Wool Marketing Board; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Donald Thompson: My right hon. Friend the Minister last met the chairman of the British Wool Marketing Board on 1 February 1988 to review the prospects for the 1988 clip year and the level of the guarantee.

Monetary Compensatory Amounts

23. **Mr. Cran:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received since January from pig farmers concerning abolition of monetary compensatory amounts; and what plans he now has to press for the abolition of the monetary compensatory amount scheme.

Mr. MacGregor: I have received many such representations. As I have told the House, I am pressing for the complete elimination of pigmeat MCAs at the current price-fixing. However, some member states do not want to see the system changed, and the negotiation will be difficult.

Potato Marketing Board

24. **Mr. McLoughlin:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Potato Marketing Board; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Ministers meet the chairman of the board from time to time. The last formal meeting was when my right hon. Friend the Minister of State met him in November 1985 to discuss various aspects of the potato market support arrangements.

Butter Intervention Stocks

25. **Mr. Patnick:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the current level of butter intervention stocks in the European Community.

Mr. Donald Thompson: At the end of April 1988, the latest available figure, the European Community butter stock level was 567,911 tonnes.

Milk Marketing Board

26. **Mr. Riddick:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Milk Marketing Board; and what matters were discussed.

37. **Mr. Mans:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Milk Marketing Board; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Donald Thompson: My right hon. Friend last met the chairman of the Milk Marketing Board on 25 April when a number of issues of current concern to the dairy industry were discussed. He expects to see him again later today.

Set-Aside

27. **Mr. Ian Bruce:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on progress in implementing the community set-aside scheme in the United Kingdom.

41. **Mr. Alan W. Williams:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement outlining the Government's policy towards grazing fallow as an option in the set-aside proposals.

65. **Mr. Gale:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on progress in implementing the Community set-aside-scheme in the United Kingdom.

Mr. MacGregor: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given earlier today to the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike)

50. **Mr. Livsey:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture Fisheries and Food what representations he has made to the European Community on the proposals for the substitution of cereals set-aside with grazing land.

Mr. MacGregor: The Community set-aside scheme allows the option to member states to permit land set aside from arable crops to be grazed by livestock. In discussion of the detailed rules, I have insisted that there should be tighter control on the number of livestock which can be grazed on set-aside land in those member states applying this option.

Raw Sugar Refining

28. **Mr. Pendry:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what recognition has been given by the European Community Commission and by the Council of Ministers of any special circumstances surrounding raw cane sugar refining in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave earlier today to my hon. Friends the Members for Uxbridge (Mr. Shersby) and for Hertfordshire, South-West (Mr. Page).

77. **Mr. Graham:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his policy towards the proposals made by the European Commission for assistance in the refining in the United Kingdom of raw cane sugar imported from the African, Caribbean and Pacific sugar-producing countries.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The Commission proposals are welcome recognition of the need to place the refining margin on a more satisfactory basis. We shall be pressing hard for their adoption.

Women's Farmers Union

29. **Miss Widdecombe:** To ask the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he met the president of the Women's Farmers Union; and what subjects were discussed.

73. **Mrs. Ann Winterton:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the president of the Women's Farmers Union; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. MacGregor: My colleagues and I meet representatives of the Women's Farmers Union from time to time and discuss a range of subjects of concern to the agricultural industry.

Research and Development

30. **Mr. Doran:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what proposals he has for the future funding of research and development into agriculture and fishing.

Mr. MacGregor: We are currently considering these issues in the context of the review of agricultural departments' R and D programmes.

Agricultural Supply Industry

31. **Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the export performance of the agricultural supply industry.

68. **Mr. Anthony Coombs:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the export performance of the agricultural supply industry.

Mr. Gummer: Although the agricultural supply industry can be defined in various ways, I am pleased to report that the visible exports attributable to the industry as detailed below is increased by 13·6 per cent, from £1,374 million in 1986 to £1,560 million in 1987. This compares favourably with the 9·4 per cent. increase in total United Kingdom visible exports over the same period.

Export Performance of Agriculture Supply Industry

	Sectors	*1986 (£ million)*	*1987 (£ million)*
011·1	Pure Bred Bovines for Breeding	5·6	7·0
08	Feeding Stuffs	139·3	155·8
271	Crude Fertilisers	0·9	1·0
56	Fertilisers	67·4	85·4
591	Insecticides	438·5	498·6
721	Agricultural Machinery	169·5	187·4
722	Tractors	444·4	506·7
727	Food processing industry	108·2	118·3

Sectors	1986 (£ million)	1987 (£ million)
Total	1,373·3	1,560·2

Farm Diversification Grant Scheme

32. **Mr. Curtiss:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many applications have been received under the farm diversification grant scheme; and what progress is being made towards achieving the targets for applications under the scheme.

Mr. Gummer: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave on 7 June to my hon. Friend the Member for the Isle of Wight (Mr. Field) at columns *490-491*.

Fishing Vessels (Grants)

33. **Dr. Mawhinney:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any plans to change the criteria by which applications for fishing vessel construction grants are assessed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: The criteria are under frequent review and we shall be considering with the Sea Fish Industry Authority whether any changes are necessary in view of the continuing high level of demand for grant assistance and our Community obligations to reduce fleet capacity by the end of 1991.

43. **Mr. Loyden:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any plans to re-introduce in the near future, a system of de-commissioning grants for United Kingdom registered fishing vessels; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: I have no plans to do so.

National Farmers Union

34. **Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the president of the National Farmers Union; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. MacGregor: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North-West (Mr. Bellingham).

56. **Mr. Knox:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he will be meeting the president of the National Farmers Union to discuss the dairy industry.

Mr. MacGregor: I hold frequent meetings with the president of the NFU, when a wide range of subjects are discussed.

Beef Graziers

35. **Sir John Farr:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what are the present prospects for beef graziers.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The prospects for beef graziers are encouraging. The average price of fat cattle in Great Britain in the week ended 21 May is provisionally estimated to have been 110·28p per kg liveweight, 11·4 per cent. up on the price in the corresponding week last year. Throughout the EC as a whole, beef supplies are affected by the reductions in dairy cow numbers and this should help to sustain the current firmer tone of the market.

Green Pound

36. **Mr. Burns:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what progress is being made with attempts to devalue the green pound following the recent meeting of the Agricultural Council.

Mr. MacGregor: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham, South (Mr. Brandon-Bravo.

Beamer Licences

18. **Mr. Harris:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his policy on the issue of beamer licences.

Mr. Gummer: Beam trawlers are subject to the general licensing arrangements operated by fisheries departments for quota species. Because of the pressure on the area VII white fisheries, beam trawler licences for those fisheries are only available—with certain limited exceptions—for a replacement vessel where the length, tonnage and engine power of the replacement do not exceed those of the existing vessels.

Badgers

39. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the Government's policy with regard to the protection of badgers in the light of current research into vaccination; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies) on 20 May at column *612*, adding that the badger is protected under the Badger Act 1973 which is the responsibility of the Secretary of State for the Home Department.

79. **Mr. Haynes:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he next intends meeting the chairman of the Nature Conservancy Council; and if he will raise the subject of the protection presently afforded to badgers.

Mr. Gummer: No date has been fixed for a meeting with the chairman of the Nature Conservancy Council, but my right hon. Friend and I are always ready to meet the council whenever there are points we could usefully discuss.

Country Landowners Association

40. **Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the president of the Country Landowners Association; and what matters they discussed.

69. **Mr. Moss:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the president of the Country Landowners Association; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. MacGregor: I last met the president of the Country Landowners Association on 25 April when we discussed agricultural research and development.

Fishing Vessels (Licensing)

44. **Mr. Darling:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any plans to review the licensing scheme for fishing vessels; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: In April 1987, Fisheries Ministers announced their conclusions following a substantive review of the restrictive licensing scheme. We are continuing to keep the licensing arrangements under review, and will introduce further changes, if they appear necessary, in consultation with the fishing industry.

Fishery Protection

45. **Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the cost of fishery protection in 1986-87; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: The cost to this Department of fisheries protection in 1986-87 was £7·59 million, including £5·36 million in respect of Ministry of Defence charges.

Fish Farms

46. **Mr. Galbraith:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what recent representations he has received on pollution control regulations appertaining to fish farms; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given earlier today to the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell).

Cereals

47. **Mr. Ralph Howell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will state, for 1986 and 1987 *(a)* the total tonnage of cereals produced in the United Kingdom, *(b)* the total tonnage of cereals and cereal substitutes consumed in the United Kingdom and *(c)* the total tonnage of cereals or cereal substitutes imported into the United Kingdom.

Mr. MacGregor: The information requested is as follows:

'000 tonnes

	1986	*1987*
Total tonnage of cereals produced in the United Kingdom	24,488	[1]21,472
Total tonnage of cereals consumed in the United Kingdom	20,626	[2]19,971
Total tonnage of cereal substitutes[3] consumed[4] in the United Kingdom	1,507	1,475
Total tonnage of cereals imported into the United Kingdom	3,488	[2]3,172
Total tonnage of cereal substitutes[3] imported into the United Kingdom	1,028	1,081

[1] Estimate.
[2] Provisional.
[3] As defined in Annex D to Regulation (EEC) No. 2727/75.
[4] Information relates to off-farm use of cereal substitutes in animal feeding stuffs production.

Sources:
HM Customs and Excise.
Annual Review of Agriculture 1988.
MAFF January 1988 Cereal Production Survey.
MAFF and Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland Compound Feed Production Surveys.

57. **Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what quantity of cereals is currently held in intervention in *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* the European Community as a whole.

Mr. MacGregor: At 15 May the quantity of cereals held in intervention in the European Community was 9·4 million tonnes of which 1·3 million tonnes was held in the United Kingdom. A note setting out the volume of intervention stocks in the United Kingdom and the European Community which includes figures for cereals, is deposited in the Library of the House and is updated monthly.

Fishing Industry (Financial Support)

48. **Mr. Bill Michie:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any proposals to make in the light of the recommendations contained in the 24th report from the Committee of Public Accounts, entitled "Financial Support for the Fishing Industry in Great Britain", No. 266, 1987-88; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: We shall be responding in full to the recommendations contained in the 24th report of the Public Accounts Committee in a Treasury minute to be laid before Parliament.

EC Food Sales

51. **Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will publish a table showing the recent special sales of food authorised by the European Economic Community, the tonnages involved and the prices in terms of pence per pound.

Mr. MacGregor: At any one time CAP arrangements provide for a number of sales schemes from intervention and from the open market. These tend to follow established patterns, but the following sales to non-EC countries, agreed over the past 12 months, have distinguishing features:

Commodity	*Date*	*Quantity (tonnes)*	*Destination*	*Sale Price p/lb*
Wheat	September 1987	650,000	USSR	1·6[1]
Barley	September 1987	850,000	USSR	1·3[1][2]
Wheat	November-December 1987	1,012,000	USSR	2·1[1]
Wheat	December 1987	480,000	USSR	1·7[1][2]
Barley	December 1987	953,000	USSR	1·5[1][2]
Wheat	April 1988	70,000	Poland	2·4[1]
Wheat	May 1988	110,000	Morocco	2·5[1]
Butter	November 1987	200,100	USSR	6·0[3]

Commodity	Date	Quantity (tonnes)	Destination	Sale Price p/lb
Beef	January-November	12,000	Peru	23·0-31·2[4]
Beef	August-November 1987	8,000	Peru	23·0-23·3[4]
Beef	March 1988	5,921	Venezuela	31·6[4]

[1] The price is calculated from the dollar equivalent of the price actually paid by the purchaser (including MCAs), converted into sterling at the spot rate at the time of the sale.
[2] Some of the grain exported was of United Kingdom origin.
[3] The price is the actual sale price (exclusive of MCAs), converted into sterling at the green rate. None of the butter was exported from the United Kingdom.
[4] The price is the sale price (including MCAs) that would have obtained if the beef had been exported from the United Kingdom, which it was not.

Fishing Grounds (Pollution)

52. **Mr. Ingram:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has recently received research reports concerning the effects of pollution on the stocks of fish in the fishing grounds off the west coast of Great Britain; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: This Department has extensive continuing programmes of research into the aquatic environment and fish stocks in British waters. Reports of this work are published on a regular basis by the directorate of fisheries research at Lowestoft. The biennial report of the director of fisheries research and reports in the "Aquatic Environment Monitoring" series are available in the Library of the House. A recent report is aquatic environment monitoring report number 17, "Irish Sea Status Report of the Marine Pollution Monitoring Management Group".

The results of this work do not indicate that pollution has any significant effects on fish stocks in the fishing grounds off the west coast of Great Britain or, indeed, any British waters.

Livestock (Genetic Improvement)

54. **Mr. Jim Marshall:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the Government's policy with regard to the genetic improvement of livestock; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The genetic improvement of livestock has been a major aim of research and development for many years and has led to significant improvements in performance and health. New techniques are now available and the Government would wish to see them employed, provided safety and the welfare of animals are not put at risk.

Sheepmeat Stabilisers

55. **Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement concerning the effect so far of the implementation of sheepmeat stabilisers on premium prices.

Mr. MacGregor: The sheepmeat stabiliser came into operation on the 23 May. For the first week of its operation we would expect the variable slaughter premium to be 7·7p/kg less than it would otherwise have been.

63. **Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he next intends meeting representatives of the Farmers Union of Wales to discuss the effect of the implementation of sheep stabilisers.

Mr. Donald Thompson: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales—who has responsibility for agriculture in Wales—maintains regular and close contacts with representatives of the Farmers Union of Wales on sheep matters. My right hon. Friend, the Minister and I also meet FUW representatives to discuss issues of mutual interest.

Green Fallow

58. **Mr. John Greenway:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received on proposals for green fallow within the plans for stabilisers.

Mr. MacGregor: I have received a number of representations from hon. Members and others about the option under the Community rules to permit land set aside from arable crops to be grazed by livestock. I am considering these representations, and will be making a statement shortly.

Sea Fish Industry Authority

59. **Mr. Wall:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he next expects to meet the chairman and members of the executive of the Sea Fish Industry Authority.

Mr. Gummer: I expect to meet the chairman and board members again within the next few months.

Tenant Farmers Association

60. **Mr. Summerson:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Tenant Farmers Association; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Gummer: I am in regular contact with the chairman of the Tenant Farmers Association and other tenants' representatives on matters of mutual interest.

Poultry Federation

61. **Mr. Michael Brown:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the president of the Poultry Federation; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. MacGregor: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Newark (Mr. Alexander) on 5 May at column *998*.

Fur Farming

62. **Mr. Morley:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will ensure the fur farming is not eligible for farm diversification grants; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: The keeping of animals for fur is not an eligible activity under the farm diversification grant scheme.

Breeding Ewes

64. **Mr. George Howarth:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the present number of breeding ewes in Great Britain.

Mr. Donald Thompson: At the December 1987 census, the figure was 18·148 million.

Mink Farming

66. **Mr. Terry Lewis:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the lastest number of mink farming licences currently in operation.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies) on 3 May 1988 at columns *401-2*.

Animal Foodstuffs (Toxins)

67. **Mr. McCartney:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any plans to strengthen current safeguards governing the levels of toxins in animal foodstuffs; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: New provisions on aflatoxin B came into effect on 6 April which extended the previously existing safeguards to a wider range of feedingstuffs. There will be a further extension of controls in December 1988, when maximum levels will be set for certain substances in specified raw materials that have not previous been restricted in this way.

Farm Woodlands Scheme

70. **Mr. Gareth Wardell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will invite the Forestry Commission to review its present guidelines for planting under the farm woodlands scheme.

Mr. MacGregor: The practical guidelines provided by the Forestry Commission in connection with the woodland grant scheme will also apply to planting under the farm woodland scheme when this is introduced. In addition, publications giving detailed advice on establishing and maintaining farm woodlands will be available in good time for the introduction of the scheme in the autumn. In the light of this I do not consider revision of guidelines necessary.

Bovine Somatotropin

71. **Mr. Martlew:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what further representations he has received concerning the testing of bovine somatotropin in the dairy herd; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I have nothing to add to my reply of 16 May to the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) at column *323*.

EC Agriculture Ministers

72. **Mr. Cox:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met with EC Agriculture Ministers; and what topics were discussed.

Mr. MacGregor: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Walthamstow (Mr. Summerson) on 18 May at columns *473-4*.

Pigmeat

74. **Mr. Gill:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food by what number he estimates the United Kingdom pig population would need to be increased so as to achieve national self-sufficiency in pigmeat; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Latest estimates indicate that the United Kingdom is currently more than self-sufficient in pork but only 40 per cent. self-sufficient in bacon and ham. An increase in the pig population approaching 30 per cent. would be needed to achieve national self-sufficiency in pigmeat, provided that this increase was wholly used for the production of bacon and ham.

Breeding Sows

75. **Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what estimate he has of future numbers of breeding sows in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The future number of breeding sows in the United Kingdom will depend on a range of factors which cannot be predicted with any certainty. I regret that I am unable to provide the figures requested.

Food Industry (Exports)

76. **Mr. Stevens:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the performance of the food industry in increasing exports to the European Community.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave on 7 June to my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis) at column *485*.

Bovine Disease (Newham)

78. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if there have been any reported cases of bovine disease in the London borough of Newham during the last five years.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I am not aware of any bovine disease in the London borough of Newham in the last five years.

Fishing Vessels

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many building grants have been awarded in respect of fishing vessels by the SFIA in the period January to April.

Mr. Gummer: During the period 1 January to 30 April 1988, construction grants amounting to some £1,211,000 were awarded in respect of seven new vessels.

PRIME MINISTER

France (Bilateral Relations)

Q16. **Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Prime Minister when she next plans to meet the President of the French Republic to discuss bilateral relations.

The Prime Minister: I shall meet President Mitterrand in Paris on 10 June to discuss bilateral relations and other international issues.

Engagements

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 9 June.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 9 June.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 9 June.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 9 June.

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 9 June.

Mr. Stern: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 9 June.

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 9 June.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 9 June.

Mr. Butler: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 9 June.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 9 June.

The Prime Minister: This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House I shall be having further meetings later today including one with the President of Tanzania.

Commercial Advertising (Ministerial Appearances)

Mr. Robert Hughes: To ask the Prime Minister if she will publish in the *Official Report* the rules governing ministerial appearances in commercial advertising.

The Prime Minister: There are no specific rules but it is well understood that Ministers do not lend their names to advertising for commercial purposes. Those who use photographs of Ministers do not necessarily seek their consent.

Government Departments (Unauthorised Disclosures)

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Prime Minister how many unauthorised disclosures from Departments regarding Government internal discussions and proposals have occurred since May 1979.

The Prime Minister: We do not collect that information.

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 10 June 1988

WALES

Welsh Language

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will list the certificate of education courses available *(a)* in English, and *(b)* in Welsh;

(2) if he will list, by secondary school, the subject entries and number of candidates *(a)* per subject offered through the medium of Welsh and *(b)* per subject offered through the medium of English, for the certificate of education examination;

(3) how many staff are employed by the Welsh Joint Examination Council to organise, administer and develop Welsh medium certificate of education courses.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Certificate of education courses are administered by the Welsh joint education committee (WJEC). Information relating to courses is not held by the Department; any such requests should be directed to the WJEC.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many statemented children there are at present in Welsh medium or bilingual primary and secondary schools, and at Welsh units, in each Welsh local education authority area.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The information as at January 1987 is as follows:

Number of statemented pupils in Welsh medium or bilingual schools or Welsh units

Local education authority	*Primary*	*Secondary*
Clwyd	43	20
Dyfed	98	15
Gwent	6	—
Gwynedd	181	117
Mid Glamorgan	69	43
Powys	30	4
South Glamorgan	5	—
West Glamorgan	15	1

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many statemented children in each Welsh education authority area have been transferred from Welsh medium or bilingual schools as a result of the statementing.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: This information is not collected centrally.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what information he has as to the numbers of the following professionals by local education authority in Wales; and in each case how many are able to carry out their work through medium of Welsh as well as English *(a)* educational psychologists, *(b)* educational social workers, *(c)* speech therapists, *(d)* advisory teachers in social and emotional problems, *(e)* special education advisers, *(f)* education welfare officers and *(g)* advisory teachers for the hearing impaired, visually impaired, etc.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Information on the number of specialist advisers employed by local education authorities is not held centrally. For information about the number of speech therapists, I refer the hon. Gentleman to my hon. Friend's reply to him of 1 March.

Caergwrle Bypass

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will meet Clwyd county councillors to discuss the Caergwrle bypass;

(2) if he will meet Caergwrle residents who oppose the Caergwrle bypass green route;

(3) if he will establish a public inquiry into the proposals for a Caergwrle bypass; and if he will make a statement;

(4) if he will give financial assistance to Caergwrle, Clwyd, residents who seek to oppose the Caergwrle bypass green route.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: This is a county road scheme and therefore a matter for Clwyd county council.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Departmental Accommodation

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy not to enter into any new long-term commitment for the Overseas Development Administration's London accommodation in the current financial year.

Mr. Eggar: No.

Eland House

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what has been the cost to the Overseas Development Administration for the rental of Eland house over the last three years; and what has been the total cost to public funds of renting that building.

Mr. Eggar: The rent paid by the Overseas Development Administration to the Property Services Agency for Eland house under the property repayment services arrangements for each of the last three financial years was as follows:

1985-86	*1986-87*	*1987-88*
2,175,838	1,927,294	2,212,976

Civil accommodation for Government Departments is held in the name of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment and managed by the PSA. The rents of leasehold buildings are determined on a strictly commercial and therefore confidential basis.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Student Unions

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) if he will place in the Library details of any representations he has received concerning automatic membership of student unions; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will place in the Library a list of those organisations and individuals who made representations to him concerning automatic membership of student unions; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he will place in the Library the information he has on compulsory student union membership; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: Students become members of the student union of their university, polytechnic or college of further or higher education by virtue of their being enrolled at the institution. They are not normally required to pay any subscription as a member and can decide whether or not to take part in the union's activities. As indicated in my right hon. Friend's reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Thurrock (Mr. Janman) on 18 April, the Government intend shortly to gather up-to-date factual information on the services available to students from their unions. Since the general election I have met the National Union of Students once to discuss the issue of union membership. The issue has also figured during visits I have made to institutions of higher and further education. In addition, over the period 1 June 1987 to 31 May 1988 we have received some 30 letters from hon. Members and members of the public about membership of local unions and a further 30 letters concerning membership of the National Union of Students. The letters have been evenly divided between those in favour of and those opposed to the present system of membership.

I do not consider it appropriate to deposit this correspondence in the Library.

Mr. H. W. Steggles

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he hopes to reply to the letter from the hon. Member for South Hams dated 23 March, enclosing a letter from Mr. H. W. Steggles of Eastern Hill, Middlecombe, Noss Mayo, Plymouth, dated 15 March.

Mrs. Rumbold: I replied to my hon. Friend on 8 June. I regret the delay in replying.

Schools (Expenditure)

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has about the public spending per head of senior school population in pounds sterling for Germany, France, the United States of America and Italy.

Mr. Dunn: For international returns, data for the senior school population are included with non-advanced further education and therefore cannot be identified separately.

Head Teachers

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what evidence he has about the rate at which head teachers are now seeking early retirement, what comparable information he has on previous years; and to what factors he attributes the trend.

Mrs. Rumbold: For teachers as a whole, premature retirements have in recent years consistently accounted for about 60 per cent. of all retirements. Premature retirement has kept open promotion opportunities for teachers and improved the age structue of the profession. Information about premature retirements of head teachers is available only combined with information on college prinicpals and up to 1986-87. The number of premature retirements in these groups fell by 17 per cent. in 1986-87 compared with 1985-86. Pension is based on the best 12 months' salary over the last three years of service. It is likely that teachers were postponing retirement in 1986-87 in order to improve their pensions by awaiting the effect on pensions of the substantial pay increases of 25 per cent. between March 1986 and October 1987. We would expect premature retirements to rise again by 1988-89 as these increases feed through into pension entitlements.

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what difficulties are being experienced in the recruitment of headteachers.

Mrs. Rumbold: Good up-to-date information is not available. The interim advisory committee on teachers' pay found no particular evidence of serious recruitment problems affecting heads and deputies. The Department estimates that at January 1988 approximately 300 headteacher posts were vacant, that is only slightly more than 1 per cent. of headteacher posts.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Driving (Minimum Age)

Miss Widdecombe: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is his assessment on the effect on the balance of payments current account of raising the minimum age requirement for the driving of *(a)* motor cars and *(b)* all motor vehicles to 18 years.

Mr. Alan Clark: Information on which to base an assessment is not available.

Liquor Taxation (Japan)

Miss Widdecombe: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is his assessment of the impact on the United Kingdom balance of payments current account of the Japanese Government's present discriminatory system of liquor taxation.

Mr. Alan Clark: We are currently awaiting the Japanese Government's response to the recommendations of the general agreement on tariffs and trade that the discriminatory element in Japanese taxation of imported wines and spirits should be removed. We expect substantially increased exports of Scotch whisky to Japan following tax reform.

North Peckham Task Force

Ms. Harman: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) what are the running costs per year of the North Peckham task force;

(2) how much Daniel Levy, the North Peckham task force leader, is paid per year.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to a similar question from her on Tuesday 12 April.

Israel (Exports)

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the current volume of Israeli exports to

the United Kingdom; what is the make-up of those exports; and what were the comparable figures for each year from 1966 to 1987.

Mr. Alan Clark: The current value of imports from Israel for the first four months to April 1988 are £167.00 million.

These figures should be treated with more than the usual caution because of major changes to customs procedures introduced in January 1988, details of which were given in a reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, South-West (Mr. Page) on 7 December 1987, at columns *34-35*.

Information on the make up of imports, within acceptable cost limits, is given in the tables:

Table 1 — *United Kingdom imports from Israel* — *Value £ thousands*

Division	*1970*	*1971*	*1972*	*1973*	*1974*	*1975*	*1976*	*1977*	*1978*	*1979*
Total trade	44,856	54,745	57,805	69,740	78,893	91,183	125,785	159,680	176,414	219,297
Of which:										
05 Vegetables and fruit	24,234	32,558	33,233	35,325	39,241	47,107	58,744	67,724	76,515	86,099
84 Articles of apparel and clothing accessories	1,282	1,622	1,912	2,545	5,061	8,259	12,350	17,595	21,531	29,121
65 Textile yarn, fabrics, made-up articles NES, and related products	1,598	1,137	1,264	1,279	2,170	1,842	2,601	5,427	8,327	13,583
89 Miscellaneous manufactured articles NES	756	1,102	762	1,364	1,421	1,283	1,566	2,502	3,142	5,446
66 Non-metallic mineral manufactures NES	3,994	4,416	6,019	9,787	8,115	10,809	18,794	18,587	31,987	27,504
29 Crude animal and vegetable materials NES	147	249	458	331	405	586	924	2,145	5,804	10,579

Table 2 — *United Kingdom imports from Israel* — *Value £ thousands*

Division	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*April 1988*
Total trade	232,746	255,866	276,077	313,677	392,744	403,952	385,175	437,014	167,049
Of which									
05 Vegetables and Fruit	83,464	95,288	97,237	100,420	113,402	142,562	107,384	123,687	55,301
84 Articles of apparel and clothing accessories	38,710	46,359	54,438	62,792	69,808	71,379	73,077	71,022	24,125
65 Textile yarn, Fabrics, made-up articles NES and related products	13,431	16,718	16,674	20,177	25,627	31,319	35,550	38,171	14,634
89 Miscellaneous manufactured articles NES	7,672	9,803	11,084	11,452	16,247	16,609	17,509	24,418	7,601
66 Non-metallic mineral manufactures NES	19,644	21,890	17,287	15,125	13,795	14,137	16,272	22,052	7,207
29 Crude animal and vegetable materials NES	6,231	7,719	6,627	8,604	9,565	12,608	13,023	14,585	9,343

Source: Overseas Trade Statistics.
Notes:
(i) Total trade figures are on a 1981 basis throughout. Imports valued at (CIF).
(ii) Figures for 1987 and for four months ended April 1988 are provisional.

Computers

Mr. Warren: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) to whom the data are given which are supplied by applicants wishing to sell computers who are required to complete his Department's computer questionnaire; and if he will make a statement;

(2) to whom the data are given which are supplied by applicants wishing to sell computers who are required to complete his Department's export licence application,; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: Applications for export licences and supporting data are considered by DTI officials and, in many cases, by officials of other Departments from whom the DTI seeks advice.

In the case of applications to export certain items to the proscribed destinations, COCOM partners are also consulted. For this purpose, brief details, which do not identify the exporter, are provided to COCOM partners.

The circulation of a particular export licence application and its supporting documents will depend upon the level of technology involved and the proposed ultimate destination.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Belfast—Dublin Road, Newry (Parking)

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what measures are being taken to ensure that private entrances and exits, leading on to and off the main Belfast to Dublin road, in the immediate vicinity of the existing customs station at Newry, are kept clear of parked vehicles.

Mr. Needham [*holding answer 7 June 1988*]: Prohibition of waiting by vehicles in the vicinity of the existing customs station, Newry, introduced by the Department of the Environment (NI) in 1981 and 1982 remain in force. Police and traffic wardens make every effort to ensure that traffic regulations in operation in the area are enforced.

Chernobyl

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what has been the total staff and administration cost to his Department of the Chernobyl accident.

Mr. Viggers [*holding answer 7 June 1988*]: Precise figures are not available but staff costs incurred, in the main by the Department of Agriculture, Northern Ireland, are estimated at around £300,000. Some £70,000 has been spent on the purchase of produce for testing, live monitoring equipment and paint in connection with the operation of the mark and release scheme. A further £12,900 has been paid in compensation to producers affected by the movement restrictions on sheep.

ENERGY

Gas Disconnections

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make it his policy to monitor the numbers of gas disconnections; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The numbers of gas disconnections are monitored by the Gas Consumers Council and Ofgas, and will continue to be so.

Electricity Privatisation

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the progress of plans to privatise electricity.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Discussions with the industry are continuing satisfactorily and our aim is to introduce legislation at the earliest opportunity.

Dr. Michael Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he is considering, in his proposals for electricity privatisation, a system of compensating owners of power stations which are not being run at any given time because they are too expensive.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Arrangements governing the future operation of power stations will be set out in the power supply contracts. These should provide proper incentives to generators to provide supplies as economically as possible.

Magnox Reactors

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy which nuclear power station Magnox reactors are currently out of operation; and when he expects each of them to be back in service.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I understand that the following four of the CEGB's Magnox reactors are out of service: Bradwell R1, Trawsfynydd R1, Berkeley R1 and Dungeness 'A' R2. Bradwell R1 and Trawsfynydd R1 are expected to return to service in June while Berkeley R1 and Dungeness 'A' R2 are expected to return in July.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Cyprus

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the United Kingdom continues to act as guarantor power for Cyprus; what information he has as to how many Turkish and Greek troops there are in Cyprus; how many troops from each of these countries are authorised to be in Cyprus; and what estimate he has as to how many non-Cypriots are resident in the Turkish and Greek sectors of the island.

Mrs. Chalker: The United Kingdom continues to fulfil its obligations under the 1960 treaty of guarantee, by consulting our fellow guarantor powers from time to time.

We estimate that there are between 28,000 and 30,000 Turkish troops and between 2,500 and 3,500 Greek troops stationed in Cyprus. The 1960 treaty of alliance provided for 650 Turkish troops and 950 Greek troops. We estimate that there are about 35,000 non-Cypriot settlers in the north. We have no figures for non-Cypriots resident in the south.

Nelson Mandela Concert

Mr. John Carlisle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received concerning the implications for international relations of the proposal by the British Broadcasting Corporation to broadcast a concert celebrating the 70th birthday of Nelson Mandela.

Mrs. Chalker: The South African Government have made representations about the programme to us through the embassy at Pretoria.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Remand Prisoners

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people awaiting trial before magistrates and Crown courts were remanded in custody on 1 June; of that number, how many were held *(a)* in youth custody or juvenile remand centres, *(b)* in prisons, *(c)* in police stations, *(d)* in Army or other service establishments or *(e)* in other institutions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The most recent readily available information for prison department establishments is given in the following table. No untried prisoners were held in a youth custody centre or in Rollestone Army camp. In addition on 30 April, about 1,080 prisoners, most of whom were on remand, were held in police cells at police stations and magistrates courts.

Population of untried prisoners in Prison Department establishments on 30 April 1988; by type of establishment and age group

Type of establishment	*14-20*	*21 and over*	*All ages*
Remand centres	2,164	1,321	3,485
Prisons	526	4,851	5,377
All establishments	2,690	6,172	8,862

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the Army or other service establishments used to hold people remanded in custody awaiting trial before either magistrates or Crown courts on 1 June.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Only two Army camps have been brought into use as temporary prisons and these held no untried prisoners on 1 June.

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the establishments, other than youth custody or juvenile remand centres, prisons, police stations, or establishments of the armed forces, which were used to hold people remanded in custody awaiting trial before either magistrates or Crown courts on 1 June.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Police cells at certain magistrates' courts were the only other type of accommodation used for untried prisoners on 1 June.

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of the people remanded in custody awaiting trial before magistrates or Crown courts on 1 June had been held in custody for a continuous period greater than *(a)* 12 months and *(b)* six months.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The latest information for untried prisoners on the length of time since initial remand in custody, relates to 30 June 1987 and is given in the reply I gave to a question from the hon. Member for St Helens, South (Mr. Bermingham) on 27 May 1988 at columns *379-80*.

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many of the people remanded in custody awaiting trial before magistrates or Crown courts on 1 June were women;

(2) if he will list the establishments in which women were held on remand, and the numbers of women held in each one, on 1 June.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The most recent readily available information for prison department establishements relates to 30 April and is given in the following table. On that date no female prisoners were held in police cells at police stations or magistrates' courts.

Population of female untried prisoners in Prison Department establishments on 30 April 1988: by establishment.

Prison Department establishment	*Number of untried prisoners*
Holloway	267
Low Newton Remand Centre	19
New Hall	29
Pucklechurch Remand Centre	27
Risley Remand Centre	75
All establishments	417

Mr. Roc Sandford

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the hon. Member for Birkenhead will receive a reply to a letter written to the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Grantham (Mr. Hogg) on 28 April, regarding the case of Mr. Roc Sandford.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I wrote to the hon. Member yesterday.

Overseas Visitors

Mr. Mudd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the number of visitors to the United Kingdom from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand in each of the years from 1976 to 1987 inclusive, broken down by country.

Mr. Renton: Information on the numbers of visitors admitted to the United Kingdom by nationality is published annually in table 1 of "Control of Immigration: Statistics, United Kingdom" (Cm 166 for the issue for 1986), copies of which are in the Library. The issue for 1987 will be published next month; however the figures requested for 1987 are as follows:

Nationality	*Visitors given leave to enter for less than 12 months*	
	Ordinary	*Business*
Indonesia	9,560	2,000
Malaysia	32,500	4,750
Philippines	14,900	1,710
Singapore	23,800	4,290
Thailand	13,100	2,700

Gatwick Airport (Exercise)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers were involved in the security exercise at Gatwick airport on 7 June; how many vehicles were stopped and searched; on whose authority the exercise was mounted; and what was the total cost involved in the exercise.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The security operation held at Gatwick airport on 7 June by the Sussex police was a routine operation and was approved by the Home Office. Because of the nature of the deployment it would not be appropriate to provide details of the number of police officers involved or the costs of the operation. The operation involved no change in the standard force procedures for stopping and searching vehicles.

Concessionary Television Licences

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consultations he has had with disability organisations concerning the increase from 5p to £5 in the concessionary television licence for elderly and disabled people living in residential care; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: There was no need for consultation on this issue.

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the estimated net revenue will be from the recent increase in television licence fees for elderly and disabled people who live in sheltered housing or in residential homes.

Mr. Renton: About £2 million a year, which will cover the costs of collection and extensions to the scheme.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

McDonald Wheeler Fund Management Ltd.

Mr. Franks: To ask the Attorney-General what is the current position regarding the inquiry relating to McDonald Wheeler Fund Management Ltd.; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: The director of the serious fraud office now has the conduct of the inquiry to which my hon. Friend refers. It is being pursued by a team of police officers, accountants and lawyers, but it is not yet complete.

"Spycatcher"

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Attorney-General what has been the total cost so far in terms of legal and other fees, travelling and expenses, Civil Service time and all other charges relating to the worldwide attempts by Her Majesty's Government to prevent the publication and distribution of the book "Spycatcher", including actions to prevent Mr. Peter Wright from receiving royalties from sales.

The Attorney-General: I refer the hon. Member to my answer of yesterday to the hon. Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick).

Rowntree

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Attorney-General what were the reasons for his intervention with regard to the Joseph Rowntree charitable trust and the Joseph Rowntree memorial trust following the trusts' public stance on the takeover bids for Rowntree plc by Nestlé and Suchard.

The Attorney-General: A request for information was made on my behalf to the trustees of the Joseph Rowntree charitable trust and the Joseph Rowntree memorial trust in exercise of my responsibilities as protector of charity under the Crown, in the light of a report in *The Daily Telegraph* on 2 June.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Attorney-General whether he consulted the charity commissioners or any other body before making representations to the trustees of the Joseph Rowntree memorial and charitable trusts regarding their charitable responsibilities to their beneficiaries in the context of the proposed takeover of Rowntree plc.

The Attorney-General: The Treasury Solicitor sought information from officials of the Charity Commission as to the likely identities of the charitable trusts referred to in *The Daily Telegraph's* report of 2 June and requested copies of the relevant trust documents. No other body was consulted before these inquiries were made on my behalf.

Miss M. Murphy

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Attorney-General when the social security commissioners will be ready to send the submission on the appeal made by Miss M. Murphy, promised within 30 days on 12 April, to Mr. A. McGuiness and Miss Murphy.

The Attorney-General: Copies of the document to which the hon. Member refers were sent to Mr. McGuiness and Miss Murphy on 8 June 1988.

Unmarried Fathers

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Attorney-General what plans he has to introduce legislation relating to the parental rights of unmarried fathers; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: Part II of the Family Law Reform Act 1987 contains a number of provisions which improve the legal position of unmarried fathers. Other plans and priorities will determine when resources can be made available for the purpose of bringing part II into force, but the Lord Chancellor will keep the matter under close review.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Personal Taxation

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the revenue effect in 1988-89 of *(a)* abolishing the high rate of income tax, *(b)* abolishing all personal tax reliefs other than the personal allowances, and *(c)* the net revenue effect of combining both measures.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The direct cost in income tax revenue for a full year at 1988-89 levels of income of abolishing the higher rate of income tax is estimated at £2·7 billion. The direct cost in capital gains tax revenue on disposals in 1988-89 is estimated at £0·2 billion.

Information on income tax reliefs is available only in respect of mortgage interest, retirement annuity premiums, employees' superannuation contributions and the business expansion scheme. The total direct revenue yield from abolishing these reliefs is estimated at £6·7 billion. The capital gains tax cost would be small.

The net effect of abolishing these reliefs and the higher rate of tax would be a yield of some £3 billion. This estimate includes the consequential effects on revenue from capital gains tax on disposals in 1988-89. The income tax component makes no allowance for possible behavioural effects arising from the changes.

Taxation Changes

Dr. Reid: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make it his policy to publish at the time of his Budget statement a full study of the redistributive effects of the taxation changes he is introducing.

Mr. Norman Lamont: There are no plans at present to add to the substantial amount of information already published on the effect of Budget proposals.

Incomes

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish figures showing, for families with one to four children, the income break-even levels, in £ sterling per week as a percentage of average male manual earnings, at which child benefit entitlement is the same as income tax liability.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The table sets out the weekly income levels for a married man whose wife is not working at which income tax liability equals child benefit entitlement at 1988-89 levels.

Break-even levels

Number of children	*£ per week*	*As a percentage of average male manual earnings*[1]
1	107·75	52·0
2	136·75	65·9
3	165·75	79·9
4	194·75	93·9

[1] Average manual earnings for male aged over 21 working a full week are estimated to be £207·40 per week in 1988-89.

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give for 1978-79 and 1988-89 or the most recent year available the total income before and after tax at constant prices for *(a)* the top 1 per cent., *(b)* the top 5 per cent. and *(c)* the top 10 per cent. and each 10 per cent. thereafter down to the bottom 10 per cent., including both working and non-working households in the figures and the percentage of income before and after tax accruing to each group.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 7 June 1988]:* Estimates for the years 1978-79, 1981-82 and 1984-85 of shares of income, before and after tax, received by quantile groups are contained in "The distribution of income in the United Kingdom 1984-85", published in the November 1987 edition of *Economic Trends.*

Income Tax

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the income tax remitted to taxpayers at all levels since 1979; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The amount of income tax remitted to taxpayers at all levels since 1979 was:

Year (to 31 October)	*Amount (£ thousand)*
1979	39,617
1980	45,091
1981	55,020
1982	70,143
1983	93,721
1984	126,905
1985	138,468
1986	187,088

Tax is written off where there is no reasonable prospect of recovery—for example, because the taxpayer is insolvent.

Corporation Tax

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* his estimate of the gain to the revenue in a full year of increasing the rates of corporation tax and advance corporation tax, respectively, to 52 per cent.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The yield from increasing the main rate of corporation tax to 52 per cent. would be about £11 billion at 1987 levels of company profits and dividends. The additional yield from increasing the advance corporation tax rate and small companies rate to 52 per cent. would be about £2 billion. These estimates take no account of possible behavioural effects following such a change.

Inland Revenue (Pre-paid Envelopes)

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement concerning the decision of the Inland Revenue to cease the practice of enclosing pre-paid envelopes in correspondence with taxpayers.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave on 29 January 1988 at column *420* and to the Inland Revenue press release of the same date.

Mortgage Interest

Mr. Soley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the total cost of mortgage interest tax relief for the United Kingdom as a whole and for England, also expressed in terms of the cost per mortgagor receiving tax relief and the cost per owner-occupied dwelling, for the financial years 1979-80 to 1987-88; and what is the estimated cost in respect of 1988-89.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Estimates for the United Kingdom for the years 1979-80 to 1988-89 and for England from 1979-80 to 1982-83 are given in the table. Figures for 1983-84 onwards include the cost of relief given to non-taxpayers.

	Cost of mortgage interest relief (£ million)		Average cost of relief per mortgagor (£)		Average cost of relief per owner-occupied dwelling (£)	
	England	UK	England	UK	England	UK
1979-80	1,300	1,450	250	245	130	125
1980-81	1,735	1,960	335	335	165	160
1981-82	1,820	2,050	350	350	170	165
1982-83	1,895	2,150	350	350	170	170
1983-84	n/a	2,780	n/a	370	n/a	210
1984-85	n/a	3,580	n/a	460	n/a	265
1985-86	n/a	4,750	n/a	595	n/a	340
1986-87[1]	n/a	4,750	n/a	580	n/a	335
1987-88[1]	n/a	4,850	n/a	575	n/a	330
1988-89[1]	n/a	4,250	n/a	495	n/a	n/a

[1] Provisional.
n/a Not available.

Following the introduction of MIRAS in April 1983, regional information on the cost of mortgage interest relief cannot be extracted from Inland Revenue records. The regional distribution of mortgage interest can be derived from the family expenditure survey (FES), but, as the sample size for the FES is relatively small, it is not possible to provide robust estimates of regional trends for the period after 1982-83. Separate figures for England for 1983-84 to 1988-89 are therefore not available.

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish a table showing the total value of mortgage interest relief forgone as tax income by the Inland Revenue, the total number of recipients of this relief and the average amount of relief received per mortgagor, respectively, in the United Kingdom, in England and in Greater London in each tax year from 1978-79 to 1987-88; and if he will give an estimate for 1988-89.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 7 June 1988]:* Estimates for the years 1978-79 to 1982-83 have been derived from the results of the survey of personal incomes and are given in the table.

Mortgage interest tax relief

	Total cost £ million	Number of mortgagors thousands	Average cost of relief £
1978-79			
London	170	680	250
England	995	5,010	200
United Kingdom	1,110	5,600	200
1979-80			
London	235	760	310
England	1,300	5,250	250
United Kingdom	1,450	5,890	245
1980-81			
London	280	710	395
England	1,735	5,210	335
United Kingdom	1,960	5,860	335
1981-82			
London	290	660	440
England	1,820	5,190	350
United Kingdom	2,050	5,850	350
1982-83			
London	260	620	420
England	1,895	5,400	350
United Kingdom	2,150	6,130	350

Following the introduction of MIRAS in April 1983, regional information on the cost of mortgage interest relief cannot be extracted from Inland Revenue records. The regional distribution of mortgage interest can be estimated from the family expenditure survey (FES), but, as the sample size for the FES is relatively small, it is not possible to provide robust estimates of regional trends for the period after 1982-83. Accordingly, the following table shows the relevant figures for 1983-84 to 1988-89 for the United Kingdom only. FES data for 1983 to 1985 suggest that about 88 per cent. of total mortgage interest relief is attributable to England and 14·5 per cent. to London. The corresponding percentages for the number of mortgagors are 88 per cent. for England and 10·6 per cent. for London.

United Kingdom

	Cost of mortgage interest relief[1] £ million	Number of mortgagors thousands	Average cost of relief £
1983-84	2,780	7,500	370
1984-85	3,580	7,750	460
1985-86	4,750	8,000	595
1986-87[2]	4,750	8,200	580
1987-88[2]	4,850	8,400	575
1988-89[2]	4,250	8,600	495

[1] Includes the cost of mortgage interest relief given to non-taxpayers.
[2] Provisional.

Housing (Expenditure)

Mr. Soley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the total cost of identifiable public expenditure; according to the main functions for housing in the years 1980-81 to 1987-88; and what was the expenditure per head of population for each of those years.

Mr. Major: The table shows, in £ million and £ per head of the population, public expenditure on the housing function which can be identified as having been incurred in one of the four countries of the United Kingdom.

Identifiable Public Expenditure[1]

	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87
£ million					
England	2,709·6	3,154·1	3,264·5	2,866·3	2,558·1
Scotland	686·9	717·0	656·3	614·7	643·4
Wales	125·3	194·9	137·1	126·1	158·4
Northern Ireland	161·9	193·0	211·0	227·3	237·6
United Kingdom	3,683·7	4,259·0	4,268·9	3,834·4	3,597·5
£ per head					
England	57·9	67·3	69·5	60·8	54·1
Scotland	132·9	139·2	127·5	119·7	125·6
Wales	44·6	69·4	48·8	44·8	56·2
Northern Ireland	105·3	125·1	136·1	145·9	151·6
United Kingdom	65·4	75·6	75·6	67·7	63·4

[1] Excludes certain expenditure such as Government net lending to public corporations.

Figures prior to 1982-83 are not available on a consistent basis because of changes in definition that have taken place between different public expenditure White Papers. Figures for 1987-88 are not yet available. The figures given above cannot be further disaggregated but a more detailed functional analysis of United Kingdom public expenditure can be found in table 2.7 of "The Government's Expenditure Plans 1988-89 to 1990-91" (Cmnd. 288-I).

Departmental Land and Buildings

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish a table comparable with that given to the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) in the *Official Report*, 27 January 1987, columns *229-30*, for sales of land and buildings by Departments, including plans for 1990-91.

Mr. Major: The table shows sales of land and buildings by Department for the years 1979-80 to 1990-91. The figures included sales by local authorities and new towns as well as central Government and are consistent with the figures published in the 1988 public expenditure White Paper (Cm. 288).

Sales of Land and Buildings by Department, 1979-80 to 1990-91 (£ million)

	1979-80 outturn	1980-81 outturn	1981-82 outturn	1982-83 outturn	1983-84 outturn	1984-85 outturn	1985-86 outturn	1986-87 outturn	1987-88 estimated outturn	1988-89 plans	1989-90 plans	1990-91 plans
Defence	45	66	54	41	32	28	60	76	68	81	50	50
Foreign and Commonwealth Office[1]	—	—	2	—	3	2	12	6	10	10	10	10
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food[2]	9	21	13	12	11	11	20	31	29	10	10	10
Trade and Industry[3]	3	3	2	7	11	16	10	—	—	—	—	—
Employment	—	—	—	1	1	1	—	3	4	—	—	—
Transport	32	44	66	41	44	53	51	51	90	47	40	40
DOE-Housing	544	792	1,392	1,965	1,525	1,355	1,286	1,497	2,063	1,665	1,750	1,830
DOE-Other Environmental Services	121	192	215	288	314	394	458	634	883	853	720	690
Home Office and Legal departments[4]	22	26	26	39	70	69	70	90	48	65	50	40
Education and Science	20	25	47	46	46	79	101	118	114	105	110	110
Arts and Libraries	—	8	2	4	3	2	1	—	—	—	—	—
DHSS-Health and Personal Social Services	15	22	25	27	45	64	103	164	221	212	210	210
DHSS-Social Security	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Scotland	42	81	133	190	230	251	228	245	292	292	260	240
Wales	19	27	102	137	90	82	84	92	116	111	110	110
Northern Ireland	1	—	1	3	3	4	4	8	13	13	10	10
Chancellor's Departments	—	—	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other Departments[3]	5	9	7	16	8	8	24	39	38	35	40	50
Total	879	1,316	2,092	2,816	2,436	2,419	2,512	3,054	3,989	3,500	3,360	3,420

[1] Including Overseas Development Administration.
[2] Including Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce and Forestry Commission.
[3] Including Export Credits Guarantee Department.

[4] This group comprises the Home Office, Lord Chancellor's Department, Northern Ireland Court Service, the Crown Prosecution Service, the Serious Fraud Office and the Crown Office, Procurator Fiscal Service and Lord Advocate's Department.
[5] Including Property Services Agency and Civil Superannuation.

House Prices

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give the assumption on the rise in house prices in 1988-89, 1989-90 and 1990-91 built into the figures given for receipts from sales of housing in table 3.6 Cm. 288-1.

Mr. Major: It is not Government practice to publish assumptions which may be market sensitive.

Interest Rates

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give the assumptions on interest rates for 1988-89, 1989-90 and 1990-91 used in calculating table 2.17 of Cm. 288-1.

Mr. Lilley: It is not the practice to give interest rate assumptions, which are market sensitive.

Chartered Accountants

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many chartered accountants are employed in the Civil Service.

Mr. Brooke: About 275, or around a third of fully qualified accountants in the Civil Service.

National Health Service

Mr. Harry Cohen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the employment effect of *(a)* reducing the income tax take from higher-rate payers by £2 billion in a full year, *(b)* reducing the income tax take for standard rate payers by £2 billion in a full year and *(c)* increasing by £2 billion the resources of the National Health Service.

Mr. Major: It has not been the practice to publish estimates of the economic effects of changes in taxation or public expenditure.

Tourism

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proposals are being made to the European Commission on taxation on tourists, in the light of the introduction of the European single market; and what representations he has received seeking a tourism or landing tax in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Lilley: The Government have made no proposals to the European Commission on taxation of tourists. My right hon. Friend has received a small number of representations about imposing a tax on arrivals in or departures from the United Kingdom.

Pensioners

Mr. Jack: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what is his estimate of the cost of raising the tax allowance to £3,498, £3,848, £4,233, £4,656, £5,122, £5,634, respectively, for single pensioners aged 65 to 79 years;

(2) what is his estimate of the cost of raising the tax allowance to £3,641, £4,005, £4,406, £4,846, £5,331, and £5,864, respectively, for single pensioners aged 80 years and over;

(3) what is his estimate of the cost of raising the tax allowance to £5,538, £6,093, £6,702, £7,372, £8,109 and £8,920, respectively, for married pensioners aged between 65 and 79 years;

(4) what is his estimate of the cost of raising the tax allowance to £5,726, £6,298, £6,927, £7,621, £8,383 and £9,221, respectively, for pensioners over the age of 80 years.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answers 23 May 1988]:* The estimated costs of increasing the age allowances from the levels proposed in the 1988 Budget are shown in the tables. All estimates are based on a projection of the 1985-86 survey of personal incomes and are therefore provisional.

Personal allowance £	*1988-89 Full year cost £ million*	*Personal allowance £*	*1988-89 Full year cost £ million*
Single aged 65-79		*Single aged 80 years and over*	
[1]3,180	—	[1]3,310	—
3,498	60	3,641	15
3,848	115	4,005	35
4,233	170	4,406	50
4,656	225	4,846	65
5,122	285	5,331	80
5,634	325	5,864	95

Personal allowance £	*1988-89 Full year cost £ million*	*Personal allowance £*	*1988-89 Full year cost £ million*
Married aged 65-79		*Married aged 80 years and over*	
[1]5,035	—	[1]5,205	—
5,538	85	5,726	5
6,093	165	6,298	15
6,702	245	6,927	20
7,372	325	7,621	25
8,109	400	8,383	35
8,920	480	9,221	40

[1]Proposed level of allowance in 1988-89.

Pensioners

Mr. Jack: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many pensioner tax units there are for the following levels of gross taxable earnings *(a)* £3,000 to £4,000, *(b)* £4,000 to £5,000, *(c)* £5,000 to £6,000, *(d)* £6,000 to £7,000, *(e)* £7,000 to £8,000, *(f)* £8,000 to £9,000, *(g)* £9,000 to £10,000, *(h)* £10,000 to £11,000, and *(i)* over £11,000, respectively.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 23 May 1988]:* Estimates are given in the table. The estimates are based on projections of the 1985-86 survey of personal incomes and the 1985 family expenditure survey and are therefore provisional.

Range of total income[1] £ per year	*Estimated number of aged tax units[2] in 1988-89 thousands*
3,000–	1,100
4,000–	860
5,000–	490
6,000–	290
7,000–	200

Range of total income[1] *£ per year*	*Estimated number of aged tax units*[2] *in 1988-89 thousands*
8,000–	180
9,000–	140
10,000–	110
11,000 and over	730

[1] Earnings, pensions and investment income.
[2] Married couples and single people aged 65 or over.

DEFENCE

Staff Losses

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence why there has been a consistent loss of professional and technological staff from his Department over the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: The number of MOD professional and technical officers (P and TOs) fell from 23,400 to 14,700 between 1 April 1983 and 1 January 1988. Most of this reduction is accounted for by the transfer out of MOD employment of P and TOs in the royal dockyards (3,200) and the royal ordnance factories (2,700). The balance is attributable partly to the general reduction in MOD manpower numbers and partly to a shortfall in replacing normal losses.

As stated in paragraphs 518 to 520 of the "Statement on Defence Estimates 1988" the problems of recruitment and retention of civilian staff are being tackled in several ways: for P and TOs especially, by improved pay arrangements, a new recruitment strategy, and building on the progress made by the formation of the defence engineering service.

Jaguar

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the cost of the upgrading of the navigation attack system for the Royal Air Force Jaguar aircraft.

Mr. Sainsbury: The update to the Jaguar navigation attack system is nearing completion at a cost of some £40 million.

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the cost of the chaff and flare dispensers for Royal Air Force Jaguar aircraft.

Mr. Sainsbury: My noble Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement will write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much longer the Royal Air Force Jaguar aircraft will remain in Royal Air Force service.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The Jaguar is planned to remain in service with the Royal Air Force until it is replaced by the European fighter aircraft, which we hope will enter service in the mid-1990s. This process is expected to be completed around the turn of the century.

Tornado

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Tornado F2/3 aircraft have been delivered to the Royal Air Force to date.

Mr. Sainsbury: By the end of May 1988, a total of 94 aircraft had been delivered.

No. 51 Squadron

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence why there is no mention of No. 51 squadron in the appendix to the current year's "Statement on Defence Estimates".

Mr. Ian Stewart: Annex C of volume 1 of the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1988" is primarily concerned with front-line units. 51 squadron is not classified as a front-line unit.

AWACS

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the cost of the strengthening of runways and taxiways at Royal Air Force Waddington for AWACS aircraft.

Mr. Freeman: The cost of strengthening the runways and taxiways at Royal Air Force Waddington for the Boeing E-3 aircraft, AWACS, is £6·5 million. However, the opportunity has also been taken to carry out simultaneously other routine airfield pavement maintenance work at a further cost of approximately £1 million.

Agusta Helicopters

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Agusta helicopters are in service with British forces.

Mr. Ian Stewart: A small number of Agusta helicopters are in service with British forces. It is not our practice to publish numbers of operational aircraft.

Nuclear Test Veterans

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will ask the National Radiological Protection Board to examine the incidence of *(a)* cataracts, *(b)* arthritis, *(c)* diabetes and *(d)* deformed children amongst nuclear test veterans.

Mr. Sainsbury: As the right hon. Member is aware, the NRPB has after careful consideration of all the data available to it, made recommendations for relevant follow-up studies in its report. The Government have endorsed these recommendations which do not include the diseases referred to, which in any event are not included in any national register.

HMS Hermione

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his answer of 27 May, when he expects the investigation into the loss and subsequent discovery of a document concerning routine refit work on HMS Hermione to be completed.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The investigation has been completed. It is not our normal practice to disclose the results of such investigations. However, I am satisfied that the loss of the document in question was accidental and measures have been taken to try and prevent a recurrence.

Gatwick Airport (Exercise)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many troops were involved in the security

exercise at Gatwick airport on 7 June; what was the purpose of the exercise; what equipment was deployed; and if any military personnel searched vehicles.

Mr. Ian Stewart: This was a routine security operation in support of the police. Such operations are conducted regularly for deterrent purposes. It is not the policy to give details of operational matters.

EMPLOYMENT

School Leavers

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment in each of the years 1980-81 to 1987-88 and in projections for each year until 1990-91, how many school leavers aged 15, 16 and 17 years entered the employment market; how many of these gained places on the YTS or its predecessors; how many entered employment; how many were unemployed; of those entering the YTS, how many had employee status; and in the years after the introduction of the two-year YTS, how many second year trainees there were and how many of these had employee status.

Mr. Cope: The information which is available is given in the tables:

Table 1
Young People in the Labour Market—Great Britain
Thousands

	Young People leaving School for the Labour Market[1] *(Academic Year Ending in Year Shown)*				*YTS Entrants (Financial year) Beginning in Year Shown)*
	Age 15	*Age 16*	*Age 17*	*All*	
1981	500	70	60	630	n/a
1982	480	90	70	640	n/a
1983	490	90	80	660	333
1984	490	80	70	640	356
1985	470	80	70	620	350
1986	460	80	60	600	344
1987	440	80	60	580	[2]328
Projections					
1988	410	80	60	550	331
1989	380	70	60	510	363
1990	360	70	60	480	358

[1] Age at beginning of academic year and excluding leavers from further education. Figures may not add up due to rounding.
[2] Provisional figure.

Table 2
Young People[1] *in training on YTS—Great Britain*
thousands

	All	*With Employee Status*	*In First Year*	*In Second Year*
January				
1985	276	19	n/a	n/a
1986	274	22	n/a	n/a
1987	318	44	266	52
[2]1988	395	57	243	152

[1] Aged 18 or under at previous 31 August. Training Commission estimates based on information from the YTS Management Information System.
[2] Provisional figures.

The other information requested is not readily available on a comparable basis and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Litter and Industrial Waste

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people are employed in *(a)* the United Kingdom, by region, and *(b)* Basildon, in the collection and disposal of litter and industrial waste; and if he will express the figures as a percentage of the total local work force.

Mr. Lee: Estimates are not separately available for the industries specified. The latest available figures for the regions of the United Kingdom are for employment in all sanitary services (class 92 of the standard industrial classification 1980) in December 1987. These cover refuse disposal, public cleansing, street cleaning, fumigation, disinfection, pest destroying (including treatment against woodworm and woodrot), sewage disposal and cleaning services (including window cleaning, chimney sweeping and units specialising in cleaning industrial, commercial and Government premises).

The information is as follows. The figures are unadjusted for the effects of seasonal variations.

	Employees in employment in the Sanitary Services Industry	*Numbers as a percentage of the (Civilian) (Working Population*[1]*)*
South East	170,000	1·8
East Anglia	13,000	1·3
South West	40,000	2·0
West Midlands	37,000	1·4
East Midlands	21,000	1·1
Yorkshire and Humberside	31,000	1·3
North West	27,000	0·9
North	14,000	1·0
Wales	12,000	1·0
Scotland	35,000	1·5
Northern Ireland	4,000	0·6

[1] The Civilian Working Population is the sum of Employees in Employment, the Self Employed, and Unemployed.

The available information for Basildon is from the September 1984 census of employment. There were then 500 employees employed in the sanitary services industry. This represents 1 per cent. of the sum of all employees in employment and the unemployed in the area at that time.

Fatal Accidents

Mr. Flannery: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish in the *Official Report (a)* the number of fatal accidents investigated by Her Majesty's factory inspectorate, *(b)* the number of prosecutions arising from these investigations and *(c)* the number of these prosecutions taken in the Crown court, in each of the last five years.

Mr. Nicholls: The numbers of fatal accidents investigated by the Health and Safety Executive's factory inspectorate are set out in the table:

Year	*Fatal accidents investigated*
1983	384
1984	414
1985	412
1986	353
1987	365

The numbers of informations laid relating to prosecutions by the factory inspectorate are set out in the table. Not all these cases arose from accidents at work. The proportion of these that relates to fatal accidents and the number of subsequent prosecutions taken in the Crown court could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Information for 1987-88 is not yet available.

Year	*Informations laid*
1982	2,134
1983	1,989
1984	1,882
1985	1,842
[1]1986	
Quarter 1	446
[2]1986-87	1,690

[1] Data for the 3-month period January 1986 to March 1986.
[2] Provisional data for the 12-month period April 1986 to March 1987.

Health and Safety Executive (Inspectors)

Mr. Flannery: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish in the *Official Report* the location and the number of inspectors at each grade, and each office address, of each Health and Safety Executive office in each year since 1978.

Mr. Nicholls: The information requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Early Retirement

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has any plans to offer to disabled employees the opportunity for early retirement similar to that existing under the job release scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: No. The job release scheme was closed on 31 January 1988 and its resources redirected to measures which would help longer-term unemployed people (including those with disabilities) more effectively. There are at present no plans to replace it.

Employment Training

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what action he plans to take to protect projects which provide services for disabled people when employment training replaces the community programme in September.

Mr. Nicholls: Project-based training will be an important part of employment training with some 194,000 project-based opportunities in the first year, broadly the present level of community programme provision. I hope that most current community programme projects will move forward into employment training, bringing with them the worthwhile services that they currently provide.

Enterprise Allowance

Mr. Hayward: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment, if he will make a statement on the recent value-for-money scrutiny of the enterprise allowance scheme.

Mr. Cope: The efficiency unit conducted a scrutiny of the enterprise allowance scheme in 1987 as part of its continuing programme of work. I have now considered the report prepared by the scrutiny team. The scrutiny found the scheme offered good value for money, and no major changes to the operation or rules of the scheme are planned. The report makes recommendations for improving the efficiency of the administration of the scheme, and for improving the success and growth of the businesses established through it. My Department has drawn up an action plan in response to the report and we will be introducing a number of pilot projects to implement the team's recommendations. These involve requiring every applicant to complete a simple business plan as a condition of entry to the scheme and reducing the number of monitoring visits made by officials. We also intend to take steps to make more and better training available to those applying for the scheme. I have arranged for copies of the scrutiny report and my Department's commentary to be placed in the Library.

Single European Market

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what advice his Department is giving to trade unions about the creation of a single European market in 1992; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope *[holding answer 9 June 1988]:* The Government aim, through their awareness campaign on the single European market, to stimulate everyone connected with business to be aware of the challenge of 1992, and to take action accordingly. The opportunities that the single market offers for boosting growth and so increasing employment are important for all union members. We hope that union members will encourage their employers to anticipate and take full advantage of the opportunities.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Sittings of the House

Mr. Amess: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will publish in the *Official Report* a consolidated list of the occasions which the House has sat later than 1.30 am since 1958.

Mr. Wakeham: I regret that it has not been possible to provide this information in the time available. I will reply shortly.

Legislation

Mr. Amess: To ask the Lord President of the Council (1) if he will publish in the *Official Report* the total number of *(a)* Government Bills and *(b)* private Members' Bills introduced in each Session since 1958;

(2) what percentage of *(a)* Government Bills, and *(b)* private Members' Bills received the Royal Assent in each Session since 1958.

Mr. Wakeham: The information is as follows:

Session	*Government Bills*		*Private Members' Bills*	
	Number	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*
1958-59	56	98	43	48
1959-60	53	100	42	45
1960-61	48	94	55	36

Session	Government Bills		Private Members' Bills	
	Number	Per cent.	Number	Per cent.
1961-62	39	100	53	38
1962-63	43	98	50	36
1963-64	64	98	86	40
1964-65	66	98	80	21
1965-66	36	58	38	—
1966-67	103	100	107	22
1967-68	65	97	77	17
1968-69	54	94	94	13
1969-70	63	60	81	19
1970-71	76	100	67	18
1971-72	59	100	82	21
1972-73	59	100	85	18
1973-74	33	45	42	—
1974	39	90	39	18
1974-75	81	90	86	12
1975-76	76	95	85	19
1976-77	49	86	89	12
1977-78	49	100	89	12
1978-79	55	80	58	5
1979-80	71	100	125	8
1980-81	58	98	80	18
1981-82	47	98	93	11
1982-83	48	85	81	12
1983-84	60	100	118	11
1984-85	56	96	98	21
1985-86	51	96	114	18
1986-87	39	92	85	18
1987-88 to date	43	n/a	88	n/a

Mr. Amess: To ask the Lord President of the Council, if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of private Members' Bills which were introduced *(a)* under Standing Order 58, *(b)* under the ten-minute rule, and *(c)* ballot Bills, which received the Royal Assent in each session since 1958.

Mr. Wakeham: The information is as follows:

A. *Private Members' Bills introduced under S.O. 58 receiving Royal Assent*

1958-59
Agricultural Improvement Grants
Hospital of St. Mary Magdalene and other Charities (Newcastle upon Tyne) Charity
Hospital of St. Nicholas (Salisbury) Charity
Jesus Hospital (Rothwell) Charity
Poor's Coal Charity (Wavendon) Charity
Small Lotteries and Gaming Act 1956 (Amendment)
Solicitors (Amendment) *[Lords]*
Supreme Court of Judicature (Amendment)

1959-60
Bromley College and other Charities
Chipping Sodbury Town Trust
Game Laws (Amendment)
House of Commons Members' Fund
Marriage (Enabling) *[Lords]*
Pawnbrokers
United Charities of Nathaniel Waterhouse, and other Charities (Halifax)

1960-61
Barristers (Qualification for Office)
Court of Chancery of Lancaster (Amendment)
Credit-Sale Agreements (Scotland)
Nurses (Amendment)
Oaths Act 1888 (Amendment)
Private Street Works
Public Authorities (Allowances)
Small Estates (Representation)

1961-62
Animals (Cruel Poisons) *[Lords]*
British Museum *[Lords]*
Drainage Rates
House of Commons Members' Fund
Law Reform (Damages and Solatium) (Scotland)
Law Reform (Husband and Wife)
Marriage (Wales and Monmouthshire)
Recorded Delivery Service

1962-63
Dog Racing (Betting Days)
Drainage Rates
Performers' Protection *[Lords]*
Public Lavatories (Turnstiles)
Stock Transfer *[Lords]*

1963-64
Animals (Restriction of Importation)
British Nationality (No. 2)
Burgh Police (Amendment) (Scotland)
Dangerous Drugs
Divorce (Scotland) *[Lords]*
Elections (Welsh Forms)
Episcopal Church (Scotland) *[Lords]*
Films *[Lords]*
Fireworks
Hairdressers (Registration)
Married Women's Property *[Lords]*
National Health Service (Hospital Boards)
New Forest *[Lords]*
Pharmacy and Poisons (Amendment)
Protection of Animals (Anaesthetics) *[Lords]*
Road Traffic
Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1923 (Amendment)
Trustee Savings Banks *[Lords]*

1964-65
British Nationality
Criminal Justice
Criminal Procedure (Attendance of Witnesses)
Criminal Procedure (Scotland)
Justices of the Peace *[Lords]*
Local Government (Scotland) Act 1947 (Amendment) (No. 2)
Lost Property (Scotland)
Merchant Shipping
Murder (Abolition of Death Penalty)
Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries *[Lords]*
Solicitors *[Lords]*
Solicitors (Scotland) *[Lords]*

1965-66
None

1966-67
Deer (Amendment) (Scotland) *[Lords]*
Land Registration *[Lords]*
Llangollen International Music Eisteddfod
Matrimonial Homes *[Lords]*
Merchant Shipping
Protection of Birds *[Lords]*
Refreshment Houses *[Lords]*
Slaughter of Poultry

1967-68
Sale of Venison (Scotland) (No. 2)
Wills

1968-69
Betting, Gaming and Lotteries (Amendment) *[Lords]*
Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance)
Public Health (Recurring Nuisances)
Sharing of Church Buildings *[Lords]*

1969-70
Education (School Milk)
Food and Drugs (Milk)
Game *[Lords]*
Indecent Advertisements (Amendment) *[Lords]*
Marriage (Registrar General's Licence)
New Forest *[Lords]*
Proceedings against Estates *[Lords]*
Riding Establishments *[Lords]*
Road Traffic (Disqualification)

1970-71
Carriage of Goods by Sea
Powers of Attorney
Welsh National Opera Company

1971-72
Affiliated Proceedings (Amendment) (No. 2)
Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons (Scotland)
Civil Evidence
Harbours, Piers and Ferries (Scotland) *[Lords]*
National Health Service (Family Planning) Amendment
Performers' Protection *[Lords]*
Police
Social Work (Scotland) *[Lords]*
Sunday Cinema *[Lords]*
Sunday Theatre (No. 2) *[Lords]*

1972-73
Badgers *[Lords]*
Dentists (Amendment)
Gaming (Amendment)
Rate Rebate
Sea Fisheries (Shellfish)
Succession (Scotland) *[Lords]*

1973-74
None

1974
Lord Chancellor (Tenure of Office and Discharge of Ecclesiastical Functions) *[Lords]*
Mines (Working Facilities and Support)
Parks Regulation (Amendment) *[Lords]*

1974-75
Guard Dogs
Hearing Aid Council (Extension)

1975-76
Licensing (Amendment) *[Lords]*
Motor-Cycle Crash-Helmets (Religious Exemption)
Protection of Birds (Amendment)
Solicitors (Scotland) *[Lords]*

1976-77
Farriers Registration (Amendment) *[Lords]*
Licensing (Amendment)
Presumption of Death (Scotland)
Roe Deer (Close Seasons)
Unfair Contract Terms

1977-78
Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons (Northern Ireland)
Education (Northern Ireland) *[Lords]*
Import of Live Fish (Scotland) *[Lords]*
Industrial and Provident Societies *[Lords]*
Theatres Trust (Scotland)

1978-79
Confirmation to Small Estates (Scotland)
Criminal Evidence *[Lords]*
Films

1979-80
Betting, Gaming and Lotteries (Amendment) *[Lords]*
Gaming (Amendment) *[Lords]*
Import of Live Fish (England and Wales)
Licensing (Amendment) (No. 2)
Representation of the People

1980-81
Countryside (Scotland)
Disused Burial Grounds (Amendment) *[Lords]*
Food and Drugs (Amendment)
Forgery and Counterfeiting *[Lords]*
Licensing (Amendment) *[Lords]*
Matrimonial Homes and Property *[Lords]*

1981-82
Copyright Act 1956 (Amendment) *[Lords]*
Deer (Amendment) (Scotland) *[Lords]*
Firearms

1982-83
British Nationality (Falkland Islands) *[Lords]*
Coroners' Juries
National Audit
Pet Animals Act 1951 (Amendment) *[Lords]*

1983-84
Education (Amendment) (Scotland) *[Lords]*
Law Reform (Husband and Wife) (Scotland)
Lotteries (Amendment) *[Lords]*

1984-85
Agricultural Training Board
Betting, Gaming and Lotteries (Amendment) *[Lords]*
Charities *[Lords]*
Dangerous Vessels *[Lords]*
Hill Farming
Licensing (Amendment) *[Lords]*
Prohibition of Female Circumcision
Wildlife and Countryside (Service of Notices)

1985-86
Forestry
Gaming (Amendment)
Health Service Joint Consultative Committees (Access to Information)
Highways (Amendment)
Incest and Related Offences (Scotland) *[Lords]*
Law Reform (Parent and Child) (Scotland)
Marriage (Prohibited Degrees of Relationship) *[Lords]*
Marriage (Wales)
Prevention of Oil Pollution *[Lords]*
Protection of Children (Tobacco)

1986-87
Animals (Scotland) *[Lords]*
Billiards (Abolition of Restrictions) *[Lords]*
Deer
Gaming (Amendment) *[Lords]*
Licensing (Restaurant Meals) *[Lords]*
Prescription (Scotland)
Protection of Animals (Penalties)
Register of Sasines (Scotland)
Registered Establishments (Scotland)

1987-88 to date
Land Registration *[Lords]*

B. *Private Members' Bills introduced under the Ten Minute Rule receiving Royal Assent*

1958-59
Eisteddfod
Housing (Underground Rooms)
Obscene Publications
Police Federation
Restriction of Offensive Weapons

1959-60
Adoption
Oil Burners (Standards)

1960-61
Companies (Floating Charges) (Scotland)
Restriction of Offensive Weapons Act 1959 (Amendment)

1961-62
Penalties for Drunkenness

1962-63
None

1963-64
Law of Property (Joint Tenants)
Local Government (Development and Finance) (Scotland)
New Towns (No. 2)
Young Persons (Employment)

1964-65
Shops (Early Closing Days)

1965-66
None

1966-67
Farm and Garden Chemicals
Private Places of Entertainment (Licensing)
Sexual Offences (No. 2)
Vessels Protection

1967-68
Design Copyright
Hearing Aid Council
Highlands and Islands Development (Scotland)

1968-69
Architects Registration (Amendment)
Licensing (Scotland)
National Mod (Scotland)
Tattooing of Minors

1969-70
Trees

1970-71 and 1971-72 None

1972-73
Breeding of Dogs
London Cab Reform

1973-74 to 1979-80 None

1980-81
Transport Act 1962 (Amended)

1981-82
None

1982-83
Solvent Abuse (Scotland)

1983-84
None

1984-85
Rent (Amendment)
Town and Country Planning (Amendment)

1985-86
None

1986-87
None

1987-88 to date
None

C. *Ballot Bills receiving Royal Assent*
1958-59
Criminal Justice Administration (Amendment)
Family Allowances and National Insurance
Fatal Accidents
Intestate Husbands' Estate (Scotland)
Landlord and Tenant (Furniture and Fittings)
Legitimacy

1959-60
Abandonment of Animals
Clean Rivers (Estuaries and Tidal Waters)
Corporate Bodies Contracts
First Offenders (Scotland)
Noise Abatement
Offices
Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings)
Road Traffic (Amendment)
Road Traffic (Driving of Motor Cycles)
Wages Arrestment Limitation (Amendment) (Scotland)

1960-61
Carriage by Air
Consumer Protection
Highways (Miscellaneous Provisions)
Home Safety
Industrial and Provident Societies
Mock Auctions
Police Federation
Printer's Imprint
Rivers (Prevention of Pollution)
Rural Water Supplies and Sewerage

1961-62
Agriculture and Forestry Associations
Air Guns and Shot Guns etc
Carriage by Air (Supplementary Provisions)
Coal Consumers' Councils (Northern Irish Interests)
Landlord and Tenant
Local Authorities (Historic Buildings)
Local Government (Records)
Lotteries and Gaming
National Assistance Act 1948 (Amendment)
Police Federations
Shops (Airports)

1962-63
Animal Boarding Establishments
Corn Rents
Deer
Forestry (Sale of Land) (Scotland)
Limitation
Local Authorities (Land)
Local Government (Financial Provisions)
Matrimonial Causes and Reconciliation
Nursing Homes
Oaths and Evidence (Overseas Authorities) and Countries
Oil in Navigable Waters
Sheriff Courts (Civil Jurisdiction and Procedure) (Scotland)
Wills

1963-64
Adoption
Betting, Gaming and Lotteries (Amusements with Prizes)
Criminal Procedure (Right of Reply)
Local Government (Pecuniary Interests)
Merchant Shipping
Nurses
Protection of Birds Act 1954 (Amendment)
Riding Establishments
Scrap Metal Dealers
Trade Union (Amalgamations etc)
Trading Stamps
Universities and College Estates

1964-65
Administration of Estates (Small Payments)
Carriage of Goods by Road
Highways (Amendment)
Public Health (Notification of Births)

1965-66
None

1966-67
Abortion
Antarctic Treaty
Civic Amenities
Industrial and Provident Societies
Licensing (Amendment)
Licensing (Certificates in Suspense) (Scotland)
National Health Service (Family Planning)
National Insurance (Industrial Injuries) (Amendment)
Road Traffic (Amendment)
Road Traffic (Driving Instruction)
Teachers of Nursing
Tokyo Convention

1967-68
Adoption
Caravan Sites
Clean Air
Domestic and Appellate Proceedings (Restriction of

Publicity)
Friendly and Industrial and Provident Societies
Local Authorities' Mutual Investment Trust
Maintenance Orders
Theatres

1968-69
Auctions (Bidding Agreements)
Divorce Reform
Employers' Liability (Defective Equipment)
Ponies

1969-70
Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons
Conservation of Seals
Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions)
Local Government (Footpaths and Open Spaces) (Scotland)
Parish Councils and Burial Authorities (Miscellaneous Authorities)

1970-71
Administration of Estates
Betting, Gaming and Lotteries (Amendment)
Consumer Protection
Dangerous Litter
Interest on Damages (Scotland)
Law Reform Miscellaneous Provisions
Motor Vehicles (Passenger Insurance)
Nullity of Marriage
Unsolicited Goods and Services

1971-72
Carriage by Railway
Defective Premises
Matrimonial Proceedings (Polygamous Marriages)
National Insurance (Amendment)
Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries
Trade Descriptions
Trading Representations (Disabled Persons) (Amendment)

1972-73
Domicile and Matrimonial Proceedings
Employment Agencies
Employment of Children
Hallmarking
Heavy Commercial Vehicles (Control and Regulations)
Law Reform (Diligence) (Scotland)
Protection of Wrecks

1973-74
None

1974
Carriage of Passengers by Road
Education (Mentally Handicapped Children) (Scotland)
Rehabilitation of Offenders
Town and Country Amenities

1974-75
Conservation of Wild Creatures and Wild Plants
Evidence (Proceedings in Other Jurisdictions)
Farriers (Registration)
International Road Haulage Permits
Litigants in Person (Costs and Expenses)
Mental Health (Amendment)
Mobile Homes
Unsolicited Goods and Services (Amendment)

1975-76
Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons (Amendment) (No. 2)
Congenital Disabilities (Civil Liability)
Dangerous Wild Animals
Divorce (Scotland) (No. 2)
Domestic Violence and Matrimonial Proceedings
Explosives (Age of Purchase &c.)
Food and Drugs (Control of Food Premises)
Industrial Common Ownership
Representation of the People (Armed Forces)
Sexual Offences (Amendment)
Stock Exchange (Completion of Bargains)
Theatres Trust

1976-77
Control of Food Premises (Scotland)
Housing (Homeless Persons)
Insurance Brokers (Registration)
Minibus
Rentcharges
Town and Country Planning (Amendment)

1977-78
Civil Liability (Contribution)
Consumer Safety
Internationally Protected Persons
Local Government
Protection of Children
Rating (Disabled Persons)

1978-79
None

1979-80
Concessionary Travel for Handicapped Persons (Scotland)
Coroners
Deer
Licensed Premises (Exclusion of Certain Persons)
Married Women's Policies of Assurance (Scotland) (Amendment)

1980-81
Disabled Persons (No. 2)
Horserace Betting Levy
Indecent Displays (Control)
Industrial Diseases (Notification)
Licensing (Alcohol Education and Research)
Local Government and Planning (Amendment)
Zoo Licensing (No. 2)

1981-82
Children's Homes
Cinematograph (Amendment)
Food and Drugs (Amendment)
Forfeiture
Gaming (Amendment)
Planning Inquiries (Attendance of Public)
Supply of Goods and Services

1982-83
Copyright (Amendment)
Diseases of Fish
Level Crossings
Licensing (Occasional Permissions)
Road Traffic (Driving Licences)

1983-84
Agriculture (Amendment)
Anatomy
Betting, Gaming and Lotteries (Amendment) (No. 2)
Child Abduction
Cycle Tracks
Juries (Disqualification)
Prescription and Limitation (Scotland)
Road Traffic (Driving Instruction)
Trade Marks (Amendment)
Video Recordings

1984-85
Charter Trustees
Controlled Drug (Penalties)
Copyright (Computer Software) (Amendment)
Gaming (Bingo)
Hospitals Complaints Procedure
Intoxicating Substances (Supply)
Local Government (Access to Information)
Motor-Cycle Crash Helmets (Restriction of Liability)
Road Traffic (Production of Documents)
Sexual Offences
Wildlife and Countryside (Amendment)

1985-86
Children and Young Persons (Amendment)
Civil Protection in Peacetime
Consumer Safety (Amendment)
Corneal Tissue
Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation)
Drainage Rates (Disabled Persons)
Horticultural Produce
Industrial Training
Protection of Military Remains
Road Traffic Regulation (Parking)
Safety at Sea

1986-87
Access to Personal Files
Agricultural Training Board
AIDS Control
Crossbows
Crown Proceedings (Armed Forces)
Motorcycle Noise

1987-88 to date
None

Mr. Amess: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will list those Bills which completed all stages in one sitting for each session since 1958, together with the dates of the sitting.

Mr. Wakeham: The information is as follows:

Presentation, First Reading to Third Reading

Session 1971-72
23rd February 1972
Northern Ireland Bill

Session 1973-74
7th February 1974
Appropriation Bill

Session 1978-79
3rd April 1979
Finance Bill

Session 1979-80
28th October 1980
Imprisonment (Temporary Provisions) Bill

SCOTLAND

Elsie Inglis Maternity Hospital

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received in connection with Lothian health board's proposal to close the Elsie Inglis maternity hospital in Edinburgh.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: My right hon. and learned Friend has received a total of around 330 letters from MPs, individuals and groups.

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he proposes to make his decision on the proposal by Lothian health board to close the Elsie Inglis maternity hospital in Edinburgh; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: My right hon. and learned Friend has today approved a restructuring of obstetric services in Lothian, which means the closure from 1 August 1988 of the Elsie Inglis memorial maternity hospital. He took particular account of the fact that there has been an oversupply and underuse of obstetric beds in Lothian for a number of years and, without change, this would be even worse from 1 August when a consultant-led obstetric service will be available for the first time at Borders general hospital. He also took account of the fact that the board's proposals have the support of its professional advisory committees and that the resources released will be fully available to permit the board to develop and improve services within its area.

Legal Aid

Sir Hector Monro: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he has made arrangements to deal with cases where, in terms of section 18 of the Legal Aid (Scotland) Act 1986, the court may not modify the loser's expenses in a civil action in which both parties are assisted persons.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: This unintended consequence of section 18 will be remedied by the provisions of schedule 4 to the Legal Aid Bill. I have authorised the Scottish Legal Aid Board to deal by write off with cases which arise before the Bill comes into force. In effect, the expenses of losing assisted persons will be borne by the Scottish legal aid fund exactly as if the court had modified them.

Hospital Patients

Mr. Graham: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people have spent more than three months in hospital in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* England, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* Northern Ireland in each year since 1979.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 27 May 1988]:* Detailed information including length of stay is held centrally only for NHS hospitals. Corresponding information is not held for private hospitals. Readily available information relates not to individual patients but to discharges (including deaths) of patients from hospital after separate episodes of care. The same patient may therefore be counted more than once. The information in the table relates to the number of discharges of patients after a stay of more than three months from all NHS hospitals, except maternity hospitals, in eayc country and in each calendar year. It does not include people who spent more than three months in hospital and who were still in hospital at the end of the year because information held centrally is incomplete. Many long-stay patients are therefore excluded.

	Scotland	*England*[1]	*Wales*	*Northern Ireland*[2]
1979	10,321	93,700	5,288	3,070
1980	9,105	88,823	5,433	2,600
1981	9,656	87,599	5,331	2,990
1982	9,775	87,560	5,167	3,560
1983	10,193	86,540	5,062	3,380
1984	9,863	87,460	5,323	3,190
1985	10,299	84,830	5,257	2,700
1986	9,828	n.a.	4,974	3,330

[1] The non-psychiatric component is estimated from a 10 per cent. sample of discharge records.
[2] Excludes discharges from mental handicap hospitals.

Electricity Generation

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the average cost per kilowatt hour of electricity generation from *(a)* the North of Scotland Hydro-Electricity Board and *(b)* the South of Scotland Electricity Board.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 28 March 1988]:* The average cost of generation, including electricity derived from interchange and purchases, borne by both Scottish electricity boards under their joint generating agreement in 1986-87 was 1·97p per kilowatt hour. An analysis of the boards' costs is contained in their annual reports for 1986-87, copies of which are available in the Library of the House.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Means-tested Benefits

Mr. Squire: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his Department's budget devoted to promoting increased take-up of means-tested benefits.

Mr. Portillo: The Department's planned budget for publicising social security is £14 million for 1988-89.

Slimming Products (Safety)

Mrs. Golding: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when the report of the advisory committee into the safety of slimming products will be available; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: Guar gum and glucomannan are widely used as stabilisers in food and are approved for such use under regulations. It is the level of these substances in certain slimming products which has created some concern.

We are seeking expert advice on the potential risks associated with taking these products and expect to obtain that in July. However, if the advice is to cast doubt on the safety of the products we shall then need to consider what action can be taken to control them, without affecting the proper use of these substances as stabilisers in food.

Ambulance Service

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many ambulance service vehicles in England and Wales are used as emergency ambulances; and what proportion are equipped with cardiac defibrillators.

Mrs. Currie: Information is not available centrally, and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mortgage Interest

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what has been the cost of providing supplementary benefit to assist with mortgage interest and/or ground rent; what were the numbers of claimants and the average weekly payments for the years 1979 to 1988; and what is the estimate for the current year for the present system of support.

Mr. Portillo: The available figures are shown in the table. Information specifically on assistance with ground rent is not collected centrally nor, prior to 1981, was information on mortgage interest. No specific estimate has been made of expenditure on these items in the current year.

Owner occupiers in receipt of Supplementary Benefit (Great Britain)

	1981	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*[1]1985*	*1986*	*[3]1987*
1. Number of owner occupiers on Supplementary Benefit receiving help with mortgage interest (000s)	196	235	242	277	—	356	334
2. Total amount included in benefit assessments for help with mortgage interest (£ million)	[2]124	[2]170	152	219	—	351	335
3. Average weekly amount included in individual assessments (£)	12·18	13·87	12·12	15·18	—	18·96	19·31

Source: Annual Statistical Enquiry.
[1] No figures available for 1985.
[2] Data collected on a different basis and not directly comparable.
[3] Provisional figures.

Disabled Persons

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Caernarfon of 19 May, *Official Report*, column *559*, why no meetings have been held with representatives of local authorities on the implementation of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986 since October 1987.

Mr. Scott: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) on 7 June at column *573*.

Nurses

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the cost of nurses employed by each district health authority in the Mersey region in each of the last five years, showing what percentage of the cost resulted from the employment of agency nurses in each case.

Mr. Newton: The information requested for the latest available five-year period is shown in the table:

Total expenditure on salaries and wages—Nurses and midwives

	1982-83		*1983-84*		*1984-85*		*1985-86*		*1986-87*	
Mersey Region	*£ thousand*	*Non-NHS per cent.*	*£ thousand*	*Non-NHS per cent.*	*£ thousand*	*Non-NHS per cent.*	*£ thousand*	*Non-NHS per cent.*	*£ thousand*	*Non-NHS per cent.*
Chester	12,102	Nil	12,823	Nil	13,529	Nil	14,301	Nil	15,451	Nil
Crewe	11,339	Nil	11,977	Nil	13,033	0·01	14,095	0·03	15,201	0·22
Halton	3,347	Nil	3,468	0·12	3,627	0·28	4,850	0·79	5,713	1·96
Macclesfield	11,148	0·01	11,765	—	12,459	0·08	12,969	0·05	13,970	0·36
Warrington	14,920	Nil	16,275	Nil	17,374	Nil	18,629	Nil	20,291	Nil
Liverpool	36,143	0·19	36,535	0·32	38,170	1·09	40,335	1·06	44,577	1·24
St. Helens & Knowsley	18,557	Nil	19,309	Nil	20,683	Nil	21,902	Nil	23,751	Nil

Mersey Region	1982-83 £ thousand	1982-83 Non-NHS per cent.	1983-84 £ thousand	1983-84 Non-NHS per cent.	1984-85 £ thousand	1984-85 Non-NHS per cent.	1985-86 £ thousand	1985-86 Non-NHS per cent.	1986-87 £ thousand	1986-87 Non-NHS per cent.
Southport & Formby	8,410	0·06	8,605	0·01	8,992	0·08	9,432	0·03	10,279	0·08
South Sefton	15,005	0·07	15,323	Nil	16,108	Nil	17,118	Nil	18,621	—
Wirral	20,499	Nil	20,505	Nil	21,178	Nil	22,164	Nil	24,133	Nil
Districts Total	151,470	0·06	156,585	0·08	165,153	0·27	175,795	0·27	191,987	0·39
Mersey RHA	408	1·64	459	1·19	481	0·89	537	1·53	597	0·82
Region Total	151,878	0·06	157,044	0·08	165,634	0·27	176,332	0·28	192,584	0·39

Note: The percentage figures show the proportion of total expenditure attributable to the employment of non-National Health Service (agency, etc.) nursing and midwifery staff. Insignificant percentage figures (ie less than 0·005 per cent.) have been indicated by the use of a dash (—).

Source: Annual accounts submitted to the Department by the health authorities comprising the Mersey region.

Community Care

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the recent statements of the Health Service Commissioner on the issue of community care for mentally handicapped people.

Mrs. Currie: The Health Service Commissioner has investigated a number of complaints relating to community care for mentally handicapped people. We are studying the published reports of these cases and will be considering whether any advice needs to be given to health authorities in the light of them.

Maternity Payments

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many women claimed maternity grants in the last year of availability in Kensington; and how many have received social fund maternity payments in the first years of availability.

Mr. Portillo: A total of 726 claims for non-contributory maternity grants were made from 7 April 1986 to 5 April 1987 in the Kensington DHSS local office area. 202 awards for social fund maternity payments were made from 6 April 1987 to 10 April 1988.

Social Fund

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when information on the first month's operation of the social fund is to be placed in the Library; if he will list the type of information about the social fund to be placed in the Library monthly; if he intends to issue monthly releases to the media to coincide with the placing of information in the Library; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: As I explained in a letter to the hon. Member on 26 May, data for the first month of operation of the social fund have been delayed due to technical problems. These should be resolved shortly. I have arranged for data for May to be placed in the Library next week, as these have not been affected by the same problems. Details of the monthly publication of data on the operation of the social fund were announced in my reply to the hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) on 6 May at column 656. Press inquiries for data will be met by the Department in the normal way.

Supplementary Benefit

Mr. Clay: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish the latest figures from the quarterly statistical inquiry showing the number of people in receipt of supplementary benefit and the numbers dependent on supplementary benefit.

Mr. Portillo: In November 1987, the latest date for which information is available, 4·85 million people were in receipt of supplementary benefit; and 8 million were dependent on that benefit.

St. Peter's Hospital, London

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make it his policy to intervene to prevent the closure of national referral centres, with particular reference to St. Peter's hospital, Henrietta street, London WC2; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: When there is a proposal for a closure or substantial change of use of a Health Service building, there is a clear procedure set out in HSC (IS) 207, a copy of which is in the Library. This requires health authorities to consult on any such proposal which may then be referred for a final decision to the Secretary of State if the relevant community health council objects to the proposal, but the proposal is supported by the regional health authority.

The relocation of St. Peter's hospital has been agreed by the community health council concerned and it would not therefore be appropriate for Ministers to intervene formally. We have nevertheless asked Bloomsbury health authority to ensure that the detailed plans for the relocation are feasible and that the future role of the St. Peter's group of hospitals as a national centre of excellence in urology and nephrology is safeguarded.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether proceeds from the proposed sale of St. Peter's hospital, Henrietta street, London WC2, will revert to his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: No. The receipts of such a sale would be received by the relevant health authorities. The hon. Member may wish to contact the chairman of North East Thames regional health authority for further details.

Low Income (Scotland)

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish for Scotland tables for 1985 on low-income families.

Mr. Portillo: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) on 27 May 1988 at columns *413-14*.

Health Service Closures

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the number of *(a)* hospitals, *(b)* antenatal clinics, *(c)* casualty wards and *(d)* geriatric units that have been closed since 1979.

Mrs. Currie: It is important to note that closures may be offset or balanced by openings or reprovision elsewhere. The number of units or facilities approved for closure between 1979 and end 1986 is as follows:

		Number
(a)	hospitals/units—total closure	316
(b)	maternity units	67
(c)	casualty wards	Not known
(d)	geriatric units	89

The number of antenatel clinics within the maternity units at *(b)* is not known.

We expect figures for the year 1987 to be available in the near future.

Student Support

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what are the terms of reference of the committee reviewing student support; and what interim proposals he has in relation to the increasing use by students of the social security system.

Mr. Portillo: There are no plans to alter the social security entitlement of students in advance of any changes which may be proposed by the student support review, chaired by the Department of Education and Science, the terms of reference of which are:

"To review the present arrangements for the financial support of students studying at first degree level or equivalent in Great Britain and to consider the future basis for such support, having regard to:

(i) the situation and the maintenance needs of students, and the extent to which it is appropriate that those needs should be supported from public funds;

(ii) other actual and possible sources of support which would allow the removal of students from the social security system—including the case for a system involving loans as well as grants, and the contribution of sponsorship to the needs of students on vocationally orientated courses;

(iii) the Government's stated policies for higher education and access to it; and

(iv) arrangements made in other countries with developed systems for the financial support of students."

Benefit Disqualification

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any plans to review the operation of the current benefit disqualification rules.

Mr. Portillo: I assume that the hon. Member is referring to the rules governing disqualification for unemployment benefit for voluntary unemployment. There are no plans to change those rules or their operation.

Baby Milk (Free Samples)

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will implement the recommendation in the COMA report entitled "Present-day Practice in Infant Feeding", that free samples of baby milk should not be allowed in hospitals.

Mrs. Currie: Yes. In 1981 the World Health Organisation issued a code on the marketing of breast milk substitutes (the WHO Code) and the report from the chief medical officer's committee on medical aspects of food policy "Present-day practice in Infant Feeding: Third Report" was published in January 1988. Both recommended that samples of baby milks should not be given to mothers.

I have discussed this with the Infant and Dietetic Foods Association of the Food and Drink Federation, previously known as the Food Manufacturers' Federation. At the Government's request the industry has agreed the time is right to discontinue manufacturers' provision to hospitals of free samples and subsidised supplies of baby milks. This change would fully meet, within the United Kingdom, the World Health Assembly's more recent 1986 resolution that Governments should not allow free and subsidised supplies of breast milk substitutes in maternity wards and hospitals. We expect this change to be implemented fully by the end of 1988.

We also agreed that the two instruments for securing within the United Kingdom the aim and principles of the WHO code, health circular HC(83)13 and the FMF code of practice for the marketing of infant formulae in the United Kingdom (the FMF code) should be revised and reissued to take account of this change and in the light of experience since they came into effect in 1983. The main change in the FMF code will be to reflect the cessation of samples and subsidised supplies. We anticipate that the revised health circular and FMF code should come into effect during the autumn.

We intend these changes to coincide with the launch in October of the breastfeeding organisations' new initiative to promote breast feeding, which we welcome. I warmly congratulate the manufacturers on their helpfulness and in particular on their pledge to assist with the new initiative, to which they generously plan to give financial support.

Benzodiazepines

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list those drug companies which supplied benzodiazepines to the National Health Service during each of the years 1978 to 1986 inclusive; and what was the amount of payments made to each of these companies.

Mr. Newton *[pursuant to his reply, 26 April 1988, c.130]:* I regret that the list of companies provided in the previous reply was unfortunately incorrect. The correct list of companies supplying proprietary benzodiazepines to the family practitioner services in 1986 is:

DDSA Pharmaceuticals Ltd.
Farmitalia Ltd.
Fisons plc
Hoechst Pharmaceuticals Ltd.
Norgine Ltd.
Roussel Laboratories Ltd.
Roche Products Ltd.
Schering Chemicals Ltd.
Steinhard Ltd.
Upjohn Ltd.
Wyeth Laboratories Ltd.

TRANSPORT

Allerton Park, Knaresborough

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to receive the report from the inspectors on the public inquiry held to consider the proposals for ingress to and egress from Allerton park, Knaresborough, from the A1.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The inspector has reported on proposals to improve the adjacent section of the A1. The report is being considered jointly by the Secretaries of State for Transport and for the Environment.

Birmingham International Airport

Sir Dudley Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many near misses have been reported, in the current year to date, involving aircraft flying to from Birmingham international airport; and how many are still under investigation.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Civil Aviation Authority has said that one such airmiss has been reported this year and is under investigation.

Air Traffic Controllers

Sir Dudley Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many air traffic controllers are currently under technical suspension as a result of airmisses between aircraft over United Kingdom territory.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: This is a matter for the management of the National Air Traffic Services.

Settle Bypass

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the cost of the Settle bypass currently under construction; and when completion will take place.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The land and works for the A65 Settle and Giggleswick bypass are estimated to cost £8·6 million. It is planned for completion by the end of the year.

Civil Aviation

Mr. McCrindle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will introduce legislation to give the Civil Aviation Authority additional powers to alter the structure of civil aviation in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We have no plans at present to seek additional powers. The existing statutory framework has proved sufficiently flexible and adaptable to allow the competitive development of airline services.

Air Traffic Controllers (Industrial Action)

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the level of inconvenience to British air passengers travelling to and from European destinations as a result of industrial action by air traffic controllers in various countries; and if he will initiate discussions with Transport Ministers in other European Community countries with a view to establishing employment agreements which prohibit such industrial action.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is kept informed of serious air traffic delays by the Civil Aviation Authority, and by airlines and others in the industry. Delays occur for a variety of reasons. My right hon. Friend does not believe the initiative proposed by my hon. Friend would be a productive or appropriate one at this juncture.

LRT (Chairman)

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library a copy of his letter to the chairman of London Regional Transport refusing to accept the latter's resignation after the King's Cross underground fire.

Mr. Channon: I am not prepared to make available correspondence conducted on a personal basis.

Railway Closures

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will give a table showing since 1979 how many *(a)* railway stations have been closed, *(b)* miles of railway line have been taken out of use, *(c)* stations have ceased to be served on Sundays and *(d)* stations are no longer staffed at any time.

Mr. Mitchell: The table lists the number of railway stations and route miles of railway line closed to passengers each year since 1979.

	Station	*Routes miles of line closed*
1979	—	—
1980	—	—
1981	2	0·75
1982	—	27·25
1983	14	36·75
1984	2	—
1985	8	8·75
1986	5	2·5
1987	1	33·75

This total of 32 stations closed should be seen in the context of 88 stations opened or reopened since 1980 (including 16 in Scotland) to give a net increase in stations opened of 56.

Sunday services and the destaffing of stations are management matters for British Rail.

LRT (Signalling)

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will give the number of signal failures on London Regional Transport and the capital expenditure at constant prices by London Regional Transport on signalling equipment for each year since 1979.

Mr. David Mitchell: The incidence of routine signal failure is not reportable to my Department. That and the implications for expenditure on routine maintenance and ongoing renewal are matters for the operator.

ENVIRONMENT

Planning Refusal (Dartford)

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment why he turned down a planning application

at Dartford to develop 1,000 acres for houses, jobs and leisure; and what representations were received from the local community.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend refused planning permission for this development for the reasons contained in the decision letter dated 24 May. I am today sending my hon. Friend a copy of that letter together with a copy of the inspector's report. The report summarises the representations received both in favour of and in opposition to the proposals.

Housing Land (London)

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he is taking to make more land available for housing in London, so as to offer Londoners the opportunity to remain in London.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Secretary of State's strategic guidance will include guidance on the provision each borough should make in its unitary development plan to meet London's expected overall requirement for new housing in the 1990s. The guidance will be issued, following consultation, early next year.

In addition, we are appointing consultants to conduct a major study of the potential of five areas of east London for housing, mainly for middle and low-income groups.

We are maintaining the pressure on all public landowners to release their underused land for development. Since the land registers were introduced in 1981, some 4,700 acres of such land in London has been brought back into use, much of it for housing.

European Directives and Regulations

Sir Richard Body: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will publish the list of directives and regulations with their subject matter relating to his Department that have been agreed by the European Economic Community Council of Ministers.

Mr. Moynihan: A list of over 200 environmental measures, including regulations and directives, is given in "EEC Environmenal Policy and Britain" by Nigel Haigh: The second edition of this useful reference work was commissioned by the Department of the Environment as a contribution to European Year of the Environment. I am arranging for copies to be placed in the Libraries of the House. The measures listed are all of interest to this Department although in a number of cases primary responsibility lies in other Departments. Since the second edition was prepared the following measures have been adopted by the Council of Ministers.

Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2242/87 on action by the Community relating to the environment (OJ L207, 29 July 1987)

Council Directive 87/405/EEC amending Directive 84/534/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the permissable sound power level of tower cranes (OJ L220, 8 August 1987)

Council Directive 87/416/EEC amending Directive 85/210/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States concerning the lead content of petrol (OJ L225, 13 August 1987)

Council Directive 87/432/EEC on the eighth adaptation to technical progress of Directive 67/548/EEC on the approximation of laws, regulations and administrative provisions relating to the classification, packaging and labelling of dangerous substances (OJ L239, 21 August 1987)

Commission Directive 87/477/EEC amending for the third time the Annex to Council Directive 79/117/EEC prohibiting the placing on the market and use of plant protection products containing certain active substances (OJ L273, 26 September 1987)

Commission Regulation (EEC) No. 3143/87 amending Council Regulation (EEC) No. 3626/82 on the implementation in the Community of the Convention on international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora (OJ L299, 22 October 1987)

Council Directive 88/76/EEC amending Directive 70/220/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to measures to be taken against air pollution by gases from the engines of motor vehicles (OJ L36, 9 February 1988)

Council Directive 88/77/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the measures to be taken against the emission of gaseous pollutants from diesel engines for use in vehicles (OJ L36, 9 February 1988)

Council Directive 88/180/EEC amending Directive 84/538/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the permissible sound power level of lawnmowers (OJ L81, 26 March 1988)

Council Directive 88/181/EEC amending Directive 84/538/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the permissible sound power level of lawnmowers (OJ L81, 26 March 1988)

Commission Regulation (EEC) No. 869/88 replacing Annex B to Council Regulation (EEC) No. 3626/82 on the implementation in the Community of the Convention on international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora (OJ L87, 31 March 1988).

Council Regulation (EEC) No. 1094/88 amending Regulations (EEC) No. 797/85 and (EEC) No. 1760/87 as regards the set-aside of arable land and the extensification and conversion of production (OJ L106, 27 April 1988).

Commission Regulation (EEC) No. 1272/88 laying down detailed rules for applying the set-aside incentive scheme for arable land (OJ L121, 11 May 1988).

Commission Regulation (EEC) No. 1273/88 laying down criteria for delimiting the regions or areas which may be exempted from the schemes for the set-aside of arable land, extensification and the conversion of production (OJ L121, 11 May 1988).

Council Directive 88/298/EEC amending Annex II to Directives 76/895/EEC and 86/362/EEC relating to the fixing of maximum levels for pesticide residues in and on fruit and vegetables and cereals respectively (OJ L126, 20 May 1988).

Commission Directive 88/302/EEC adapting to technical progress for the ninth time Council Directive 67/548/EEC on the approximation of laws, regulations and administrative provisions relating to the classification, packaging and labelling of dangerous substances (OJ L133, 30 May 1988).

Resolution of the Council of the European Communities and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council on the continuation and implementation of a European Community policy and action programme on the environment (1987-1992) (OJ C328, 7 December 1987).

Council Resolution of 25 January 1988 on a Community action programme to combat environmental pollution by cadmium (OJ C30, 4 February 1988).

Home Improvement Grants

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what has been the cost of providing home improvement grants and what was the number of dwellings involved, for private owner-occupiers, landlords and housing associations, private tenants and public sector tenants; what were the total costs for private owners and tenants for the years 1980 to 1987; and what is the current estimate for 1988.

Mr. Waldegrave: Following are the estimates of the amount of home improvement grants paid and the numbers of dwellings covered by these grants, with the local authorities' expenditure on administration of home improvement and home insulation grants.

Improvement grants paid[1]: England

	Dwellings (thousands)			*Amount (£ million)*		
	Owner occupiers	*Landlords and housing associations*	*Tenants (public and private)*	*Owner occupiers, landlords and housing associations*	*Tenants (public and private)*	*Expenditure on improvement and home insulation grants administration (£ million)*
1980-81	61·1	10·3	0·4	126·0	0·9	n/a
1981-82	84·5	12·0	0·8	166·1	1·4	n/a
1982-83	110·8	18·8	2·0	364·1	3·3	33
1983-84	214·3	30·3	6·0	778·3	17·8	45
1984-85	159·2	31·4	4·6	726·3	10·8	41
1985-86	94·2	24·9	5·4	451·6	9·7	42
1986-87	84·9	19·8	7·2	378·4	9·7	42
1987-88	87·1	16·5	10·5	361·1	11·5	43

[1] Improvement, conversion, repairs and intermediate grants.
n/a—Not available.

Local Authorities (Subsidies)

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what subsidy has been paid and is estimated to be paid in respect of English local authorities for the financial years 1979-80 to 1988-89 from the Exchequer, both in total and expressed as a subsidy per dwelling for the total number of dwellings in local authority control and in respect of those authorities in receipt of subsidy; and what is the position, expressed in similar terms, for rate fund contributions, for both negative and positive contributions.

Mr. Waldegrave: Housing subsidy up to 1980-81 was paid under a different system, so I am using 1981-82 as the first year. The information requested is shown in the tables. The rate fund contribution figures (RFCs) are net amounts. The 1987-88 and 1988-89 figures are estimates. Only a provisional housing subsidy figure is available for 1988-89 at this stage in the year.

Main housing subsidy and rate fund contributions 1981-82 to 1987-88 local authorities in England

	1981-82 £	*1982-83* £	*1983-84* £	*1984-85* £	*1985-86* £	*1986-87* £	*1987-88* £	*1988-89* £
Main Housing Subsidy								
Total	881·1M	436·8M	346·9M	353·9M	486·4M	476·5M	464·0M	469·4M
Per Dwelling:								
All LAs	163	92	75	77	107	107	108	—
LAs in Subsidy	167	209	250	263	342	374	371	—
Negative RFCs								
Total	−17·1M	−22·1M	−28·0M	−44·2M	−58·3M	−101·3M	−59·7M	—
Per Dwelling:								
All LAs	−3	−5	−6	−10	−13	−23	−14	—
LAs in Subsidy	−3	−11	−20	−33	−41	−80	−48	—
Positive RFCs								
Total	419·6M	432·7M	495·2M	432·3M	438·4M	378·0M	412·6M	—
Per Dwelling:								
All LAs	78	91	106	94	97	85	96	—
LAs in Subsidy	79	184	309	207	260	242	262	—

Note: Not all local authorities in receipt of Exchequer subsidy are also making contributions from the general rate fund.

House Building

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has about the level of investment in residential construction, expressed as a percentage of gross domestic product, for the European and other major developed nations.

Mr. Trippier: International differences in housebuilding costs, population growth and internal migration affection comparisons of this kind.

The available information given in the table is taken from the "OECD National Accounts" vol II detailed tables 1973-1985.

Residential Construction as a Percentage of GDP in 1985

Country	*Per cent.*
Austria	4·6
Belgium	3·2
Finland	6·2
France	4·6
Germany (Federal Republic)	5·5
Greece	3·9
Iceland	n/a
Ireland	4·5 (1984)
Italy	4·0
Luxembourg	4·7 (1982)
Netherlands	4·6
Norway	4·1
Portugal	6·4 (1981)
Spain	4·6 (1984)
Sweden	4·1
Switzerland	n/a
Turkey	n/a
United Kingdom	3·5
Yugoslavia	n/a
Australia	5·2
Canada	5·4
Japan	4·9

Country	Per cent.
New Zealand	4·3 (1984)
United States (America)	4·8

n/a Not available

It is estimated that the 1987 equivalent percentage for the United Kingdom is 3·7 per cent.

Abercrombie House, East Kilbride

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy not to enter into any arrangements to sublet any part of Abercrombie house, East Kilbride.

Mr. Chope: No.

Rating Reform

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will take steps to ensure that residential volunteers carers who receive only a nominal subsistence allowance will be exempt from the community charge.

Mr. Howard: I refer the hon. Member to what was said by my noble Friend the Minister of State during the Committee stage of the Local Government Finance Bill in another place on 24 May, at columns 814-15. The matter is currently under consideration.

Homelessness

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give the number of homeless households in priority need in England in each year since 1979; and if he will give this information for England as a whole and for each district council and London borough.

Mr. Waldegrave: The estimated numbers of households accepted by local authorities under the homelessness provisions of the housing Acts, are derived from quarterly returns. The figures for England are in the table. I regret that in the reply given by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the hon. Member for Redcar (Ms. Mowlam) on 18 May at column *481* the acceptance figures quoted for 1979 to 1987 were those for 1978 to 1986.

	Total acceptances	of which priority need
1979	57,200	55,030
1980	62,920	60,390
1981	70,010	65,530
1982	74,800	69,930
1983	78,240	71,590
1984	83,550	76,760
1985	94,530	87,540
1986	105,280	96,490
1987	112,730	102,440

The readily available information on priority need acceptances by individual authorities comes from their housing investment programme returns. The figures appear in column B5 of the "HIP1 all items print" for each of the years 1981-82 to 1983-84, column B6B for 1984-85 and column C1B for 1985-86 and for 1986-87; copies of these documents are in the Library. In some cases, figures in HIP returns may differ slightly from those reported in the quarterly returns.

Landfill Sites

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many landfill sites in current use exist in Warwickshire; and how many have been identified as emitting methane or carbon dioxide.

Mr. Moynihan: I am advised by Warwickshire county council that there are 98 landfill sites currently in use in Warwickshire, of which nine have been identified as emitting landfill gas.

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what regulations exist covering the control of landfill sites; and if he has any plans to review their working.

Mr. Moynihan: Landfill sites are licensed by waste disposal authorities under the Control of Pollution Act 1974. Clarification of the types of activity which are and are not subject to licensing is contained in the Licensing of Waste Disposal Regulations 1976 and 1977, which will be superseded by the Collection and Disposal of Waste Regulations 1988 in October next. We expect to announce shortly our conclusions on proposals for legislative changes to improve arrangements for waste disposal.

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how often disused landfill sites are inspected and by whom; what record of such visits exists; and if the public are permitted to inspect such records.

Mr. Moynihan: District councils have a duty under the Public Health Act 1936 to inspect their districts from time to time for the detection of statutory nuisance which may be caused by, inter alia, any accumulation or deposit which is prejudicial to health or is a nuisance. In general, Government advice to authorities is that information collected from exercises of this kind should be made available to the public.

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many explosions have occurred on or near landfill sites as a result of methane or carbon dioxide gas in each year since 1960.

Mr. Moynihan: This information is not held by my Department.

Waste Disposal

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what changes he plans to the laws which control special wastes and the arrangements for monitoring breaches in disposal licences.

Mr. Moynihan: We plan to issue a consultation paper with proposals to amend the Control of Pollution (Special Wastes) Regulations 1980 later this year. Responsibility for monitoring that conditions specified in disposal licences are complied with rests with waste disposal authorities. It is for each authority to make suitable arrangements for this.

Palace of Westminster (Water Samples)

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list each of the occasions since May 1987 when each of the shower heads, water tanks central

heating and all other water tanks and systems at the Palace of Westminster were sampled; if he will publish the results; who carried out the monitoring; and whether any action has been taken.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 7 June 1988]:* Routine testing of drinking water supplied direct from the water authority's main is not normally required. But bacteriological and chemical tests have been carried out on four occasions since May 1987 for the reasons shown in the table.

Date	*Location*	*Reason for test*	*Result*
21 May 1987	Palace of Westminster Engineers Control	Warm Water issuing from drinking water tap	Sample was chemically and bacteriologically suitable for drinking. Problem overcome by increasing lagging in adjacent hot water pipe.
4 February 1988	Norman Shaw North	Dirty Water	Samples were chemically and bacteriologically suitable for drinking. Problem probably caused by work on Bridge Street site disturbing the water main.
22 February 1988	Sales Office and PSA Tea Point	Complaint about skin irritation	Water samples would not be expected to cause any skin irritation.
10-13 May 1988	Palace of Westminster Kitchens	Outbreak of illness in House of Lords	Preliminary results shows adequate chlorine levels and no colorform organisms were detected.

Note: The samples were analysed by the laboratory of the Government Chemist.

Water for hot water services is stored at 60°C and kept at 50°C in the distribution system. No water samples have been taken from shower heads. Nor has water quality sampling been carried out on central heating water tanks.

The cooling towers of the air conditioning system in the Palace and the standby generator serving the underground car park are dosed to minimise microbiological contamination. The water quality is tested by an approved specialist contractor, Betz. All the tests carried out since May 1987—August and November 1987 and February and May 1988 were satisfactory. In addition, the water in the air conditioning system and boiler plant is chemically tested every month by the same company. All the results have been satisfactory since May 1987.

Water sampling is undertaken in accordance with a PSA technical instruction (No. 22) which incorporates the standards detailed in an EEC directive and current DHSS guidelines.

INDEX TO THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

SIXTH SERIES **VOLUME 134**

SESSION 1987–88

23rd May-10th June 1988

SCOPE OF THE INDEX, ARRANGEMENT AND ABBREVIATIONS

This index is derived from the House of Commons Library's Parliamentary On-Line Information System (POLIS), and the subject terms used are based on those used in POLIS. There are often changes in column numbering, etc, between the daily part or weekly Hansard (which simply collects together the daily parts without revision) and the bound volume. The index for the bound volume is revised to take account of these changes.

Scope and arrangement of the Index

Oral and Written Parliamentary Questions are indexed under subject headings and the names of Members asking and Ministers replying to them. Questions are not listed under the names of Departments replying. Departmental listings can be arrived at indirectly by looking under the names of the Minister(s) of that Department. There are, however, the headings 'Northern Ireland', 'Scotland', and 'Wales' under which one can find not only most Questions answered by the Northern Ireland Office, Scottish Office, Welsh Office but also Questions about these areas of the United Kingdom which are answered by other Departments. Ministerial statements are indexed under subject headings, under 'Ministerial statements' and the names of Ministers making them and Members speaking on them. General debates are indexed under broad subject headings and under the names of all Members and Ministers taking part. Debates on legislation (Bills, Orders, Regulations etc.) are indexed under the name of the Bill, Statutory Instrument etc, under subject headings and under the names of those taking part.

Rulings and Statements by Mr. Speaker and his deputies are brought together under the heading Speaker's rulings and statements.

Other contributions by Mr. Speaker and his deputies appear under the heading Speaker.

Opposition Day Debates, Estimates Day Debates and Standing Order No. 10 applications are listed under those respective headings and under subject headings too.

The date of each item except Parliamentary Questions is inserted immediately before the reference.

Members' names are given in the form by which they prefer to be known and are printed in bold italics. Under their names, entries are arranged under one of the two headings *Debates etc* (to include interventions on statements, points of order and so on) or *Questions*.

Abbreviations

Bills 1R = first reading, 2R = second reading, Money res = money resolution, Com = Committee stage, Rep = Report stage, 3R = third reading, amendt/amendts = amendment/amendments, * = matter taken formally, without debate.

Column numbers followed by the letter W refer to Written Questions. These appear at the end of each daily part or volume with their own sequence of column numbers printed in italics.

A Level Review Committee
433-4w

A1
Allerton Park 729w

A17
Sutton bridge 56w

A33
452w
Road accidents 452w

A40
Cost benefit analysis 60w
Road construction 174w

A44
Wales 2

A49
Traffic lights 173w

A55
Clwyd County Council 2
Road signs 43w

A345
Army 554w

Abbott, Ms Diane
Debates etc.
Housing (23:05:88) 58
Questions
Armed forces, Ethnic monitoring 154w
Employment training, Child care 497w

Abercrombie house
Tenancy agreements 735w

Aberdeen Prison
191w

Abortion
AIDS 400w, 511w
Clinics 419w
Fees & charges 418w
Licensing 419w
Prosecutions 419w

Abortion (Amendment) Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
(25:05:88) 354-6, 371-5
Questions
House of Commons division of time 23w

ABRC
see Advisory Board for the Research Councils

Access to buildings
Handicapped students 200w, 202w

Access to countryside
Firing ranges 180

Access to Parliament
23w
Palace of Westminster 18, 664w
Parking 106w
Weather 477w

Accidents
Palace of Westminster 664w

Accountants
Civil service manpower 705w
Office of Arts & Libraries 258w

Accounting
Public bodies 532-8w
VAT 52w

ACOST
see Advisory Council on Science & Technology

Acquittals
Terrorism 274w

Adams, Mr Allen
Questions
Industrial development, Renfrew 186w
Unemployment, Paisley 15w

ADAS
see Agricultural Development & Advisory Service

ADC
see Association of District Councils

Adjournment debates
Speaker's rulings & statements (23:05:88) 17, (27:05:88) 665

Adley, Mr Robert
Questions
Blandford fly, Departmental coordination 475-6w
Customs, Channel tunnel 136w
Ferries, Shipping safety 198
Lebanon, Peace keeping operations 828

Administration of justice
Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference 329w

Administrative costs
Community charge 2-3
VAT 528w

Administrative delays
Attendance allowance 593w
Criminal Injuries Compensation Board 276w
Electroconvulsive therapy 571w
Immigration appeals 585-6w
Immigration controls 833
Members' correspondence 689w, 696w
Passports 643w
Remand in custody 695w
Social security benefits 215w
Vote bundle 665w
Written questions 219w

Admission charges
Museums & galleries 260w

Adult training centres
Glasvey 81w

Advance corporation tax
Tax yields 700w

Advanced College of Business & Cultural Studies
Illegal immigrants 441-3w

Advanced gas-cooled reactors
Electricity generation 8w

Advertising
Central Office of Information 51w
Expenditure 585-6w
Ministers 686w

Advertising agencies
Employment schemes 134w
Inner cities initiative 134w

Advertising controls
Firearms 3w

Advertising Standards Authority
3w

Advisory Board for the Research Councils
11w

Advisory bodies
Arms control 466w

Advisory Council on Science & Technology
Public appointments 432-4w

Advisory services
Glue sniffing 561-2w
Mobility of disabled 345w
Young people 504w

Africa
Debts 983
Infant mortality 467-73w
School admission 467-73w

Aga Khan Foundation
Food aid from UK 473-4w

Age
Employment discrimination 595-6w

Age addition
Old persons' pensions 216w, 576w

Age allowances
Income tax 198-9w

Ageing
Medical research 343w

Agency nurses
Merseyside 724-6w

Agricultural Development & Advisory Service
Fees & charges 261w

Agricultural land
Conservation 598w
EC countries 386w
Land use 682w
Set-aside schemes 384w, 973-4
Sewage 115w
Wales 588-9w

Agricultural marketing
Management 263w

Agricultural products
Radioactivity 488-9w

Agricultural research
Cereals 981
Research finance 676w
Salmon 263w
Wales 405w

Agricultural stabilisers
Sheep meat 404w, 681-2w

Agricultural workers
Economic regions 485-8w
Scotland 190-1w
Wales 398w

Agriculture
Departmental publications 262-3w
EC internal trade 673w
Exports 676-8w
Horses 977-8
Land use 673w
Manpower 493-6w

Agriculture Select Committee
491-2w

Agusta Helicopters
708w

AI Services (Northern Ireland) Society
462w, 623w

AIDS
265-6w
Abortion 400w, 511w
Babies 400w, 561w, 599w
Blood tests 88w
Death 88w
District health authorities 411w
Leicestershire Health Authority 411w
Mothers 400w
Scotland 511w, 599w
Wales 399-400w

Aids for handicapped
Armed forces casualties 389w
Employment training 711w
Wales 13

AIDS Monitoring & Surveillance Committee
148w

Air accidents
Air force 188, 540-1w
Harrier aircraft 553-4w
Jet aircraft 541-2w
Low flying 541w
Military aircraft 39w
Tornado aircraft 323w, 542w

Air force
Air accidents 188, 540-1w
Canberra aircraft 543w

Air force—continued
Chipmunk aircraft 542-3w
Jet Provost aircraft 544w
Low flying 541w
US bases 547w

Air force bases
Defence equipment 547w
Fire services 553w
Sea rescue 153w

Air freight transport
Plutonium 628w

Air pollution
Chlorofluorocarbons 648-9w

Air pollution control
Chlorofluorocarbons 634-5w
Standards enforcement 301w
Waste disposal 478w

Air routes
Greater London 55-6w
Licensing 343w

Air safety
Greater London 282w

Air traffic control
Airmisses 729w
Industrial disputes 729-30w
No-strike agreements 729-30w

Air transport
Civil Aviation Authority 729w

Airbuses
Government assistance to industry 370-1w, 429w

Aircraft
Police 170w

Aircraft engines
European fighter aircraft 543w

Aircraft noise
Military aircraft 158-9w

Aircrew
Training 661w

Airmisses
Air traffic control 729w
Birmingham Airport 59-60w, 729w

Airport security
Gatwick Airport 696w

Aitken, Mr Jonathan
Questions
Ramsgate harbour, Roads 479w
Seafreight Freeway, Fires 197-8

Alcohol & crime
Police 714

Alcohol (Health Warning) Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
1R (08:06:88) 846-8

Alcoholic drinks
Balance of payments 690w
Garages & petrol stations 439w
Greater Manchester 379w
Young people 166-7w

Alcoholic drinks duties
Japan 690w

Alexander, Mr Richard
Questions
Hong Kong, Exhibitions 603w

Alison, Rt Hon Michael, Second Church Estates Commissioner
Debates etc.
Rowntree (25:05:88) 496-7
Questions
Church buildings 14w
Church Commissioners, Income 14-5
Church Commissioners, Official engagements 13
Church of Scotland, Prime Minister 14

Alison, Rt Hon Michael—continued
Redundant churches 14-5w
Religious education, Church schools 14w
Rowntree, Takeovers 333

Allason, Mr Rupert
Questions
Cash limits, Dept of Health & Social Security 216-7w
Japan, Military intelligence 118w
Lie detectors, Government Communications Headquarters 195-6

Allen, Mr Graham
Debates etc.
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (24:05:88) 231-2, 241, 244, 260, 263, 268-9
NHS finance, Nottingham Health Authority (25:05:88) 375-8
Recess motions, Spring (25:05:88) 375-8
Questions
Access to Parliament 23w
Brush, Company accounts 425w
Business statements 999
Doctors, Contracts of employment 88-9w
Further education, Northern Ireland 31w
Government Bills, Commons amendments 166w
Health, Social class 559-60w
NHS, Temporary staff 212-4w
Pensioners, Higher pensioner premium 89w
Public Accounts Commission 15
Road works 281w
Schools, Northern Ireland 329w
Scottish & Newcastle Breweries, Government assistance 321
Severe disability premium, Medical certificates 563w
Unfair dismissal, Trade unions 509w
USA, Official engagements 837-8

Allerton Park
A1 729w

Almeyda, Clodomiro
Chile 607w, 839-40

Alternative energy
(07:06:88) 738-41

Alton, Mr David
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 742-3
Questions
Abortion, Clinics 419w
Abortion, Fees & charges 418w
Abortion, Licensing 419w
Abortion, Prosecutions 419w
Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference 330w
Business statements 528
Prisoners, Northern Ireland 506-7
Radioactive waste disposal, Capenhurst 481w

Ambulance services
Manpower 591w
Medical treatments 591w, 724w
Private health services 93w
Tourists 294w
Wales 294-5w

Amersham International
360-1w

Amess, Mr David
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 806
Public sector housing, Basildon (27:05:88) 692-5
Questions
Defective housing, Reinstatement grants 358w
Government Bills 712-3w
House of Commons times of sittings 712w
Litter, Fines 445w
Litter, Prosecutions 638-40w
Litter, Railway property 639w
Litter, Waste disposal 480w

Amess, Mr David—continued
Local enterprise agencies 500-1w
Private Members' Bills 713-21w
Public Bills, House of Commons division of time 721w
Student unions, Trade union membership 688-9w
Waste disposal 646-7w
Waste disposal, Convictions 639w
Waste disposal, Manpower 710w
Waste disposal, Water pollution 647w

Ammunition
Expenditure 157w

Amnesties
(25:05:88) 392-492

Amos, Mr Alan
Questions
Foetal tissue, Transplant surgery 555-8w

Anderson, Mr Donald
Debates etc.
"Developments in the European Community Six Monthly Report" (26:05:88) 578
Questions
Cyprus, Peace negotiations 832-3
Job training scheme, Wales 286-7w
Southern Africa, Peace negotiations 611w
VAT, Administrative costs 528w

Anglo-Irish Agreement
329w

Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference
330-2w
Administration of justice 329w

Angola
Armed forces deployment 984
Overseas aid 612w
Peace negotiations 612w

Animal breeding
Pigs 684w
Sheep 683w

Animal cruelty
Dog collars 446w

Animal diseases
Research 17w, 219w
Scotland 17w

Animal feed
Carbadox 384w, 488w
Drugs 400w
Hazardous materials 683w
Olaquindox 384w

Animal husbandry
Pigs 970

Annual reports
307-8w

Anniversaries
Year 2000 346w

Antarctic Treaty (Agreed Measures) (No 2) Order 1988
Debates etc.
(23:05:88) 23

Antrim
Hospital beds 620w
Hospitals 620w

Apartheid
EC action 826-7

Appeals
Bombings 277-8w
Employment discrimination 32-4w
Northern Ireland 332w
Terrorism 332w

Appledore Ferguson

(27:05:88) 631-40

Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 757

Ards Borough Council
621w

Armed conflict
Merchant ships 153w, 191
Occupied territories 613-4w
Sudan 831

Armed forces
Community charge 39w, 162w
Crimes of violence 285w
Ethnic monitoring 154w

Armed forces casualties
390w
Aids for handicapped 389w
Armed forces pensions 389w
Clothing 390w
Complaints 390w
Departmental correspondence 389w
Military ceremonies 390w

Armed forces deployment
Angola 984
Exercise Ocean Venture 88 553w
F15 aircraft 546w
Falkland Islands 182w
Honduras 837-8
Joint strategic target planning staff 544w
NATO 548w
Rescue services 554-5w
Wales 38w

Armed forces housing
Boscombe Down 551-2w
Property Services Agency 551w
RAF Dishforth 179

Armed forces medical services
546w
Defence 546w

Armed forces pay
545w

Armed forces pensions
Armed forces casualties 389w
Civil service pensions 253-4w

Armed forces recruitment
Army 552w

Armed forces storage depots
Safety measures 159w

Armed forces strength
Army in Northern Ireland 323-4w
Ulster Defence Regiment 323-4w

Armed forces training
Bangladesh 37w
British Aerospace 661w
Chipmunk aircraft 542w
Devon 181
Nuclear accidents 553w
P & O 324-5w
Redtop missiles 543w
South Africa 324w

Armed forces women
Maternity leave 387w

Arms control
Advisory bodies 466w
Chemical weapons 195-6w
Conventional weapons 190-1
UN disarmament 368-9w, 607w
USSR 190

Arms control negotiations
515, 712, 715
Chemical weapons 831, 986
Conventional weapons 190
East West relations 714-5
Mutual & balanced force reductions 615w
Nuclear weapons 182-3
Verification 118w

Arms exports
Iran 463w
Iran-Iraq war 463w

Arms trade
Canberra aircraft 543w
Tornado aircraft 542w

Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Debates etc.
Factories, Northern region (08:06:88) 966
Women, Health (10:06:88) 1154-7
Questions
Employment training 496-7w
Inner city school compacts, Vocational guidance 710-1
Nurses, Free movement of labour 270w

Army
A345 554w
Armed forces recruitment 552w
Gibraltar 661w
Intimidation 549-50w
Ireland 552w

Army bases
RAF Dishforth 179
Remand in custody 695w

Army in Northern Ireland
Armed forces strength 323-4w
Charities 389w
Firearms 222w
Forgery 551w
Kidnapping 36w
Motor vehicle theft 338w
Prisoners' release 339w
Prisoners' transfers 339w
Psychology 36w
Royal Irish Rangers 552w
Violence 222w

Arnold, Mr Jacques
Questions
Cameroon, Official engagements 616w
Dock workers, National Dock Labour Board 662w
Employment training 496w
Hospital waiting lists, Dartford & Gravesham Health Authority 217w

Arnold, RC
Compensation (07:06:88) 819-24

Arnold, Mr Tom
Questions
Glaucoma 415w
Greater Manchester Residuary Body 70w
Planning inquiries 343w

Arrests
Northern Ireland 334w
Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Acts 334w

Artificial insemination of animals
Northern Ireland 462w, 623w

Artillery
546-7w
Defence procurement 387w, 586w

Arts council grants
256w

Arts finance
Museums & galleries 135w

Arts sponsorship
British Telecom 510w

ASA
see Advertising Standards Authority

Ashby, Mr David
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 751, 760, 806
Questions
Civil Justice Review 449w
Employment, Rolls-Royce 700
Unemployment 516-7

Ashdown, Mr Paddy
Questions
Sites of special scientific interest, Somerset 304w
Wetlands, Somerset 487w

Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Questions
Armed forces casualties 390w
Armed forces casualties, Aids for handicapped 389w
Armed forces casualties, Clothing 390w
Armed forces casualties, Complaints 390w
Armed forces casualties, Departmental correspondence 389w
Armed forces casualties, Military ceremonies 390w
Armed forces pensions, Armed forces casualties 389w
Army, Intimidation 549-50w
Community charge, Voluntary social work 735w
Nuclear weapons tests, Exservicemen 708w
Opren, Prescriptions 87-8w
Road traffic, Urban areas 630w
Social security recipients, Medical examinations 671-2w
Water pollution, Beaches 355w, 363w

Ashton, Mr Joseph
Debates etc.
Rover Group (08:06:88) 935, 938
Questions
COD Donnington, Fires 158w

ASR 1238
Defence procurement 543w

Assaults on police
Northern Ireland 338w

Assisted areas
EC grants & loans 425w

Associated British Ports (Barrow) Bill (HL) 1987/88
Debates etc.
Rep* (07:06:88) 699

Associated British Ports (No 2) Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
Order for resuming adjourned 2R read (26:05:88) 501, (09:06:88) 969

Association of District Councils
2-3

Atkins, Mr Robert, Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry
Debates etc.
Factories, Northern region (08:06:88) 964-8
Rover Group (08:06:88) 926, 937-9
Questions
Assisted areas, EC grants & loans 425w
Carbadox 370w
Cars, Production 633w
Ceramic industries, Official engagements 243w
Chlorofluorocarbons, Air pollution control 634-5w
Regional development grants, Economic regions 175-8w
Regional development grants, Northern region 177-8w
Regional development grants, Pay 370w
Regional enterprise grants, Cash limits 371w
Wood, Tree conservation 633-4w

Atkinson, Mr David
Questions
Balance of trade, USSR 113w
Cellular phones, Cars 55w
Export credit, USSR 178w
Health hazards, Blandford fly 411w
Joint ventures, USSR 177-8w
Overseas investment, USSR 178w
Syrian Arab Republic, Foreign policy 196w
VAT threshold, EC action 371w
Vietnamese refugees, Hong Kong 652-3w

Attendance allowance
Administrative delays 593w
Death 593w
Social security appeals 94-5w
Social security benefits rules 592-3w

Attorney-General
172w
Equal opportunities 447w

Auctions
118w

Audit
Medical profession 189w

Audit Commission
see Audit Commission for Local Authorities in England & Wales

Audit Commission for Local Authorities in England & Wales
15

Australia
Exports 245w

Austria
Foreign policy 609w

Availability for work
Handicapped 707-8
Income support 575w

Average earnings
Scotland 314
Social security benefits 216w

Avon
Official engagements 103w

AWACS
544w
Radar 545w
RAF Waddington 708w

Ayrshire
NHS 187w

Ayrshire & Arran Health Board
187w

Babies
AIDS 400w, 561w, 599w
Eye disorders 268w

Badgers
Bovine tuberculosis 264w, 489w
Nature conservation 678w

BAe 146 aircraft
150w

Bail
Disclosure of information 171w
Northern Ireland 333-4w
Terrorism 274w

***Baker, Rt Hon Kenneth**, Secretary of State for Education and Science*
Questions
A Level Review Committee 433-4w
Burnage School, Manchester, Inquiries 625w
Cash limits, Dept of Education & Science 341w, 436-7w
City technology colleges, Expenditure 109w
Primary education, Mathematics education 237-8w
Task Group on Assessment & Testing, Examinations 434-6w
Teacher training, Mathematics education 237w
Teachers, Conditions of employment 234w
Teachers, Mathematics education 236-7w
Teachers, Professional qualifications 109-10w
Universities Funding Council, Public appointments 238w

Baker, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc.
Vacant land, Land use (27:05:88) 665-6
Questions
Hereditament maps, Public Record Office 254w
Pigs, Animal husbandry 970

Balance of payments
Alcoholic drinks 690w
Driving licences 690w

Balance of trade
Manufactured goods 176w, 633w
USSR 113w

Baldry, Mr Tony
Questions
Cash limits, Dept of the Environment 357-8w
China, Foreign policy 604w
Civil servants' secondment 637-8w
Conventional weapons, Arms control 190-1
Council house sales 651w
Council housing, Property transfer 587w
Equal opportunities, Northern Ireland 513
Foreign investment in UK, Northern Ireland 219w
Hard core unemployed, Industrial training 704
Retirement pensions 562w

Ballyharry School
Primary education 458w

Bangladesh
Armed forces training 37w

Bank of england
375w

Bankruptcy
Building industry 5w
Manufacturing industries 4w

Banks
Social security payments 578w

Banks, Mr Robert
Questions
A1, Allerton Park 729w
Museums & galleries, Arts finance 135w
Rowntree, Takeovers 336
Tourism, Government grants 131w

Banks, Mr Tony
Debates etc.
Alcohol (Health Warning) Bill, 1R (08:06:88) 846-8
Business statements (24:05:88) 204
Departmental correspondence (07:06:88) 736-7
"Developments in the European Community Six Monthly Report" (26:05:88) 549
Housing (23:05:88) 36, 39, 40
Housing Bill, Rep (09:06:88) 1008, 1074-80, 1089, 1094-102
Questions
Armed forces training, P & O 324-5w
Broadcasting Standards Council 2w
Business statements 534, 993
Cattle diseases, Newham 684w
Central America, EC action 27w
Central America, Peace negotiations 605w
Church Commissioners, Income 14-5
Exceptional needs payments, Newham 95w
Football, Hooliganism 286w
Gatwick Airport, Airport security 696w
House of Commons accommodation, Cannon Row police station 18
Legionnaires' disease, BBC 94w
Local government expenditure 79-80w, 226w
Local government expenditure, Leasehold housing 226-7w
Local government expenditure, London docklands 79w
Local government expenditure, West Ham 80w
Military exercises, Gatwick Airport 708-9w
Museums & galleries, Property transfer 258-60w
Neighbourhood watch schemes 108w
Official engagements 103w
"Spycatcher", Legal costs 697w

BAOR
181
Costs 181
Defence equipment 182
Military vehicles 388w
National Audit Office 182

Barn owls
355w

Barnard, Godfrey
426w

Barnes, Mr Harry
Questions
Business statements 997-8
Income support, School leaving 269w
NATO, Nuclear weapons 152w

Barrett, Tony
Ferries Safety Steering Committee 173w

Barron, Mr Kevin
Questions
Business statements 995

Barter trading
Local authorities 115w

Bartington crossroads
173w

Basildon
638-40w, 646-7w
Public sector housing (27:05:88) 692-8
Waste disposal 710w

Basingstoke
Official engagements 102w

Batiste, Mr Spencer
Debates etc.
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (24:05:88) 239-40

Baton rounds
Injuries 285w
Northern Ireland 285w, 337-8w

Battle, Mr John
Debates etc.
Housing (23:05:88) 38
Housing Bill, Rep (09:06:88) 1028, 1035-7, 1039, 1057
Questions
Business statements 1000
COD Donnington, Fires 158w
Leeds prison, Prison overcrowding 444-5w
Mental patients, Hospital discharges 669w
Social Fund, Northern Ireland 326w
Textiles, Turkey 114w
World Bank 475w

BBC
51w, 331w, (25:05:88) 368-9, 466w
Legionnaires' disease 94w
Mandela, Nelson 694w
Ministry of Defence 325-6w
South Africa 694w

BBC external services
Government grants 466w

Beaches
Scotland 516w
Water pollution 355w, 363w

Beam trawlers
Licensing 678w

Beaumont-Dark, Mr Anthony
Debates etc.
Girobank, Privatisation (07:06:88) 726
Housing Bill, Rep (09:06:88) 1014-5
Rowntree (08:06:88) 853-4, 860, 862
Questions
Rowntree, Mergers 332-3

Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Questions
Handicap benefits 574w
Handicap benefits, Social security benefits rules 574w
Handicapped 574-5w
Housing benefits, Rent rebates 574w
Housing benefits, Social security reform 560-1w
Income support, Availability for work 575w
Income support, Capital rules 576w

Beckett, Mrs Margaret—continued
Income support, Handicap benefits 575-6w
Income support, Young people 575w
Social Fund, Publicity 576w
Social security benefits disqualification, Social security reform 147w

Beef
677w
Hormone treatments 137w
Republic of Ireland 137w

Beggs, Mr Roy
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 796-9
Questions
Crumlin Road Prison, Sanitation 460w
Harland & Wolff 502-3
Hospital beds, Antrim 620w
Hospitals, Antrim 620w
Hospitals, Northern Ireland 645w
Import controls, Industrial investment 425-6w
Job centres, Northern Ireland 327w
Local government services, Racial discrimination 357w
Northern Ireland Education & Library Boards 620w
Prisoners, Scheduled offences 460w
Prisoners, Women 460w
Public bodies, Northern Ireland 620w
VAT, Hospital radio 527w

Beith, Mr A J
Questions
Occupational pensions, Women 396w
Pay, Economic regions 508-10w
Pay, Scotland 361-2w
Pay, Wales 401w
Type 23 frigates, Defence procurement 155w

Belfast
Economic situation 332-3w
Employment opportunities 327w, 332w

Belfast Telegraph
Recruitment 35w

Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001
120w

Belize
Ministers' visits abroad 604-5w

Bell, Mr Stuart
Questions
Local government staff, Occupational pensions 116-7w, 303-4w

Bellingham, Mr Henry
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 754
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Rep (23:05:88) 132, 151-3
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 409-10, 422, 424, 454-5
Questions
Business, Northern Ireland 510
Business statements 521-2
Cereals, Production 29-30w
Doctors, Women 579w
Junior hospital doctors, Working hours 579-80w
Local enterprise agencies 505w
Military aircraft, Exhibitions 159w
Sugar beet, Norfolk 971

Bendall, Mr Vivian
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 795-6

Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Debates etc.
Girobank, Privatisation (07:06:88) 723

Bennett, Mr Andrew F
Questions
Higher education, Science & technology 11w
Military aircraft, Polaris submarines 37w

Bennett, Mr Andrew F—continued
Prisoners, Northern Ireland 505-6
Radio frequencies, Glen Garry 37w
RAF Fylingdales, Early warning systems 38w
Submarines, Communication engineering 38w
Trident submarines, Communication engineering 38w, 151w

Bennett, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc.
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (24:05:88) 236, 237
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 396
Housing (23:05:88) 38
Questions
Agricultural land, Set-aside schemes 384w
Agricultural land, Wales 588-9w
Beef, Hormone treatments 137w
Beef, Republic of Ireland 137w
Cereals, Co-responsibility levy 261-2w
Child benefit 522-4w
Community programme 663w
Customs & Excise, Cost effectiveness 371-3w
Customs & Excise, Overseas trade 372w
Customs & Excise, Trade formalities 372w
Dock labour scheme, Dock workers 211w
Dock labour scheme, Retirement 314w
Electorate, Wales 396-7w
Enterprise allowance scheme 663w
Foetal tissue, House of Commons questions 92w
Foetal tissue, Transplant surgery 556-8w
Health services finance, Wales 9
Income support, Social security benefits rules 670w
Irradiated food, Food labelling 137w
Sheep premiums 139w
Tax yields, Child benefit 521w
Taxable benefits, Child benefit 197w
VAT, Small businesses 636-7w
Weapons, Northern Ireland 327-8w
Welsh Development Agency, Foreign investment in UK 12

Benzodiazepines
Drug industry 728w

Berlin
East West relations 610w

Bermingham, Mr Gerald
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 771-2
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 459, 465, 467, 475, 478
Rowntree (08:06:88) 865
Questions
Body searches, Prisons 2w
Business statements 525-6, 997
Crown Prosecution Service, Criminal proceedings 447w
Crown Prosecution Service, Legal profession 448w
Crown Prosecution Service, Pay incentives 448w
Hooliganism, Football 440w
M1, Road works 452-3w
Magistrates' courts, Criminal proceedings 449w
Motorways, Driving 453w
Prisoners on remand 379-80w
Prisons, EC countries 446w
Probation, Ethnic monitoring 2w
Sea transport, EC action 58w

Bermuda
Ministers' visits abroad 605w

Bevan, Mr David Gilroy
Questions
European Year of the Traveller 501w

Beverley
Unemployment 985

Bexley
Bus services 450w

BGC
see British Gas Corporation

Bidwell, Mr Sydney
Questions
Sikhs, India 464w

Biffen, Rt Hon John
Debates etc.
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 397-9

Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Questions
Business statements 521
Employment opportunities, Local Enterprise Development Unit 457w
Industry, Northern Ireland 454-5w
Prisoners, Northern Ireland 506
Security, Northern Ireland 328w

Birds
Farm buildings 78w

Birmingham
Bombings 277-8w
Pirate radio stations 111-2w

Birmingham Airport
Airmisses 59-60w, 729w

Birmingham Children's Hospital
Nurses 148-9w

Biwater
105w, 112w

BL
see Rover Group

Black Committee
see Task Group on Assessment & Testing

Blackburn, Dr John G
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 761, 765
Questions
Middle East, UN resolutions 832

Blackpool
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 411w
Unemployment 500w

Blair, Mr Tony
Debates etc.
Rowntree (08:06:88) 890-3
Questions
Central Office of Information, Advertising 51w
Central Office of Information, Television advertising 51w
Electricity supply industry, External financing limits 230w
Employment schemes, Advertising agencies 134w
Employment schemes, Departmental publications 134w
Employment schemes, Expenditure 133w
Inner cities initiative, Central Office of Information 6w
Nationalised industries, Finance 50w
Regional development grants, Economic regions 175-8w
Regional development grants, Northern region 177-8w
Science & technology research, Research finance 369w
Social security benefits, Average earnings 216w

Blair, Mr Tony—continued
Taxpayers, Tax rates & bands 54w

Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Questions
Cash limits, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 119w
Hong Kong, China 835

Blandford fly
Departmental coordination 475-6w
Health hazards 411w

Block grant
Local government expenditure 71-6w

Blood tests
AIDS 88w

Blood transfusion services
Wales 10-1

Blunkett, Mr David
Questions
"British Defence Policy 1988-89" 326w
Community charge, Pensioners 305w
Exchange rates, Employment 527-8w
Local Government Practices & Procedures Inquiry, Government responses 651w
Motorways, Finance 589-90w
Trade unions, EC internal trade 712w
Vote bundle, Administrative delays 665w

BMA
see British Medical Association

BNFL
see British Nuclear Fuels

Board of Inland Revenue
see Inland Revenue

Boarding cards
Ferries 282w

Boateng, Mr Paul
Debates etc.
Housing (23:05:88) 36, 40, 58, 63-4
Housing Bill, Rep (09:06:88) 1013, 1040, 1042-3, 1057, 1061-2, 1079, 1081-3
South Africa, BBC (08:06:88) 899
Questions
Business statements 995

Body, Sir Richard
Questions
Assisted areas, EC grants & loans 425w
Environmental policy, EC law 731-2w
Sutton bridge, A17 56w

Body searches
Prisons 2w

Boeing
Early warning systems 189

Bolton
GCE A level 342w

Bomb disposal
Gibraltar 162-4w

Bombings
Appeals 277-8w
Birmingham 277-8w
Guildford 445w
Inquiries 445w
Iraq 613w

Bombs
Northern Ireland 221-2w

Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Debates etc.
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Rep (23:05:88) 127-8, 145-6, 155, 156
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 406-8
Questions
Cyclotron Trust, Government grants 565w

Book Trust
256w

Borders Health Board
189w

Boscombe Down
Armed forces housing 551-2w

Boswell, Mr Tim
Debates etc.
"Developments in the European Community Six Monthly Report" (26:05:88) 584-6, 587-8
Questions
Age addition, Old persons' pensions 576w
Agriculture, EC internal trade 673w
Cancer, Children 412w
Cereals, EC grants & loans 263-4w
Hungary, Official engagements 604w
Income tax, Age allowances 198-9w
Nuclear accidents, Ministry of Agriculture 490w
Nuclear accidents, Northern Ireland Office 693w
Nuclear accidents, Scottish Office 520w
Nuclear accidents, Welsh Office 430-1w
Social security benefits, Capital rules 272-3w
UN finances 833

Bottomley, Mr Peter, Under-Secretary of State for Transport
Debates etc.
Lorries, Spray suppression (08:06:88) 944-8, 949, 950, 953, 955, 958-60
Questions
A1, Allerton Park 729w
A33, Road accidents 452w
A40, Cost benefit analysis 60w
A40, Road construction 174w
A49, Traffic lights 173w
Air routes, Greater London 55-6w
Air routes, Licensing 343w
Air safety, Greater London 282w
Air traffic control, Industrial disputes 729-30w
Air transport, Civil Aviation Authority 729w
Airmisses, Air traffic control 729w
Airmisses, Birmingham Airport 59-60w, 729w
Cellular phones, Cars 55w
Chandler's Ford bypass, Road works 452w
Dartford tunnel, Road tankers 453w
Dartford tunnel, Road tolls 383w
Driving instruction, Licensing 627-8w
Dual carriageways, Road traffic 451-2w
East London river crossing, Bridges 453w
Equal opportunities, Dept of Transport 281w
M1, Road works 452-3w
M25, Road damage 629-30w
Mobility of disabled, Advisory services 345w
Motorcycles, Noise control 56w
Motorways, Driving 453w
Motorways, Finance 589-90w
Motorways, Road construction 628w
Perivale underpass, Land drainage 454w
Planning inquiries 343w
Plutonium, Air freight transport 628w
Road accidents 450-1w
Road construction, Contracts 629w
Road construction, Kent 343-4w
Road construction, Road damage 628-30w
Road tax, Tax evasion 197-8w
Road tolls 173-4w
Road traffic, Road accidents 174-6w
Road traffic, Urban areas 630w
Road works 281w
Roads, Private sector 282w
Settle bypass, Road construction 729w
Sutton bridge, A17 56w
Tachographs, Repairs & maintenance 345w
Transport of hazardous materials, Explosives 149w
Tunnels, Road tankers 453w

Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Questions
Church buildings 14w
Hard core unemployed 499w
Water authorities, Shares 313w

Bovine somatotropin
683-4w, 972, 978-9
Milk 218w

Bovine tuberculosis
Badgers 264w, 489w

Bowden, Mr Andrew
Questions
Retirement pensions, British residents abroad 87w
Supplementary benefits, Social security claims 141w

Bowden, Mr Gerald
Questions
Arms control negotiations 712
Council house sales, Southwark 115w
Employment, Southwark 499w
Mexico, Foreign policy 616w

Bowis, Mr John
Questions
Food exports, UK trade with EC 482-3w
Inner city school compacts, Government grants 710

Boyes, Mr Roland
Questions
Chemical Defence Establishment, USSR 154w
Eastern Health & Social Services Board, NHS finance 508-9
Museums & galleries 134-5w

Boyson, Rt Hon Sir Rhodes
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 813-4
Questions
Ethnic groups, Schools 279w

BP
see British Petroleum

BPF
see British Poultry Federation

BR
see British Rail

Bradford
Railway network 306w
School buildings (25:05:88) 382-4

Bradley, Mr Keith
Debates etc.
Housing (23:05:88) 40-4
Housing Bill, Rep (09:06:88) 1027, 1057-8
Questions
Military aircraft, NATO Nuclear Planning Group 182-3
Withington Hospital, Hospital closures 517

Bradwell-on-Sea
Defence equipment 322-3w

Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 742
Questions
Babies, Eye disorders 268w
Foetal tissue, Transplant surgery 557-8w

Bramley Camp
Housing construction 152w

Brandon-Bravo, Mr Martin M
Debates etc.
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (24:05:88) 293
Housing (23:05:88) 29
Recess motions, Spring (25:05:88) 361
Questions
Green pound 976-7
Unemployment 499w

Bray, Dr Jeremy
Questions
Hong Kong, China 604w, 835-6
Hospitals, Motherwell 316

Brazier, Mr Julian
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 801
Questions
Defence procurement, NATO 189
Enterprise allowance scheme 502w

Bread
Cereals 976
Prices 976

Breast feeding
727-8w
Government assistance 594w

Breathalysers
Police powers 151w

Brent
Government grants to local authorities 279w

Bridges
East London river crossing 453w

Bridging allowances
574w

Bristol University
90w

British Aerospace
157w, 429w, (08:06:88) 900-43
Armed forces training 661w
F15 aircraft 546w

British Airways
343w

British Broadcasting Corporation
see BBC

British Caledonian Airways
343w

British Coal
see British Coal Corporation

British Coal Corporation
321-2
Deficit grants 232w
External financing limits 231-3w
Mines & Quarries Act 1954 132w

"British Defence Policy 1988-89"
326w

British Gas
see British Gas Corporation

British Gas Corporation
585w

British Geological Survey
Defence contracts 546w

British Leyland
see Rover Group

British Medical Association
189w
Myalgic encephalomyelitis 577w

British merchant fleet
Defence 155w

British Nuclear Fuels
8w, 481w, 585w

British Petroleum
Shares 375w

British Poultry Federation
Official engagements 682w

British Rail
57-8w, 451w, 454w, (26:05:88) 601-20, 639w
Privatisation 590w

British Railways Board
Public appointments 451w

British Railways (No 2) Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
2R* (07:06:88) 699

British residents abroad
Kampuchea 463-4w
Retirement pensions 87w

British Shipbuilders
(27:05:88) 631-40

British Standards Institution
370w

British Telecom
Arts sponsorship 510w

British Theatre Association
256w

British Transport Police
477w

British Waterways Board
Official engagements 224w
Privatisation 478w
Takeovers 356w

British Wool Marketing Board
Official engagements 674w

Broadcasting controls
Satellite broadcasting 168-9w

Broadcasting house
94w

Broadcasting Standards Council
2w

Broadleaved woodlands
Farm woodland scheme 383w
Forestry 19-20w

Broadmoor Hospital
Land values 83w

Broads Authority
(09:06:88) 1003-103

***Brooke, Rt Hon Peter**, Paymaster General*
Debates etc.
"Developments in the European Community Six Monthly Report" (26:05:88) 565
Questions
Civil servants, Religion 528w
Civil service manpower, Accountants 705w
Civil service manpower, Northern Ireland 602-3w
Civil service pensions, Armed forces pensions 253-4w
EC budget contributions, EC countries 539-40w
Equal opportunities, Treasury 254w
European Commission, Finance 602w
Government data network, Computer privacy 529-30w
Government data network, Cost effectiveness 530w
Government departments, Personal records 529w
Languages education, Treasury 603w
Payroll deduction scheme 255w
Public bodies, Accounting 532-8w
UK contributions to EC budget 539w
Welsh language, Treasury 55w

Brown, Mr Gordon
Questions
Attendance allowance, Social security appeals 94-5w
Family income, Children 578w
Government departments, Property transfer 703-6w
Hospital closures 727w
House prices 705w
Income tax, Married people 530-2w
Inheritance tax 531-2w
Interest rates 705w
London Regional Transport, Railway signals 730w
Low incomes 95w
Low incomes, Scotland 726-7w
Personal income 197w
Personal income, Taxpayers 699w

Brown, Mr Gordon—continued
Personal tax allowances, Tax yields 255-6w
Railway closures 730w
Secondary education, Cost per pupil 689w

Brown, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
Recess motions, Spring (25:05:88) 357, 370
Questions
British Poultry Federation, Official engagements 682w
Hard core unemployed, Young people 702-3
Haverigg Prison, Prisoners 719
Ivory Coast, Official engagements 611w

Brown, Mr Nicholas
Questions
Child benefit 564-6w
Family income 699w
Harland & Wolff, Government assistance 503
Harland & Wolff, Official engagements 330w
Homelessness 735w
Maternity benefits, Kensington & Chelsea 725w

Brown, Mr Ron
Questions
Business statements 993
Housing standards, Official residences 319
UK membership of EC 973

Browne, Mr John
Debates etc.
Women, Health (10:06:88) 1149-54
Questions
Business statements 992-3
Unemployment, Hampshire 498w

Brownie's Health Club
Police raids 377w

Bruce, Mr Ian
Debates etc.
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 411
Questions
Caribbean, Ministers' visits abroad 607w
Enterprise allowance scheme 502w
HMS Sturdy, Inquiries 660w
Set-aside schemes 675w

Bruce, Mr Malcolm
Debates etc.
Rowntree (08:06:88) 868-72
Questions
Employment training, Handicapped workers 28w
Maternity services, Rural areas 186-7w
Rowntree, Takeovers 329-30

Brush
Company accounts 425w

BSI
see British Standards Institution

BT
see British Telecom

Buchan, Mr Norman
Questions
Housing benefits, Scotland 183w

Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Debates etc.
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 432, 454
Scottish Bus Group, Privatisation (24:05:88) 207-8
Questions
Hospitals, Scotland 315
Seals, Scotland 187w
South of Scotland Electricity Board, Coal 322

Buck, Sir Antony
Questions
Exercise Purple Venture, South America 653w
Warships, USA 180

Buckley, Mr George J
Questions
Rescue services, Helicopters 153w

Budgen, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc.
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 399, 408-9, 410
Questions
Business statements 998

Budget
Taxation 699w

Building industry
320-2w
Bankruptcy 5w
Industrial accidents 319w
Industrial health & safety 321w, 504-5w, 509w, 708-9
Prosecutions 320-2w
Safety 708-9

Building repairs
Wales 297w

Building sites
504-5w
Greater London 320-2w, 509w
Industrial health & safety 509-10w

Building societies
135w
Shares 51w

Building workers
Wales 403-4w

Buildings
NHS 273w

Burnage School, Manchester
Inquiries 13w, 625w

Burnley Pendle & Rossendale Health Authority
Finance 82-4w

Burns, Mr Simon
Questions
Green pound 678w
South Africa, Overseas aid 825

Burt, Mr Alistair
Questions
USSR, Emigration 605-6w

Bury
Vacancies 502-3w

Bus services
Bexley 450w
Settle-Carlisle railway 451w

Business
Government assistance 510
Information services 710
Investment 528w
Northern Ireland 510

Business education
EC internal trade 242-3w

Business expenses
National Rivers Authority Advisory Committee 311w

Business motions
(27:05:88) 690
Speaker's rulings & statements (27:05:88) 690

Business questions
Speaker's rulings & statements (26:05:88) 521, 522, 525, 526, 530, (09:06:88) 989

Business statements
(24:05:88) 201-4, 519-34, 987-1002
Speaker's rulings & statements (24:05:88) 203, 204

***Butcher, Mr John**, Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry*
Debates etc.
Shipbuilding, River Clyde (27:05:88) 636-40
Woollen industry, West Yorkshire (27:05:88) 657-61

***Butcher, Mr John**—continued*
Questions
Citizens' Advice Bureaux, Legal advice & assistance 633w
Civil servants' business appointments, Dept of Trade & Industry 114-5w
Equal opportunities, Dept of Trade & Industry 369-70w
Furniture, Fire prevention 179-80w
Furniture, Fire regulations 180-2w, 244-5w
Furniture, Fires 179-80w
Garages & petrol stations, Prosecutions 150-1w
Pens, Safety standards 370w
Pirate radio stations, Birmingham 111-2w
Pirate radio stations, Greater London 112-3w
Radio, Surveillance 588w
Radio broadcasting licences, Surveillance 588w
Retail trade, Companies 5w
Science & technology research, Research finance 369w
Sub post offices 588w
Tourist industry, Exchange rates 244w
Trading standards departments, Manpower 111w
Welsh language, Dept of Trade & Industry 5-6w

Butler, Mr Chris
Debates etc.
Property Services Agency (25:05:88) 347
Questions
Arts sponsorship, British Telecom 510w
Business statements 993
Consumer advisory committees, Wales 589w
Council house sales, Wales 6-7
Domestic wastes, Imports 652w
EC integration 195w
Enterprise initiative, Wales 49w
Legionnaires' disease, Palace of Westminster 303w
Official engagements 686w
Palace of Westminster, Cash dispensing 22w
Pigs, Cheshire 978
Prisoners, Ethnic minorities 378w
Waste disposal, Pollution control 736w
Year 2000, Anniversaries 346w

Butler-Sloss Committee
see Child Abuse in Cleveland Judicial Inquiry

Butter
Intervention stocks 674w
New Zealand 385w, 972-3

Butterfill, Mr John
Questions
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 632w

BWMB
see British Wool Marketing Board

Bye laws
Water supply industry 482w

Byford Inquiry
see Yorkshire Ripper Case Inquiry

CAA
see Civil Aviation Authority

Caergwrle bypass
688w

Cairngorm Chairlift Company
121-2w

Cairngorms
Lifts 121-2w
Nature conservation 121-2w
Road construction 121w
World Heritage Convention 121w

Caledonian MacBrayne
324-5

Callaghan, Mr Jim
Questions

***Callaghan, Mr Jim**—continued*
Harland & Wolff 502

Calling of Members
Speaker's rulings & statements (24:05:88) 215, (25:05:88) 338, 371, (26:05:88) 574

Cameroon
Official engagements 616w

Campbell, Joseph
36-7w

Campbell, Mr Menzies
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 764-6
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Rep (23:05:88) 94-5, 150-1
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 402-3, 454
Rescue services, RAF Leuchars (23:05:88) 174-5
Questions
Class actions, Scotland 188w
Rescue services 153w
South Africa, Namibia 603w

Campbell-Savours, Mr D N
Debates etc.
Business questions point of order (26:05:88) 534
Standing Order No 20 applications (23:05:88) 21, 22, 23
Questions
Business statements 522
Cemetery Assets United Kingdom, Official Receiver 426w
Defence procurement, Defence industries 159w
Falkland Islands, Ministers' visits abroad 603w
Haverigg Prison, Prison staff 719
Health service ancillary staff, Manpower 265-8w
Unemployed workers centres, Employment training 506w
Wyebrow, John, Official Receiver 426w

Canada
Economic summit conferences 609w
Official engagements 608w
Pensioners 595w

Canary Wharf
Official engagements 229w

Canavan, Mr Dennis
Questions
Community charges register, Scotland 185w
Intervention stocks 483-4w
Manufactured goods, Balance of trade 633w
Republic of Ireland, Foreign relations 512-3
Unemployment, Scotland 320

Canberra aircraft
Air force 543w
Arms trade 543w

Cancer
Children 147-8w, 412w
Kingston upon Hull 147-8w

Cancer hazards
Food additives 413-4w
Medical research 90w

Cannon Row police station
House of Commons accommodation 18

Capenhurst
Radioactive waste disposal 481w

Capital goods
Imports 5w

Capital investment
Local government finance 117w
Water authorities 351-4w

Capital punishment
(07:06:88) 742-818

Capital rules
Income support 273w, 576w
Social security benefits 272-3w

Carbadox
370w, 400w
Animal feed 384w, 488w
Carcinogens 413-4w
Genetics 414-5w

Carcinogens
Carbadox 413-4w

Cardiff Bay Barrage Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
2R order read (26:05:88) 501, (09:06:88) 969

Cardiff Bay Development Corporation
44w

Caribbean
Ministers' visits abroad 607w

Carlile, Mr Alex
Questions
Haverigg Prison, Prison escapes 718-9
Hungary, Official engagements 610-1w
Morgan, Daniel, Death 448-9w
Remand in custody 695w
Remand in custody, Administrative delays 695w
Remand in custody, Army bases 695w
Remand in custody, Prison population 694-5w
Remand in custody, Women 695-6w
Sheep, Wales 45w

Carlisle, Mr John
Debates etc.
Recess motions, Spring (25:05:88) 386
South Africa house, Demonstrations (25:05:88) 362-6
Questions
Business statements 994
Home Grown Cereals Authority, Official engagements 673w
Mandela, Nelson, BBC 694w
South Africa, Foreign policy 618w

Caro, Jamie
467w

Carpets
Opposition Whips' Office 81w

Carrington, Mr Matthew
Questions
Employment, Greater London 500w
VAT, Accounting 52w

Cars
Cellular phones 55w
Production 633w

Carttiss, Mr Michael
Questions
Farm diversification scheme 677w

Cartwright, Mr John
Questions
Connaught Barracks, Historic buildings 41-2w
Horniman Museum 10w
Occupied territories, Palestine 828
Strategic defence initiative, Defence contracts 154w

Cash, Mr William
Questions
Canada, Economic summit conferences 609w
Industrial investment 540w

Cash dispensing
Palace of Westminster 22w

Cash limits
Dept of Education & Science 341w, 436-7w
Dept of Employment 132-3w

Cash limits—continued
Dept of Energy 233w
Dept of Health & Social Security 216-7w
Dept of the Environment 357-8w
Dept of Trade & Industry 371w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office 119w
Home Office 379w
Overseas Development Administration 350w
Regional enterprise grants 371w
Scottish Office 251-2w
Serious Fraud Office 172w
Welsh Office 297w

Casualty units
727w

Cattle diseases
Newham 684w

CBI
see Confederation of British Industry

CEGB
see Central Electricity Generating Board

Cellular phones
Cars 55w

Cemetery Assets United Kingdom
Official Receiver 426w

Central America
EC action 27w
Peace negotiations 605w

Central Electricity Generating Board
8w, 185w, 230w, 632w
Energy conservation 346-7w
Official engagements 45-6w

Central Intelligence Agency
551w

Central London
62-3w
Property Services Agency 62w

Central Office of Information
133w
Advertising 51w
Inner cities initiative 6w
Television advertising 51w

Ceramic industries
Manpower 317w
Official engagements 243w

Cereal substitutes
679-80w

Cereals
679-80w
Agricultural research 981
Bread 976
Co-responsibility levy 261-2w
EC grants & loans 263-4w
Intervention stocks 680w
Production 29-30w
Pulses & seeds 15w
Set-aside schemes 974

Certification Office for Trade Union & Employers' Association
see Certification Officer

Certification Officer
(24:05:88) 219-98

Certification testing
Plants 138-9w

Cervical cancer
Lasers 670w
Leicestershire Health Authority 271w
Medical education 96-8w
Scotland 515w
Screening 271-2w

Chalker, Rt Hon Lynda, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Debates etc.
Arnold, RC, Compensation (07:06:88) 821-4

Chalker, Rt Hon Lynda—continued
"Developments in the European Community Six Monthly Report" (26:05:88) 536-43, 547, 589, 591, 592-9
Questions
Angola, Peace negotiations 612w
Apartheid, EC action 826-7
Austria, Foreign policy 609w
Berlin, East West relations 610w
Cameroon, Official engagements 616w
Canada, Economic summit conferences 609w
Council of Europe, Official engagements 611w
Council of Ministers 240-2w
Cyprus 694w
Cyprus, Official engagements 610w
Denmark, Official engagements 604w
Developing countries, Debts 611w
EC action, Coal 26w
EC action, Council of Ministers 367w
EC external relations 617w
EC Foreign Affairs Council 239-40w
EC integration 195w
Equal opportunities, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 238-9w
Ethiopia, Foreign policy 828-9
Ethiopia, Human rights 608w
Ethiopia, Independence movements 829
Foreign policy, Overseas trade 614w
France, Finlay, Ian Hamilton 618w
France, Foreign policy 612-3w
Ivory Coast, Official engagements 611w
Languages education, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 465-6w
Lesotho, St John's Church Maseru 118-9w
Mandela, Nelson 825-6
Mandela, Nelson, BBC 694w
Mandela, Nelson, Official visits 617w
Powell, Charles 604w
Sharpeville six 613w
South Africa, Foreign policy 618w
South Africa, Human rights 825-6
South Africa, Namibia 603w
South Africa, Political prisoners 826
Southern Africa, Defence 464w
Southern Africa, Foreign policy 463w
Southern Africa, Peace negotiations 611w
Switzerland, Law reports 24w
Togo, Official visits 617w
Turkey, EC accession 836-7
Turkey, Human rights 836-7
Turkey, Official engagements 608w

Challenger tanks
387w

Chancellor of the Exchequer
see Treasury

Chandler's Ford bypass
Road works 452w

Channel Islands
EC internal trade 639-40w
Employment discrimination 167w
Europassport 640w

Channel tunnel
Customs 136w, 537w
Employment opportunities 504w
Private sector 283w
Railway network 283w
Railway transport 590w

Channon, Rt Hon Paul, Secretary of State for Transport
Questions
East London river crossing, Planning permission 150w
London Regional Transport, Resignations 730w

Chapman, Mr Sydney
Questions
Radioactive waste disposal 233w
Travel grants, Spirit of Enniskillen bursaries 505
USSR, Foreign policy 607w
Youth unemployment, Greater London 503w

Charitable trusts
Rowntree 697-8w

Charities
286w
Army in Northern Ireland 389w

Charity Commission
286w, 697-8w

Chatelherault
Departmental correspondence 16w

Chemical Defence Establishment
USSR 153-4w

Chemical industries
Industrial health & safety 663w

Chemical weapon detection kits
Export controls 177w

Chemical weapons
192
Arms control 195-6w
Arms control negotiations 831, 986
USSR 157w

Chernikeef Telecommunications
167-8w

Cheshire
Pigs 978

Chief Medical Officer for Scotland
Public appointments 189w

Child Abuse in Cleveland Judicial Inquiry
566w

Child benefit
522-4w, 564-6w
EC countries 91w
Social security reform 191-2
Tax yields 521w
Taxable benefits 197w

Child care
142w
Employment schemes 507-8w
Employment training 497w

Child health
Infant foods 727-8w

Children
Cancer 147-8w, 412w
Family income 578w

Children & Young Persons (Amendment) Act 1986
Questions
Members' correspondence 574w

Children in care
Grandparents (27:05:88) 670-6
Rights of special groups (27:05:88) 670-6

Chile
Almeyda, Clodomiro 607w, 839-40
Elections 609w
Human rights 467w, 829, 840
Referenda 829-31

Chilver, Lord
238w

China
Economic policy 834
Foreign policy 604w
Hong Kong 118w, 604w, 834-6
Human rights 834
Official engagements 616w
Overseas trade 834

Chipmunk aircraft
Air force 542-3w
Armed forces training 542w

Chlorine
Air pollution 648-9w

Chlorofluorocarbons
Air pollution control 634-5w, 648-9w
Chlorine 648-9w

Chlorofluorocarbons—continued
Ozone layer 481w

Chope, Mr Christopher,
Under-Secretary of State for the Environment
Questions
Abercrombie house, Tenancy agreements 735w
Block grant, Local government expenditure 71-6w
Carpets, Opposition Whips' Office 81w
Dog wardens, Local government expenditure 478-9w
Floods, Ealing 79w
Government buildings, Greater London 115w
Greater Manchester Residuary Body 70w
Legionnaires' disease, Palace of Westminster 303w
Liverpool, Official engagements 354-5w
Local authorities, Barter trading 115w
Local government borrowing, Ealing 481-2w
Local government expenditure 79-80w, 226w
Local government expenditure, Leasehold housing 226-7w
Local government expenditure, London Docklands 79w
Local government expenditure, West Ham 80w
Local government finance, Pension funds 117w
Local government pensions, Investment 311w
Local Government Practices & Procedures Inquiry, Government responses 651w
Local government services, Racial discrimination 357w
Local government staff, Occupational pensions 116-7w, 303-4w
Offices, Greater London 62-3w
Official cars, Lead free petrol 78w
Palace of Westminster, Contract cleaning 117w
Palace of Westminster, Sanitation 82w, 479w
Palace of Westminster, Water supply 736-8w
Property Services Agency, Central London 62w
Property Services Agency, Efficiency scrutinies 477w
Property Services Agency, Land ownership & tenure 61w
Railway network, Bradford 306w
Rate support grants, South East region 115-6w
Rates & rating, Prosecutions 78w

Church buildings
14w

Church Commissioners
Income 14-5
Official engagements 13

Church of Scotland
193, 475w
Prime Minister 14-5, 191, 194, 515-6, 518

Church property
Immigrants 13

Church schools
Religious education 14w

Churchill, Mr Winston
Questions
Defence expenditure, National income 162w
Immigration 107-8w, 378w

CIA
see Central Intelligence Agency

CISWO
see Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation

Citizens' Advice Bureaux
Legal advice & assistance 633w

City of London
Poverty 514
Wealth distribution 514

City technology colleges
13w
Dixons 13-4w
Expenditure 109w
Lincoln 236w
School closures 433w

Civil Aviation Authority
282w, 343w
Air transport 729w

Civil defence
Emergency planning 2w, 273w
Telecommunications technology 167-8w

Civil Justice Review
449w

Civil servants
Languages education 465-6w, 603w
Northern Ireland 528w, 552w
Religion 528w, 552w

Civil servants' business appointments
Defence industries 153w, 188
Dept of Education & Science 13w
Dept of Employment 29w
Dept of Health & Social Security 93-4w
Dept of the Environment 77w
Dept of Trade & Industry 114-5w
Ministry of Agriculture 139w
Welsh Office 297w

Civil servants' secondment
637-8w

Civil servants' visits abroad
Defence Export Services Organisation 548w

Civil service
Welsh Office 8

Civil service dispersal
National Audit Office 15
Overseas Development Administration 186w

Civil service manpower
Accountants 705w
Factory Inspectorate 320-2w
Housing benefits 96w
Marine surveys 59w
Ministry of Defence 707w
Northern Ireland 602-3w
Planning 356w
Regional planning & development 356w
Scottish Office 120w

Civil service pensions
Armed forces pensions 253-4w

Clapham
Illegal immigrants 444w

Clark, Mr Alan, Minister of State for Trade and Industry
Questions
Balance of payments, Alcoholic drinks 690w
Balance of payments, Driving licences 690w
Balance of trade, Manufactured goods 176w
Balance of trade, USSR 113w
Capital goods, Imports 5w
Chemical weapon detection kits, Export controls 177w
Dept of Trade & Industry, Switzerland 242w
EC internal trade, Competition law 175-6w
Export credit, USSR 178w
Export licensing, Computers 691-3w
Foreign trade 111-2w
Import controls, Industrial investment 425-6w
Imports, Israel 690-2w

Clark, Mr Alan—continued
Joint ventures, USSR 177-8w
Manufactured goods, Balance of trade 633w
Manufacturing industries, Private sector 4w
Nigeria, Water supply 112w
Overseas investment, South Africa 243w
Overseas investment, USSR 178w
Short time working, Textile industry 134w
Textiles, Turkey 113-4w
Voluntary restraint agreements 426-8w
Voluntary restraint agreements, Japan 427w
Voluntary restraint agreements, South Korea 427w

Clark, Dr David
Questions
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service, Fees & charges 261w
Agricultural workers, Economic regions 485-8w
Agricultural workers, Scotland 190-1w
Agricultural workers, Wales 398w
Agriculture, Departmental publications 262-3w
Air pollution control, Standards enforcement 301w
Badgers, Bovine tuberculosis 489w
Detergents, Phosphates 300w
Farmers, Economic regions 484-6w
Farmers, Scotland 190w
Farmers, Wales 397-8w
Farms, Pollution 972
Food contamination, Emergency planning 138w
Hazardous wastes, Ports 303w
Nitrates, Pollution control 263w
North Sea, International conferences 298-9w, 302-3w
North Sea, Pollutants 299-300w
North Sea, Pollution control 299-302w
North Sea, Pollution monitoring 301w
North Sea oil, Oil pollution control 101w
Pigmeat, EC internal trade 971
Sea pollution, Pollution control 350w
Sewage, Agricultural land 115w
Sewage, Pollution control 136w
Sheep, Cumbria 218w
Sheep, Paint 489-90w
Sheep meat, Radioactivity 136w
Wadden Sea, Pollution monitoring 303w
Waste disposal, Irish Sea 136w
Waste disposal, Seas & oceans 302w

Clark, Dr Michael
Questions
Food industry, EC internal trade 673w
Power stations, Competition 693-4w
Voluntary work, Unemployment benefits 502w

Clark Kincaid
(27:05:88) 631-40

Clarke, Rt Hon Kenneth, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
Debates etc.
National Girobank, Ministerial statements (07:06:88) 721-31
Rover Group (08:06:88) 906, 907-14
Rowntree (08:06:88) 856-64, 867
Questions
Airbuses, Government assistance to industry 370-1w, 429w
Confectionery, Takeovers 334-5
Dept of Trade & Industry, Government research establishments 429-30w
Inner cities initiative, Central Office of Information 6w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission, Nationalised industries 245-6w
Nestle, Dumfries 338
North Peckham task force, Costs 690w
Planning inquiries, Foxley Wood 635w
Rio Tinto Zinc, Cornwall 635-6w
Rowntree, Employment 337-8
Rowntree, Foreign investment in UK 337
Rowntree, Mergers 332-3
Rowntree, Takeovers 327-36

Clarke, Rt Hon Kenneth—continued
Rowntree, Unemployment 330-1, 333

Clarke, Mr Tom
Debates etc.
Rowntree (08:06:88) 860, 888
Scottish Bus Group, Privatisation (24:05:88) 214
Questions
Africa, School admission 467-73w
Community care, Public Accounts Committee 89w
Community Care Review 89w
Cost of living, Scotland 314
Debts, Developing countries 525-7w
Defence Export Services Organisation, Civil servants' visits abroad 548w
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Act 1986, Local authority associations 573w
Kampuchea, British residents abroad 463-4w
Mental patients, Hospital discharges 563-4w
Mobility of disabled, Advisory services 345w
Nicaragua, Overseas aid 474w
Population 468w
Poverty, Scotland 193
Rowntree, Employment 337-8
South America, Employment 474w
Tax yields, Debts 197-8w
Unemployment, Scotland 188w
Youth training scheme, Monklands 15w

Class actions
Scotland 188w

Clay, Mr Bob
Questions
Merchant ships, Shipbuilding 185
Navy 151w
Supplementary benefits, Social security recipients 726w

Clelland, Mr David
Debates etc.
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (24:05:88) 233-5, 243, 259, 261, 266-7

Clinics
Abortion 419w

Clothing
Armed forces casualties 390w

Clubs
Firearms certificates 280w

Clwyd
Homelessness 286w
Housing 287-8w
Social security reform 12
Structure plans 6

Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Questions
Chemical weapons, USSR 157w
Child care 142w
Chile, Almeyda, Clodomiro 839-40
Housing standards, Cynon valley 45w
Livestock, Genetic engineering 218w
Malaysia, Water supply 105w
Nigeria, Water supply 112w
Official engagements 685-6w
Palace of Westminster, Members' facilities 17
Unemployment, Cynon valley 11-2

Clwyd County Council
A55 2

Clydebank
515-6w

CMEA
see Comecon

Coal
EC action 26w
Imports 518w
Scotland 518w

Coal—continued
Self-sufficiency 348w
South of Scotland Electricity Board 321-2

Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation
Privatisation 8-9w

Coal mine closures
Nottinghamshire 349w

Coal mining
Scotland 321-2
Subsidence 349w

"Coal Mining Subsidence Compensation Consultation Paper"
349w

COD Donnington
Fires 157-8w, 187

Codes of practice
Electroconvulsive therapy 410w, 566w, 570w

COE
see Council of Europe

CoEnCo
see Council for Environmental Conservation

Cohen, Mr Harry
Debates etc.
Waltham Forest Health Authority, Finance (27:05:88) 683-7
Questions
Air force, US bases 547w
Armed forces medical services 546w
Armed forces medical services, Defence 546w
Armed forces pay 545w
Armed forces training, Nuclear accidents 553w
Artillery 546-7w
AWACS, Radar 545w
Business statements 532-3
Chemical weapon detection kits, Export controls 177w
Community charge, Disclosure of information 304-5w
Community charge, Price Waterhouse 305w
Community charge, Scotland 512-3w
Community charges register, Disclosure of information 49w
Community charges register, Government data network 480w
Data networks, Computer privacy 446w
Defence contracts, British Geological Survey 546w
Defence contracts, Strategic defence initiative 553w
Defence equipment, Air force bases 547w
Defence equipment, Bradwell-on-Sea 322-3w
Defence equipment, North Sea 544w
Defence equipment, Parachuting 545w
Defence expenditure 25w
Exercise Ocean Venture 88, Armed forces deployment 553w
F15 aircraft, Armed forces deployment 546w
F15 aircraft, British Aerospace 546w
Government data network, Computer privacy 529-30w
Government data network, Cost effectiveness 530w
Government data network, Intelligence services 446w
Government departments, Personal records 529w
Harrier aircraft, Air accidents 553-4w
HI-CAMP programme, Defence research 548w
Hospital beds, Waltham Forest Health Authority 410w
Joint strategic target planning staff, Armed forces deployment 544w
Ministry of Defence, Civil service manpower 707w
NATO, Armed forces deployment 548w

Cohen, Mr Harry—continued
NATO ministerial meetings, Official engagements 162w
NATO Nuclear Planning Group 161-2w
Navy, Nuclear weapons 161w
Netway communication system 544-5w
Nuclear submarines, Radioactive waste disposal 547w
Nuclear test ban, Warsaw Pact 195w
Nuclear weapons deployment, USA 161w
Official engagements 230w, 475w, 686w
Offshore structures, North Sea 545w
Parental leave, EC countries 393w
Polaris missiles, Testing 548w
Police firearms, Merseyside 106w
Public Accounts Commission, Public expenditure 16-7
Radioactive waste disposal, Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive 545w
RAF Brawdy, USA 544w
RAF Feltwell, Satellites 540w
Tax rates & bands, Employment 705w
Tornado aircraft, Air accidents 323w
US bases, Construction 658-60w
Youth training scheme, Government assistance 704

COI
see Central Office of Information

Coleman, Mr Donald
Questions
Council house sales, Wales 7

Colvin, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
Business statements (24:05:88) 203
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Rep (23:05:88) 87, 94, 96, 99, 107, 112, 117-8, 137-8
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 404-5, 411, 428-31, 453-4, 458, 461
Questions
Business statements 996
Firearms certificates, EC action 105-6w
Fish farming, Pollution 974-5
Hard core unemployed, Employment services 506w
Sea King helicopters, Defence procurement 156w

Colwich junction
Railway accidents (09:06:88) 1104-10

COMA
see Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy

COMARE
see Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment

Comber
Road works 31-2w

Comber bypass
31-2w

Comecon
239-40w

Command & control
38w

Commission for Racial Equality
234w, 238-9w, 249w, 254w, 256-7w, 262w, 281w, 304w, 348-9w, 369-70w, 381w, 389w, 397w, 438-9w, 447w

Commission of the European Communities
see European Commission

Commissioner for the Rights of Trade Union Members
(24:05:88) 219-98

Committal proceedings
Crown courts 448w

Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy
727-8w

Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment
600-1w

Common agricultural policy
977
EC reform 384-5w

Common sheep meat regime
971-2
Ministerial duties 229w

Commonhold land
Land ownership & tenure 9w

Commons amendments
Government Bills 166w

Communication engineering
Submarines 38w
Trident submarines 38w, 151w

"Communities & Crime Reduction"
108w

Community care
269-70w, (25:05:88) 381-2
Income support 147w
Mental health community care 590-1w
Mentally handicapped 725w
Ministerial duties 229w
Public Accounts Committee 89w
Research finance 417w
Vocational training 269w

Community Care Review
89w, 229w

Community charge
305w
Administrative costs 2-3
Armed forces 39w, 162w
Disclosure of information 304-5w
Farmers 406w
Immigration rules 640w
Legislative process 193-4
Northern Ireland 330w
Pensioners 79w, 228w, 305w
Price Waterhouse 305w
Religious orders 122w
Scotland 18w, 122w, 184w, 363-4w, 512-3w, 657w
Uniform business rate 353-4w
Voluntary social work 735w
Voluntary work 305w
Wales 2-3, 48-9w, 406w

Community charge rebates
228w
Pensioners 227-8w

Community charges register
39w, 512-3w
Disclosure of information 49w, 479w
Government data network 480w
Grampian 311
Highlands of Scotland 184w
Scotland 184-5w, 250w, 311-2

Community health services
Costs 83w

Community nurses
Psychiatric nurses 85-6w, 92w

Community programme
663w
Pre-school education 433w

Community relations
Northern Ireland 505

Community work
Employment training 701-2

Companies
Retail trade 5w
VAT registration 528w

Companies (Fees) Regulations 1988
Debates etc.
(24:05:88) 215

Companies house
see Companies Registration Office (England & Wales)

Companies Registration Office (England & Wales)
428w
Information services 636w

Company accounts
Brush 425w
London Docklands Development Corporation 307-8w

Company investigations
Co-Star 186w
Fab Fashions 426w
Guinness 179w
House of Fraser 179w, 426w
McDonald Wheeler Fund Management 697w

Company law
Harmonisation of legislation 428w

Company taxation
Corporation tax 531w

Compensation
Arnold, RC (07:06:88) 819-24
Employment discrimination 34w
Farmers 405w
Ferries 198
Low flying 156w
Negligence 409-10w
Vaccine damaged children (24:05:88) 216-8

Competition
Defence contracts 552-3w
Power stations 693-4w

Competition law
EC action 425w
EC internal trade 175-6w

Complaints
Armed forces casualties 390w
Scottish Legal Aid Board 656w

Comptroller & Auditor General
see National Audit Office

Compulsorily detained mental patients
558-9w
Wales 294-5w

Compulsory purchase
RAF Greenham Common 549w

Computer applications
Type 23 frigates 155w

Computer privacy
Data networks 446w
Government data network 529-30w

Computers
Export licensing 691-3w

Computers in Government departments
Privatisation 267w
Schedule D income tax 50w

Concessionary television licences
(25:05:88) 366-8
Fees & charges 697w
Handicapped 697w
Residential care 279w

Conditions of employment
Teachers 234w

Confectionery
Takeovers 334-5

Confederation of British Industry
199w

Confidence building measures
368-9w

Connaught Barracks
Historic buildings 41-2w

Conscientious objectors
Juries 106w

Conservation
Agricultural land 598w

Construction
Hospitals 315, 516-7w
US bases 658-60w

Construction costs
RAF Waddington 544w

Construction materials
EC action 225-6w

Consultants
Inland Revenue 255w
London Docklands Development Corporation 358w

Consumer advisory committees
Wales 589w

Consumer credit
637w, 713

Consumer expenditure
Rates & rating 305-6w

Contract cleaning
Palace of Westminster 117w

Contracts
London Docklands Development Corporation 307w
Road construction 629w

Contracts for services
Hospitals 184w
NHS 146w, 572w
Public libraries 376-7w

Contracts of employment
Doctors 88-9w

Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
Official engagements 188w

Conventional weapons
Arms control 190-1
Arms control negotiations 190
NATO 160-1w, 190
Navy 162w
Warsaw Pact 605w

Convictions
Litter 638-40w
Terrorism 274w
Waste disposal 639w

Conway, Mr Derek
Debates etc.
Girobank, Privatisation (07:06:88) 726
Questions
Church buildings 14w
Special Air Service 187

Cook, Mr Frank
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 772
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Rep (23:05:88) 90, 108, 110, 115, 120, 126, 140, 150, 153-4
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 433, 436, 457-8, 466, 475, 477, 479
Recess motions, Spring (25:05:88) 364
Renewable Energy Development Agency (Establishment) Bill, 1R (07:06:88) 738-41
Questions
Advisory Council on Science & Technology, Public appointments 432-4w
Employment training 496w
NATO Nuclear Planning Group, Military aircraft 154-5w
Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee, Public appointments 357w

Cook, Mr Robin
Questions
Community care 269-70w
Community care, Vocational training 269w
Income support, Community care 147w
Low incomes, Scotland 413w
M8, Public inquiries 251w
Malaysia, Gregory, Derrick 466w
Mental health community care, Community care 590-1w
Mental hospitals, Hospital closures 400-2w, 665-8w
Mental patients, Supplementary benefits 413w

Cook, Mr Robin—continued
Ministerial duties, Community care 229w
NHS, Buildings 273w
NHS, Expenditure 382-3w
NHS administration, Temporary staff 214w
Nurses, Pay settlements 271w
Supplementary benefits, Residential care 419w

Coombs, Mr Anthony
Questions
Agriculture, Exports 676-8w
Economic growth 527w
Employment training, Training allowances 497w
Income support, Capital rules 273w
Turkey, Human rights 836

Coombs, Mr Simon
Questions
Employment training, Women 702
USA, Official engagements 606w

Cope, Mr John, Minister of State for Employment
Debates etc.
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (24:05:88) 240-3, 252, 255, 257, 260-2, 288-9
Questions
Business, Information services 710
EC Labour & Social Affairs Council, Official engagements 700-1
Employment, EC internal trade 509w
Employment opportunities, EC internal trade 701
Employment opportunities, South West region 701
Employment schemes, Advertising agencies 134w
Employment schemes, Child care 507-8w
Employment schemes, Departmental publications 134w
Employment schemes, Expenditure 133w
Enterprise allowance scheme 502w
Enterprise allowance scheme, Efficiency scrutinies 711-2w
European Social Charter 662w
Local enterprise agencies 500-1w, 505w
New businesses 29w
Productivity, Employment 706
Productivity, Labour costs 706
Skill shortages 496w
Small Firms Service 503w
Technical & vocational education initiative, Orkney 393w
Television advertising, Dept of Employment 130w
Trade unions, EC internal trade 712w
Training Commission, Inner city areas 317w
Young people, Advisory services 504w
Youth employment, School leaving 709w
Youth training scheme 505w, 705
Youth training scheme, Government assistance 704
Youth training scheme, Kensington & Chelsea 317-9w
Youth training scheme, Take-up of employment 662w
Youth training scheme, Tourist industry 704-5
Youth training scheme, Women 28w

Corbett, Mr Robin
Debates etc.
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Rep (23:05:88) 88-136 passim, 157, 165-7
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 417-20, 422, 426, 430, 445
Questions
Escalators, Industrial health & safety 316w
Escalators, Warning signs 316-7w
Firearms, Advertising controls 3w
Gibraltar, Television programmes 331w
Inland Revenue, Postal services 255w
Population, Regional health authorities 420w
Regional health authorities, Finance 419-20w

Corbyn, Mr Jeremy
Debates etc.
Housing (23:05:88) 29-30, 45, 51, 52
Housing Bill, Rep (09:06:88) 1085-6
Questions
Aga Khan Foundation, Food aid from UK 473-4w
Army, A345 554w
Business statements 532
Chile, Human rights 467w
Fishery protection, Expenditure 679w
Turkey, Human rights 837
Turkey, Official visits 476w
Turkey, Prisoners' transfers 466w

Co-responsibility levy
Cereals 261-2w

Cormack, Mr Patrick
Questions
Business statements 530
Ethiopia, Human rights 608w

Cornwall
NHS 591w
Rio Tinto Zinc 635-6w
Tin 635-6w

Corporation tax
Company taxation 531w
Tax yields 700w

Corrosion
Water distribution 67w

Cory, Major
Courts martial 325w

Cost benefit analysis
A40 60w

Cost effectiveness
Customs & Excise 371-3w
Government data network 530w
Northern Ireland Prison Service 461-2w
Public libraries 258w

Cost of living
Scotland 314

Cost per pupil
Secondary education 322-3, 689w

Co-Star
Company investigations 186w

Couchman, Mr James
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 793, 804-5
Property Services Agency (25:05:88) 344
Questions
Employment training 516
Enterprise allowance scheme 502w
Hong Kong, Ministers' visits abroad 609-10w

Council for Environmental Conservation
Official engagements 298w

Council for the Protection of Rural England
Official engagements 298w

Council house sales
651w
Hamilton 16w
Southwark 115w
Wales 6-7

Council house waiting lists
Wales 44w

Council housing
Housing construction 75w
Property transfer 587w
Wales 7

Council of Europe
168-9w, 446w
Official engagements 611w

Council of Ministers
240-2w, 306w, 492w
EC action 367w

Council of Ministers—continued
EC law 385w

Council tenants
Departmental publications 651w

Country Landowners' Association
Official engagements 678-9w

Countryside Commission
Official engagements 223w

Courier services
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 270w

Court orders
(24:05:88) 219-98, (09:06:88) 1003-103

Courtaulds
114w

Courts martial
Cory, Major 325w

Cousins, Mr Jim
Questions
Compulsorily detained mental patients 558-9w
Disposable income, Single people 580-4w
EC internal trade, Business education 242-3w
NATO, Navy 158w
Police civilians, Manpower 439-40w
Tax yields, Personal taxation 698w
Universities Funding Council, Zoological Society of London 235w

Coventry
Social security reform 422-4w
Standard of living 422-4w

Cox, Mr Tom
Questions
Alcoholic drinks, Young people 166-7w
Cruelty to children, London boroughs 267-8w
EC Agriculture Council 684w
Garages & petrol stations, Prosecutions 150-1w
Handicapped workers, Unemployment 506w
Homelessness, Greater London 313w
Juries, Conscientious objectors 106w
Lebanon, Hostages 618w
Local radio, Radio broadcasting licences 172w
Pirate radio stations, Greater London 112-3w
Trading standards departments, Manpower 111w
Wandsworth Prison, Industrial disputes 167w

CPRE
see Council for the Protection of Rural England

Cran, Mr James
Debates etc.
Rover Group (08:06:88) 915-9
Questions
District health authorities, Property transfer 563w
Employment discrimination, Age 595-6w
Geriatric patients, Mental patients 565w
Monetary compensatory amounts, Pigmeat 674w
Police, Manpower 439w
Productivity, Labour costs 706
Radio, Surveillance 588w
Radio broadcasting licences, Surveillance 588w
Unemployment, Beverley 985

Cranes
Industrial safety 395w
Quarrying 315w

CRE
see Commission for Racial Equality

Crickhowell, Rt Hon Lord
4, 80w

Crime prevention panels
Scotland 187w

Crimes of violence
Armed forces 285w

Criminal injuries compensation
277w

Criminal Injuries Compensation Board
276-7w
Administrative delays 276w

Criminal investigation
Northern Ireland 36-7w

Criminal Justice Act 1961
Questions
249w

Criminal Justice Bill (HL) 1987/88
Debates etc.
Rep (07:06:88) 742-818

Criminal proceedings
(07:06:88) 742-818
Crown Prosecution Service 447w
Magistrates' courts 449w

Crown courts
Committal proceedings 448w

Crown Estate Commissioners
(09:06:88) 1003-103

Crown Prosecution Service
316w
Criminal proceedings 447w
Legal profession 448w
Lotteries 447w
Manpower 284-5w
Pay 284-5w
Pay incentives 448w
Prosecutions 364-6w
Recruitment 284-5w

Crowther, Mr Stan
Questions
Restart programme, Interviews 503-4w

Cruelty to children
London boroughs 267-8w

Cruise missiles
Holy Loch 179-80
Nuclear weapons deployment 40w
USA 160w, 179-80

Crumlin Road Prison
Sanitation 460w

Cryer, Mr Bob
Debates etc.
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (24:05:88) 243
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Rep (23:05:88) 114
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 473-4, 477-8, 480
Girobank, Privatisation (07:06:88) 726
Housing Bill, Rep (09:06:88) 1005-6
Recess motions, Spring (25:05:88) 375
Rowntree, Members' interests (08:06:88) 844
School buildings, Bradford (25:05:88) 382-4
Settle-Carlisle railway (26:05:88) 607-12, 615, 618
Woollen industry, West Yorkshire (27:05:88) 654-6
Questions
Armed forces training, South Africa 324w
Business statements 530, 995-6
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Courier services 270w
Employment opportunities, EC internal trade 701
Ferries, Boarding cards 282w

Cryer, Mr Bob—continued
Industrial safety, Cranes 395w
Mines & Quarries Inspectorate, Prosecutions 315-6w, 395w
Official engagements, Denmark 102w
Penlee quarry, Industrial safety 315w
Penlee quarry, Mines & Quarries Inspectorate 314w
Quarrying, Cranes 315w
Quarrying, Industrial health & safety 316w
Railway network, Bradford 306w
Settle bypass, Road construction 729w
Settle-Carlisle railway, J Jarvis & Sons 281w
Settle-Carlisle railway, Local government expenditure 282w
Settle-Carlisle railway, Private sector 57-8w
Settle-Carlisle railway, Railway closures 281-2w
Special Air Service 187
Trident, Costs 151w
Yorkshire Ripper Case Inquiry 277w

Cuba
Ministers' visits abroad 239w

Cumbria
School population 10-2w
Sheep 218w

Cunliffe, Mr Lawrence
Questions
Chemical Defence Establishment, USSR 154w

Cunningham, Dr John
Debates etc.
Property Services Agency (25:05:88) 328-9
Questions
Community charge, Wales 48-9w
Domestic rates, Scotland 18-9w
Environmental impact assessment, Enterprise zones 649-50w
Haverigg Prison, Drug abuse 641-2w
Haverigg Prison, Prison escapes 717-8
Haverigg Prison, Prisoners 642w
Haverigg Prison, Security 641-2w
Nuclear safety, Sellafield 321w
Planning inquiries, Foxley Wood 635w

Currency movements
198w

Curriculum
Gaelic language 31w

Currie, Mrs Edwina, Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security
Debates etc.
Children in care (27:05:88) 673-8
Waltham Forest Health Authority, Finance (27:05:88) 687-90
Women, Health (10:06:88) 1111-22, 1126, 1129, 1131, 1153, 1173-6
Questions
Ambulance services, Manpower 591w
Ambulance services, Medical treatments 591w, 724w
Ambulance services, Private health services 93w
Babies, Eye disorders 268w
Breast feeding, Government assistance 594w
Cancer, Children 412w
Cancer, Kingston upon Hull 147-8w
Cancer hazards, Medical research 90w
Carbadox, Carcinogens 413-4w
Carbadox, Genetics 414-5w
Cervical cancer, Lasers 670w
Cervical cancer, Leicestershire Health Authority 271w
Cervical cancer, Medical education 96-8w
Cervical cancer, Screening 271-2w
Community care, Mentally handicapped 725w
Community care, Research finance 417w
Compulsorily detained mental patients 558-9w
District health authorities, Property transfer 563w
Electorate, Dacorum 144-6w

Currie, Mrs Edwina—continued
Electorate, Hertfordshire 415-6w
Electorate, Three Rivers 144-5w
Electroconvulsive therapy, Administrative delays 571w
Electroconvulsive therapy, Codes of practice 410w, 566w, 570w
Electroconvulsive therapy, Death 143w
Electroconvulsive therapy, Manpower 570w
Electroconvulsive therapy, Medical research 265w
Electroconvulsive therapy, Medical treatments 410w
Electroconvulsive therapy, Mental Health Act Commission 571w
Electroconvulsive therapy, Mental health services 567-70w
Electroconvulsive therapy, Mental patients 142-3w, 566-7w
Food standards 665w
Geriatric patients, Mental patients 565w
Glaucoma 415w
Glue sniffing, Advisory services 561-2w
Glue sniffing, Death 144w
Health, Social class 559-60w
Health, Women 672w
Health hazards, Blandford fly 411w
Homelessness, Greater London 313w
Hospital beds, Waltham Forest Health Authority 410w
Hospital catering, Fish 270w
Hospital closures 727w
Hospitals, Essex 418w
Hospitals, NHS & private practice 92-3w
Hospitals, Water supply 144w
Hume, Donald, Mental patients 267w
Infant foods, Child health 727-8w
Influenza 558w
Legionnaires' disease, BBC 94w
Leicester Royal Infirmary, Hospital closures 215w
Mental health community care, Community care 590-1w
Mental health services, Property transfer 562w
Mental hospitals, Hospital closures 665-8w
Mental hospitals, Hostels 91w
Mental illness, Surgery 143w
Mental patients, Electroconvulsive therapy 211-2w
Mental patients, Hospital discharges 563-4w, 669w
Mental patients, Medical treatments 212w
Mental patients, Per capita costs 577-8w
Moore, Thomas Connolly, Mental patients 267w
Myalgic encephalomyelitis 577w
Myalgic encephalomyelitis, British Medical Association 577w
Myalgic encephalomyelitis, Official engagements 577w
Negligence, Compensation 409-10w
NHS, Buildings 273w
NHS, Contracts for services 146w, 572w
NHS, Cornwall 591w
NHS, Land values 89-90w
NHS complaints, Government assistance 578w
North Staffordshire Health Authority, Finance 671w
Nurses, Birmingham Children's Hospital 148-9w
Nursing homes, Private health services 411w
Office of Population Censuses & Surveys, Operating Costs 421w
Patients, NHS 571-2w
Population, Regional health authorities 420w
Population studies, South East Thames Regional Health Authority 420w
Post-neonatal mortality, Death rate 670w
Private health services, Hospital beds 213w
Radiation hazards, Sellafield 90w
Residential care, Hotels 268-9w
Salmonella, Food poisoning 92w
Slimming, Food additives 723-4w
South West Thames Regional Health Authority, Land acquisition 572-3w

Currie, Mrs Edwina—continued
Tobacco 592w
Tobacco advertising, Health warnings 411-2w
Ulcerative colitis, Prescription charges exemptions 269w
Women, Domestic violence 216w

Curry, Mr David
Debates etc.
"Developments in the European Community Six Monthly Report" (26:05:88) 549, 551-5, 566-7
Settle-Carlisle railway (26:05:88) 604-7
Questions
Army bases, RAF Dishforth 179
GCE A level 713-4
Unemployment, Yorkshire & Humberside 498w

Customs
Channel tunnel 136w, 537w
Firearms 55w
Newry 528w

Customs & Excise
Cost effectiveness 371-3w
Overseas trade 372w
Trade formalities 372w

Customs officers
Manpower 527w

Cyclotron Trust
Government grants 565w

Cynon valley
Housing standards 45w
Unemployment 11-2

Cyprus
694w
Official engagements 610w
Peace negotiations 832-3

Czechoslovakia
Foreign policy 617w

Dacorum
Electorate 144-6w

Dairy farming
677w
Processed food 407w
Wales 407w

Dairy products
Milk Marketing Board 973

Dalmally
Helicopters 391w

Dalyell, Mr Tam
Debates etc.
Business statements (24:05:88) 203
Departmental correspondence, Standing Order No 20 applications (07:06:88) 736-7
"Developments in the European Community Six Monthly Report" (26:05:88) 539, 570-4
Girobank, Privatisation (07:06:88) 730
Parliamentary privilege (08:06:88) 844
Powell, Charles, Diplomatic service (25:05:88) 379-81
Property Services Agency (25:05:88) 344, 348
Recess motions, Spring (25:05:88) 360
Standing Order No 20 applications (23:05:88) 21
Questions
Army, Gibraltar 661w
Business statements 526-7, 1001-2
Customs, Channel tunnel 537w
Electronic surveillance, Northern Ireland 327w
Fish farming, Pollution 974
Gibraltar, IRA 119w, 465w
HMS Hermione, Inquiries 708w
Lothian Regional Council, School buildings 250w
Official secrets, Firth of Forth 549w
Palace of Westminster, Press conferences 22w

Dalyell, Mr Tam—continued
Powell, Charles 604w
Public Accounts Commission 16
Special Air Service, Europe 186
Student grants 727w

Darcy, Michael
IRA (07:06:88) 733
Standing Order No 20 applications (07:06:88) 733

Darling, Mr Alistair
Debates etc.
Scottish Bus Group, Privatisation (24:05:88) 210
Questions
Armed forces, Community charge 39w
Elsie Inglis Memorial Maternity Hospital, Hospital closures 721-2w
Fishing vessels, Licensing 679w
Guatemala, Human rights 614w
Hospitals, Contracts for services 184w
Ministers, Offices 250w
Nurses, Pay settlements 120-1w
Plutonium, Transport of radioactive materials 102w
School governors, Departmental leaflets 236w
Scottish health boards, Expenditure 253w
Scottish Information Office, Press releases 121w
South of Scotland Electricity Board, Coal 322
Wealth distribution 516

Dartford
Planning permission 730-1w

Dartford & Gravesham Health Authority
Hospital waiting lists 217w

Dartford tunnel
Road tankers 453w
Road tolls 383w

Dartmoor national park
Firing ranges 180

Data networks
Computer privacy 446w

Data Protection Registrar
529-30w

Davies, Rt Hon Denzil
Questions
Conventional weapons, NATO 190
Nuclear weapons, Modernisation 184

Davies, Mr Quentin
Questions
Rowntree, Takeovers 334

Davies, Mr Ron
Debates etc.
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Rep (23:05:88) 90
Questions
Badgers, Bovine tuberculosis 264w, 489w
Barn owls 355w
Birds, Farm buildings 78w
British Rail, Privatisation 590w
Business statements 989
Competition law, EC action 425w
Forestry grants 520-1w
Forestry grants, Scotland 194-5w
National Rivers Authority, Wales 4, 408-9w
National Rivers Authority Advisory Committee, Business expenses 311w
National Rivers Authority Advisory Committee, Public appointments 80w, 311w
Rivers, Wales 199w
Rivers, Water authorities 67-8w
Sheep meat, Agricultural stabilisers 681w
Social security reform, Northern Ireland 219w
Water authorities, Expenditure 67w
Water charges, Wales 199w
Water charges, Water authorities 81w
Water pollution, Prosecutions 309w

Davies, Mr Ron—continued
Water pollution, Wales 296w
Welsh Water Authority, Expenditure 199-200w
Welsh Water Authority, Manpower 200w
Woodworking, Scotland 657w

Davis, Mr David
Questions
Ethiopia, Foreign policy 828-9
Home Grown Cereals Authority, Official engagements 981

Davis, Mr Terry
Debates etc.
Rover Group (08:06:88) 925-9

Day, Mr Stephen
Questions
Enforcement notices 311-2w
UN disarmament, Arms control 607w

Day nurseries
49w

De Lorean
Debts 460-1w

Deaf
Handicapped children 95w

Deal barracks
391w

Death
AIDS 88w
Attendance allowance 593w
Electroconvulsive therapy 143w
Glue sniffing 144w
Morgan, Daniel 448-9w
Occupied territories 613w
Prisoners of war (25:05:88) 356-62
Surgery 361w
Terrorism 249-50w

Death rate
Post-neonatal mortality 670w
Wales 407w

Debts
Africa 983
De Lorean 460-1w
Developing countries 525-7w, 611w
Tax yields 197-8w
Water authorities 352w

Decommissioning grants
Fishing vessels 677w

Decriminalisation
Scotland 363w

Defective housing
Reinstatement grants 358w, (26:05:88) 600
Scotland 125-7w, (26:05:88) 600

Defence
186, 984
Armed forces medical services 546w
British merchant fleet 155w
Glenmoriston Estates 159w
Merchant seamen 186
Merchant ships 185
Opposition 713
Southern Africa 464w

Defence contracts
British Geological Survey 546w
Competition 552-3w
Military aircraft 546w
Military vehicles 388w
North West region 37w
Strategic defence initiative 154w, 553w

Defence equipment
Air force bases 547w
BAOR 182
Bradwell-on-Sea 322-3w
Jaguar aircraft 707w
North Sea 157w, 544w
Parachuting 545w
Tornado aircraft 542w
Western Europe 160w

Defence Estimates
Nuclear weapons 182

Defence expenditure
25w
Defence procurement 156w
National income 162w
Public Accounts Commission 16-7
Tucano aircraft 322w

Defence Export Services Organisation
152w
Civil servants' visits abroad 548w

Defence industries
Civil servants' business appointments 153w, 188
Defence procurement 159w
Former Ministers 188

Defence land
Motor sports 326w
Property Services Agency 551w

Defence procurement
Artillery 387w, 586w
ASR 1238 543w
Defence expenditure 156w
Defence industries 159w
Helicopters 555w
International cooperation 160w
Levene, Peter 188
Military vehicles 553w
NATO 189
Scotland 155-6w
Sea King helicopters 156w
Tanks 387w
Tornado aircraft 542w
Type 23 frigates 155w
Wales 155-6w

Defence research
Disclosure of information 322w
HI-CAMP programme 548w
International cooperation 548w
Privatisation 548-9w
Small businesses 322w

Deficit grants
British Coal Corporation 232w

Delaware
110w

Demonstrations
Northern Ireland 457w
Orange Order 457w
South Africa house (25:05:88) 362-6

Denmark
Official engagements 102w, 604w

Dental charges exemptions
Departmental forms 580w

Dentists
Hospital staff 579-80w

Dept of Education & Science
341w, (07:06:88) 736-7
Cash limits 341w, 436-7w
Civil servants' business appointments 13w
Equal opportunities 234w

Dept of Employment
475-6w
Cash limits 132-3w
Civil servants' business appointments 29w
Television advertising 130w

Dept of Energy
Cash limits 233w
Equal opportunities 348-9w

Dept of Health & Social Security
346w
Cash limits 216-7w
Civil servants' business appointments 93-4w

Dept of Health & Social Security local offices
Blackpool 411w
Courier services 270w
Opinion polls 562w

Dept of Health & Social Security local offices—continued
Southampton 418w

Dept of National Savings
374w

Dept of the Environment
356-7w, 475-6w, 731-2w
Cash limits 357-8w
Civil servants' business appointments 77w
Equal opportunities 304w

Dept of Trade & Industry
371w, 634-5w
Cash limits 371w
Civil servants' business appointments 114-5w
Equal opportunities 369-70w
Government research establishments 429-30w
Switzerland 242w
Welsh language 5-6w

Dept of Transport
Equal opportunities 281w

Departmental circulars
Welsh language 202w

Departmental coordination
Blandford fly 475-6w

Departmental correspondence
Armed forces casualties 389w
Chatelherault 16w
Disclosure of information 599w, (07:06:88) 736-7
Social Security Commissioners 698w
Standing Order No 20 applications (07:06:88) 736-7
Ulster Defence Regiment 40w

Departmental forms
Dental charges exemptions 580w

Departmental initiatives
Domestic energy conservation 631-2w

Departmental leaflets
School governors 236w
Welsh language 91w

Departmental publications
Agriculture 262-3w
Council tenants 651w
Employment schemes 134w
Inner cities initiative 134w
Welsh language 341w
Wrecks 150w

Deposited papers
Speaker's rulings & statements (07:06:88) 728

Derbyshire
Unemployment 699

Derelict land grants
Staffordshire 66w

DES
see Dept of Education & Science

Design
Sprinter trains 454w

Detergents
Phosphates 300w

Developing countries
Debts 525-7w, 611w
Food contamination 980

Development aid
7w
Multinational companies 233-4w
Nicaragua 625-6w
OECD countries 475w

Development Assistance Committee
625-6w

Development of Tourism Act 1969
Questions
131w

"Developments in the European Community Six Monthly Report"
(26:05:88) 536-600

Devlin, Mr Tim
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 789, 791, 808
"Developments in the European Community Six Monthly Report" (26:05:88) 584
Housing Bill, Rep (09:06:88) 1044
Oral question time intervention (09:06:88) 967
Questions
Cash limits, Dept of Education & Science 341w, 436-7w
Crown Prosecution Service, Manpower 284-5w
Crown Prosecution Service, Pay 284-5w
Magistrates' courts 283-4w
Meat & Livestock Commission, Official engagements 674w
Regional development grants, Pay 370w
Teachers, Professional qualifications 109-10w
USA, Official engagements 616w

Devolution
Scotland 183w, 309

Devon
Armed forces training 181

Dewar, Mr Donald
Debates etc.
Scottish Bus Group, Privatisation (24:05:88) 205-7
Questions
Community charges register, Scotland 312
Housing, Poverty 475w
Housing benefits, Scotland 324
Scottish assembly 310-1

DHSS
see Dept of Health & Social Security

Dickens, Mr Geoffrey
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 810-1
Questions
Cash limits, Dept of Employment 132-3w
Economic situation, USA 514
Palace of Westminster, Members' facilities 19

Diplomatic relations
Laos 24w

Diplomatic service
Powell, Charles (25:05:88) 379-81

DIR79/409/EEC
380w

Direct labour departments
Historic buildings 252w

Director of Public Prosecutions
285w

Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland
285w

Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Act 1986
Questions
Local authority associations 573w, 723w

Disclosure of information
Bail 171w
Community charge 304-5w
Community charges register 49w, 479w
Defence research 322w
Departmental correspondence 599w, (07:06:88) 736-7
Financial services 243-4w
Government departments 686w
New towns development corporations 123w
Newspaper press 401w
Personal records 529w

Disclosure of information—continued
Social Fund 725w
Special Air Service 193

Dispensing doctors
Prescriptions 139-40w

Disposable income
Married people 580-4w
Single people 580-4w

District health authorities
AIDS 411w
Expenditure 289-92w
Infant mortality 140-2w
NHS administration 84-6w, 140-2w, 147w
Property transfer 563w
Transport costs 294w
Wales 289-92w, 294w

Dixon, Mr Don
Questions
Film industry, Monopolies & Mergers Commission 635w

Dixons
City technology colleges 13-4w

Dobson, Mr Frank
Debates etc.
Business statements (24:05:88) 201
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 395-7, 411
Housing Bill, Rep (09:06:88) 1012
Standing Order No 20 applications (23:05:88) 23
Questions
Ambulance services, Private health services 93w
Attendance allowance, Administrative delays 593w
Attendance allowance, Death 593w
Attendance allowance, Social security benefits rules 592-3w
Business statements 519-20, 987-9
Hospital waiting lists, Information 217w
Hospitals, NHS & private practice 92-3w
Immigration appeals, Administrative delays 585-6w
London Regional Transport, Resignations 730w
Palace of Westminster, Screening 19-20
St Peter's Hospital, London 593-4w
St Peter's Hospital, London, Hospital closures 726w
St Peter's Hospital, London, Property transfer 726w

Dock labour scheme
Dock workers 211w
Manpower 314w
Retirement 314w

Dock workers
Dock labour scheme 211w
National Dock Labour Board 662w

Doctors
Contracts of employment 88-9w
Women 579w

DOE
see Dept of the Environment

Dog collars
Animal cruelty 446w

Dog wardens
Local government expenditure 478-9w

Dogs
Royal Army Veterinary Corps 157w

Domestic energy conservation
Departmental initiatives 631-2w

Domestic rates
Scotland 18-9w
Wales 48-9w

Domestic violence
Women 216w

Domestic wastes
Imports 652w
USA 652w

Donnelly, Susan
South Africa 27w, 465w

Doran, Mr Frank
Debates etc.
Girobank, Privatisation (07:06:88) 728
Questions
Agricultural research, Research finance 676w
Armed conflict, Merchant ships 191
Community charges register, Scotland 311
El Salvador, Peace negotiations 617w
Fish farming, Research 975
Housing benefits, Social security recipients 560w
Unemployment 500w
Uniform business rate 354w

Dornoch forest
Forestry grants 20-2w

Douglas, Mr Dick
Debates etc.
Scottish Bus Group, Privatisation (24:05:88) 211
Questions
Business statements 994
Community charges register, Scotland 184w
Early warning systems, Boeing 189
EC internal trade, Scottish Assembly 317
Nuclear submarines, Radioactive waste disposal 160w

Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James, Under-Secretary of State for Scotland
Questions
Beaches, Scotland 516w
Cairngorms, Nature conservation 121w
Cairngorms, Road construction 121w
Cairngorms, World Heritage Convention 121w
Chatelherault, Departmental correspondence 16w
Class actions, Scotland 188w
Co-Star, Company investigations 186w
Council house sales, Hamilton 16w
Crime prevention panels, Scotland 187w
Decriminalisation, Scotland 363w
Defective housing, Scotland 125-7w
Drugs, Prisoners 16-7w
Ferries, Scottish islands 124w
Fetlar, Fraud 251w
Forestry 246w
Forestry, Broadleaved woodlands 19-20w
Forestry Commission, Motor sports 251w
Forestry grants 520-1w
Forestry grants, Dornoch forest 20-2w
Forestry grants, Scotland 194-5w
Historic buildings, Direct labour departments 252w
Housing benefits, Scotland 183w, 324
Housing standards, Dundee 656-8w
Housing standards, Official residences 319
Housing standards, Scotland 318-9
Kerb crawling, Glasgow 513w
Legal aid, Recovery of costs 722w
Legal aid, Scotland 192w, 655-6w
Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive, Official engagements 187w
Prison sentences, Women 249w
Prisoners' transfers, Scotland 249w
Prisons, Scotland 191w
Prostitution, Glasgow 514w
Public sector housing, Scotland 323-4
Regional councils, Scotland 17w
Rescue services, Radio 16w
Scottish Bus Group, Privatisation 324-5
Scottish Legal Aid Board, Complaints 656w
Scottish Legal Aid Board, Expenditure 656w
Scottish Legal Aid Board, Manpower 656w
Scottish Special Housing Association, Shetland 599-600w
Terrorism, Death 249-50w
Water pollution, Beaches 363w

Downey

Leukaemia 600-1w

Dover Castle
Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission for England 310w

Downing Street
Members 445-6w

DPP
see Director of Public Prosecutions

Driving
Motorways 453w

Driving instruction
Licensing 627-8w

Driving licences
Balance of payments 690w

Drug abuse
Haverigg Prison 641-2w

Drug industry
Benzodiazepines 728w

Drugs
Animal feed 400w
Haverigg Prison 719
Prisoners 16-7w
Scotland 16-7w
Wales 400w

DTI
see Dept of Trade & Industry

DTp
see Dept of Transport

Dual carriageways
Road traffic 451-2w

Duffy, Mr A E P
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 813
Questions
BAOR 181

Dumfries
Nestle 338

Dumping
Horticulture 982

Dundee
Housing standards 656-8w
Vacancies 657w

Dungavel Prison
191w

Dunn, Mr Bob, Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science
Questions
Burnage School Manchester, Inquiries 13w
Durham County Council, Educational finance 108w
Free school meals, Durham 165w
Free school meals, Leicestershire 165-6w
Horniman Museum 10w
Palterton School, School buildings 235w
Portage, Pre-school education 11w
Pupils, Equal opportunities 342w
Research finance, Special education 13w
School governors, Departmental leaflets 236w
School milk, Leicestershire 234-5w
School population, Cumbria 10-2w
Secondary education, Cost per pupil 689w

Dunnachie, Mr Jimmy
Questions
East West relations 615w
Fetlar, Fraud 251w
Hong Kong, China 118w
Hospital waiting lists, Scotland 191w
Nuclear weapons, NATO 152-3w
Prader-Willi syndrome, Handicap benefits 593w

Dunwoody, Mrs Gwyneth
Debates etc.
Geriatrics, Health services (24:05:88) 300-2, 303, 304, 305, 306
Social Fund, House of Commons questions (23:05:88) 21, 22

Dunwoody, Mrs Gwyneth—continued
Questions
Citizens' Advice Bureaux, Legal advice & assistance 633w
Iraq, Bombings 613w
Part-time employment, Employment protection 501w
Planning permission, Farms 67w

Durham
Free school meals 165w
Vacancies 131w

Durham County Council
Educational finance 108w

Durham Prison
2w

Dyfed
Integrated development operations 46w

Dykes, Mr Hugh
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 810
Questions
EC Labour & Social Affairs Council, Official engagements 700-1
France, Foreign policy 685w
Mandela, Nelson 826
USSR, Human rights 609w

Eadie, Mr Alexander
Questions
Electricity generation, Scotland 184w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 313
Employers' contributions, North Sea oil 146w
Offshore fixed platforms, Leave 102w
Oil industry safety, Fees & charges 101-2w

EAEC
see Euratom

Ealing
Floods 79w, 213w
Housing construction 648w
Housing investment programmes 116w
Local government borrowing 481-2w

Early retirement
Handicapped workers 711w
Headteachers 689-90w

Early warning systems
Boeing 189
RAF Fylingdales 38w

East Anglia
Unemployment 499w

East Kilbride
186w

East Kilbride Development Corporation
Public sector housing sales 122w

East London Housing Association
79w

East London river crossing
383w
Bridges 453w
Planning permission 150w

East Midlands
Unemployment 699

East West relations
614-5w, 839
Arms control negotiations 714-5
Berlin 610w
International conferences 610w

Eastbourne Harbour Bill (HL) 1987/88
Debates etc.
2R* (07:06:88) 699

Eastern Health & Social Services Board
509
NHS finance 508-10

Eastham, Mr Ken
Debates etc.
Rover Group (08:06:88) 914-5, 927

EC accession
Turkey 836-7

EC action
Apartheid 826-7
Central America 27w
Coal 26w
Competition law 425w
Construction materials 225-6w
Council of Ministers 367w
Environment 306w
Firearms certificates 105-6w
Immigration 643-4w
Industrial health & safety (26:05:88) 600
Nature conservation 310w
Pulses & seeds 492w
Sea transport 58w
Sugar refineries 675-6w
Terrorism 643-4w
Transport of radioactive materials 26w
VAT threshold 371w
Water pollution 310-1w

EC Agriculture Council
218w, 229w, 684w

EC budget
UK contributions539w

EC budget contributions
EC countries 539-40w

EC Commission
see European Commission

EC countries
Agricultural land 386w
Child benefit 91w
EC budget contributions 539-40w
Employment 705-6
Industrial health & safety 709
Parental leave 393w
Prisons 446w

EC Draft 7658/86
(26:05:88) 600

EC Draft 8284/87/1
(08:06:88) 944-60

EC Draft 8284/87/2
(08:06:88) 944-60

EC Draft 9928/87
(26:05:88)-600

EC Draft 10662/87
(26:05:88) 600

EC Draft 4544/88
(26:05:88) 600

EC external relations
617w

EC external trade
Food 680-2w

EC Foreign Affairs Council
239-40w, 617w
Official engagements 618-9w

EC free food scheme
South Hams 490w

EC General Affairs Council
see EC Foreign Affairs Council

EC grants & loans
Assisted areas 425w
Cereals 263-4w
Wales 404w

EC law
Council of Ministers 385w
Environmental policy 731-2w

EC integration
195w

EC internal trade
(26:05:88) 536-600
Agriculture 673w

EC internal trade—continued
Business education 242-3w
Channel Islands 639-40w
Competition law 175-6w
Economic regions 428w
Employment 509w
Employment opportunities 700-1
Food industry 673w
Isle of Man 639-40w
Pigmeat 971
Scotland 309, 316-8
Scottish assembly 317
Small businesses 710
Trade unions 712w
Wales 295-6w

EC Labour & Social Affairs Council
Official engagements 700-1

EC reform
Common agricultural policy 384-5w

Economic growth
527w
Employment 507w
European monetary system 523w, 525-6w

Economic League
Industrial relations 132w

Economic policy
China 834
Northern Ireland 513
Regional planning & development 602w

Economic regions
Agricultural workers 485-8w
EC internal trade 428w
Employment 205-12w
Farmers 484-6w
Pay 508-10w
Regional development grants 175-8w
Unemployment 131w, 597-8w

Economic situation
Belfast 332-3w
Rolls-Royce 516-7
Unemployment 601w
USA 514

Economic summit conferences
Canada 609w

Edinburgh University
108-9w

Education Act 1981
Questions
95w

Educational advisers
Welsh language 687w

Educational exchanges
Languages education 247-9w, 398-9w, 457-8w

Educational finance
Durham County Council 108w
Open University 11w
Scotland 323

Educational institutions
Illegal immigrants 443-4w
Ministry of Defence 39-40w

Efficiency scrutinies
252w
Enterprise allowance scheme 711-2w
Property Services Agency 477w

Eggar, Mr Tim, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs
Questions
BBC external services, Government grants 466w
Belize, Ministers' visits abroad 604-5w
Bermuda, Ministers' visits abroad 605w
Canada, Official engagements 608w
Caribbean, Ministers' visits abroad 607w
Cash limits, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 119w

Eggar, Mr Tim—continued
Central America, Peace negotiations 605w
Chile, Almeyda, Clodomiro 607w, 839-40
Chile, Elections 609w
Chile, Human rights 467w, 840
Chile, Referenda 829-31
China, Economic policy 834
China, Human rights 834
China, Official engagements 616w
China, Overseas trade 834
El Salvador, Peace negotiations 617w
Entry clearances, Fees & charges 464w
Entry clearances, Heathrow Airport 833-4
Exercise Purple Venture, South America 653w
Falkland Islands, Ministers' visits abroad 603w
Foreign policy, Human rights 840
Guatemala, Human rights 614w
Hong Kong, Exhibitions 603w
Hong Kong, Ministers' visits abroad 609-10w
Immigration controls, English language 833
Indian subcontinent, Entry clearances 833
International organisations 616w
Kampuchea, British residents abroad 463-4w
Kampuchea, Foreign policy 615w
Malaysia, Gregory, Derrick 466w
Mexico, Foreign policy 616w
Mexico, Ministers' visits abroad 606w
Nicaragua, Official engagements 615w
Nicaragua, Peace negotiations 615w
Norway, Official engagements 606w
Overseas Development Administration, Offices 688w
Panama, USA 614w
Sikhs, India 464w
South Africa, Donnelly, Susan 465w
Turkey, Prisoners' transfers 466w
USA, Official engagements 606w, 616w
Vietnamese refugees, Hong Kong 652-3w

EIB
see European Investment Bank

El Salvador
Peace negotiations 617w

Eland house
688w

Elderly
Housing benefits 253w
National income 559w

Elections
Chile 609w

Electorate
Dacorum 144-6w
Hertfordshire 415-6w
Three Rivers 144-5w
Wales 396-7w

Electricity Council
230w

Electricity (Financial Provisions) (Scotland) Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
2R order read (27:05:88) 691

Electricity generation
Advanced gas-cooled reactors 8w
North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board 722-3w
Scotland 184w
South of Scotland Electricity Board 722-3w

Electricity supply industry
External financing limits 230w
Privatisation 101w, 173w, 231w, 312-4, 454w, 585w, 632w, 693-4w
Scotland 182w, 185w, 312-3

Electricity tariffs
Northern Ireland 504

Electroconvulsive therapy
Administrative delays 571w
Codes of practice 410w, 566w, 570w
Death 143w

Electroconvulsive therapy—continued
Manpower 570w
Medical research 265w
Medical treatments 410w
Mental Health Act Commission 571w
Mental health services 567-70w
Mental patients 142-3w, 211-2w, 566-7w

Electronic surveillance
Northern Ireland 327w

Electronics industry
Scotland 308

Eli Lilley
87-8w

Elsie Inglis Memorial Maternity Hospital
Hospital closures 721-2w

Emergency planning
Civil defence 2w, 273w
Food contamination 138w

Emery, Sir Peter
Debates etc.
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 465
Questions
Employment opportunities, South West region 701
Food, Radioactivity 980

Emigration
Hong Kong 834-5
USSR 605-6w

Employers' contributions
North Sea oil 146w

Employment
498w
EC countries 705-6
EC internal trade 509w
Economic growth 507w
Economic regions 205-12w
European monetary system 523w
Exchange rates 527-8w
Greater London 500w
NHS finance 705w
North West region 596-8w, 661w
Northern Ireland 619-20w
Productivity 706
Rolls-Royce 700
Rowntree 337-8
South America 474w
Southwark 499w
Suffolk 498w
Takeovers 706
Tax rates & bands 705w

Employment agencies
Licensing 662w

Employment Appeal Tribunal
(24:05:88) 219-98

Employment Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
Lords amendts (24:05:88) 219-98
Royal assent (26:05:88) 501

Employment discrimination
Age 595-6w
Appeals 32-4w
Channel Islands 167w
Compensation 34w
Further education teachers 458w
North Eastern Library & Education Board 463w
Northern Ireland 32-5w, 219-21w, (25:05:88) 351-4, 456-7w
Northern Ireland Housing Executive 455-6w
Religious discrimination 646w

Employment opportunities
Belfast 327w, 332w
Channel tunnel 504w
EC internal trade 700-1
European monetary system 524-5w
Local Enterprise Development Unit 457w
London Docklands 225w

Employment opportunities—continued
Northern Ireland 457w
Scotland 182-3w
South West region 701

Employment protection
Part-time employment 501w

Employment schemes
Advertising agencies 134w
Child care 507-8w
Departmental publications 134w
Expenditure 133w
Social security reform 506-7w

Employment services
Handicapped workers 504w
Hard core unemployed 506w

Employment training
496-7w, 507-8w, 516, 661w, 663w
Aids for handicapped 711w
Child care 497w
Community work 701-2
Handicapped workers 28w
Leisure 663w
Pay incentives 392w
Social security benefits rules 497w
Trades Union Congress 497w
Training allowances 497w
Unemployed workers centres 506w
Wales 44w
Women 702

Energy conservation
Central Electricity Generating Board 346-7w
Scotland 172w

Energy consumption
231-2w

Energy Efficiency Office
231-2w, 632-3w

Energy prices
Manufacturing industries 230w
Unfair competition 349w

Enforcement notices
311-2w

English Estates
see English Industrial Estates Corporation

English Heritage
see Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission for England

English Industrial Estates Corporation
(08:06:88) 962-8

English language
Immigration controls 833

Enterprise allowance scheme
502w, 663w
Efficiency scrutinies 711-2w
Housing benefits 215w

Enterprise initiative
Wales 49w

Enterprise zones
Environmental impact assessment 649-50w

Entry clearances
Fees & charges 464w
Heathrow Airport 833-4
Indian subcontinent 119w, 833
Inquiries 106-7w

Environment
EC action 306w

Environment protection
Expenditure 587-8w

"Environment Select Committee on Pollution of Rivers & Estuaries"
351-2w

Environmental health
Tipping of waste 736w

Environmental impact assessment
Enterprise zones 649-50w

Environmental policy
EC law 731-2w

EOC
see Equal Opportunities Commission

Equal opportunities
Attorney-General 447w
Dept of Education & Science 234w
Dept of Energy 348-9w
Dept of the Environment 304w
Dept of Trade & Industry 369-70w
Dept of Transport 281w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office 238-9w
Home Office 438-9w
Minister for the Civil Service 256w
Ministry of Agriculture 262w
Ministry of Defence 389w
Northern Ireland 331w, 340w, 513
Northern Ireland Housing Executive 619w
Northern Ireland Office 381w
Office of Arts & Libraries 257w
Pupils 342w
Redundancy pay 394w
Scottish Office 249w
Treasury 254w
Welsh Office 397w

Equal Opportunities Commission
234w, 238-9w, 249w, 254w, 256-7w, 262w, 281w, 304w, 348-9w, 369-70w, 381w, 389w, 397w, 438-9w, 447w
Official engagements 503w

Equal pay
495w

Equipment
Nantergannick quarry 315w
Penlee quarry 314w

Escalators
Industrial health & safety 316w
Warning signs 316-7w

Essex
Hospitals 418w

Ethiopia
Famine 828-9
Foreign policy 828-9
Human rights 608w
Independence movements 829

Ethnic groups
New Zealand 118w
Schools 279w

Ethnic minorities
Prisoners 378w

Ethnic monitoring
Armed forces 154w
Probation 2w

Euratom
26w

Eurogroup
185

Europassport
Channel Islands 640w
Isle of Man 640w

Europe
Special Air Service 186

European Atomic Energy Community
see Euratom

European Charter of Local Self-Government
Northern Ireland 462w

European Commission
45-6w, 349w, 425w, 492w
Finance 602w
Tourist taxes 705w

European Communities
(26:05:88) 536-600

European Communities (Amendment) Act 1986
Questions
270w

European fighter aircraft
Aircraft engines 543w

European Investment Bank
130w
Local government borrowing 537-9w

European monetary system
Economic growth 523w, 525-6w
Employment 523w
Employment opportunities 524-5w
Inflation 523w
Productivity 523-4w

European Regional Development Fund
371w

European Social Charter
662w

European Year of the Traveller
501w

Evans, Mr David
Questions
Football, Hooliganism 193
Local government constituencies, Welwyn Hatfield 378w

Evans, Mr John
Questions
District health authorities, NHS administration 140-2w
EC Agriculture Council 218w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 454w
NATO, Conventional weapons 190
Regional planning & development, Merseyside 602w
Social security abuse, Tax evasion 711-2
United Nations, Official engagements 831

Evennett, Mr David
Debates etc.
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (24:05:88) 225-6
Questions
Ambulance services, Manpower 591w
Ambulance services, Medical treatments 591w, 724w
Bus services, Bexley 450w
France, Foreign policy 612-3w
Official engagements 229-30w, 685-6w

Evidence
Police 170w

Evren, Kenan
476w

Ewing, Mrs Margaret
Debates etc.
Maternity services, Moray (10:06:88) 1177-80, 1181
Scottish Bus Group, Privatisation (24:05:88) 209
Women, Health (10:06:88) 1120
Questions
Decriminalisation, Scotland 363w
Fishing vessels, Shipping accidents 344-5w
Maternity services, Moray 600w
National Farmers' Union of Scotland, Official engagements 186w
Rescue services, Radio 16w
Schools, Scotland 600w
Scottish health boards, NHS finance 308
Veterinary services, Higher education administration 108-9w

Examinations
Northern Ireland 507-8
Task Group on Assessment & Testing 434-6w

Exceptional needs payments
Lambeth 144w, 214-5w
Newham 95w
Northern Ireland 503-4
Shetland 592w

Exchange rates
198-9w
Employment 527-8w

Exchange rates—continued
Sterling 524w
Tourist industry 244w

Exercise Brave Defender
38w

Exercise Ocean Venture 88
Armed forces deployment 553w

Exercise Purple Venture
South America 653w

Exhibitions
Hong Kong 603w
Military aircraft 159w

Explosives
Transport of hazardous materials 149w

Export controls
Chemical weapon detection kits 177w

Export credit
USSR 178w

Export licensing
Computers 691-3w

Exports
Agriculture 676-8w
Australia 245w
Fibres 245w
Fire regulations 245w

Exservicemen
Nuclear weapons tests 708w

External financing limits
British Coal Corporation 231-3w
Electricity supply industry 230w

Eye disorders
Babies 268w

Eye tests
Prisoners 171w

F15 aircraft
Armed forces deployment 546w
British Aerospace 546w

Fab Fashions
Company investigations 426w

Factories
Northern region (08:06:88) 962-8
Welsh Development Agency 201w

Factory Inspectorate
321w, 663w
Civil service manpower 320-2w
Industrial accidents 710-1w
Industrial health & safety 709
Manpower 501w
Prosecutions 710-1w
Stallite Batteries 319-20w

Fair Employment Agency for Northern Ireland
35w, 220-1w, 455-6w, 458w, 463w, 646w

Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act 1976
Questions
32-5w, 456-7w, 646w

Fair Employment Trust
619w

Fairbairn, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 766-71

Falkland Islands
Armed forces deployment 182w
Ministers' visits abroad 603w
Television programmes 716

Fallon, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 458
Girobank, Privatisation (07:06:88) 728

Fallon, Mr Michael—continued
Property Services Agency (25:05:88) 345
Questions
Business statements 989
EC internal trade, Scotland 317-8
Nationalised industries, Scotland 185w
Official engagements, Northern region 102-3w
Redundancy, Northern region 501w
Voluntary restraint agreements 426-8w
Voluntary restraint agreements, Japan 427w
Voluntary restraint agreements, South Korea 427w

Falmouth Container Terminal Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
2R order read (26:05:88) 501, (09:06:88) 969

Family doctors
Psychiatry 91w

Family income
699w
Children 578w

Family practitioner committees
Finance 86-7w

Famine
Ethiopia 828-9

Farm buildings
Birds 78w

Farm diversification scheme
487-8w, 677w
Furs 683w

Farm incomes
386w
Wales 406w

Farm woodland scheme
431w
Broadleaved woodlands 383w
Tree planting 683w

Farmers
Community charge 406w
Compensation 405w
Economic regions 484-6w
Northern Ireland 622w
Radioactive fallout 129w
Scotland 129w, 190w
Supplementary benefits 622w
Trade unions 43w
Wales 43w, 397-8w, 405w

Farmers' Union of Wales
45w, 400w, 681-2w

Farms
386-7w
Forestry 431w
Mink 683w
Planning permission 67w, 650w
Pollution 972
Wales 407w
Water pollution 405-6w

Farr, Sir John
Debates etc.
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 405-6, 431-2, 456
Questions
Beef 677w
Business statements 996
Leicester Royal Infirmary, Hospital closures 215w
Pensioners, Canada 595w
Unemployment, Leicester 499-500w

Fatchett, Mr Derek
Questions
City technology colleges 13w
City technology colleges, Dixons 13-4w
City technology colleges, Lincoln 236w
City technology colleges, School closures 433w
Examinations, Northern Ireland 507-8

Fatchett, Mr Derek—continued
Handicapped workers, Early retirement 711w
Immigration rules, Community charge 640w
Immigration rules, Social security reform 640w
NATO, Conventional weapons 190
Pre-school education, Community programme 433w
Research finance, Special education 13w
Supplementary benefits, Young people 95-6w
Young people, Kensington & Chelsea 308-9w
Youth training scheme, Kensington & Chelsea 317-9w
Youth unemployment, Kensington & Chelsea 318w

Faulds, Mr Andrew
Questions
Prime Minister, Church of Scotland 515-6

Favell, Mr Tony
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 753
Questions
Abortion (Amendment) Bill 1987/88, House of Commons division of time 23w
British Coal Corporation, Deficit grants 232w
District health authorities, NHS administration 147w
Foreign policy, Overseas trade 614w
Housing standards, Scotland 318-9
National Farmers' Union, Official engagements 482w
Public Accounts Commission 15
Schools, Northern Ireland 329w

FCO
see Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Fearn, Mr Ronnie
Debates etc.
Women, Health (10:06:88) 1146-8
Questions
Canada, Official engagements 608w
Computers in Government departments, Privatisation 267w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Southampton 418w
Hospitals, Essex 418w
Hospitals, Water supply 144w
Midwives, Medical education 93w
Official engagements 229-30w
Social security reform, Training 217w
Tourism, North West region 495w

Fees & charges
Abortion 418w
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service 261w
Concessionary television licences 697w
Entry clearances 464w
Oil industry safety 101-2w
Public expenditure 374-6w
Public libraries 257-8w, 377w, 510w

Ferrier, Charles
Prison escapes 444w

Ferries
Boarding cards 282w
Compensation 198
Fire services 199
Fires 200
Merchant seamen 199-200
Safety standards 58-9w, 150w, 344w
Scotland 150w
Scottish islands 124w
Shipping safety 59w, 197-9, 280-1w

Ferries Safety Steering Committee
280-1w
Barrett, Tony 173w
Pay 173w

Fetlar
Fraud 251w

Fibres
Exports 245w

Field, Mr Barry
Questions
Army in Northern Ireland, Charities 389w
Business statements 530
Civil service manpower, Accountants 705w
Farm diversification scheme 487-8w
Japan, Official engagements 239w
Police interrogation, Tape recorders 171-2w
Prosecutions, Crown Prosecution Service 364-6w
Tourist taxes, European Commission 705w
Uniform business rate, Community charge 353-4w
Youth training scheme, Take-up of employment 662w

Field, Mr Frank
Questions
Members' correspondence, Administrative delays 696w
Pensions, Social security appeals 669-70w
Police, Evidence 170w
Rowntree, Charitable trusts 697-8w
Social Security Commissioners, Departmental correspondence 698w
UN disarmament, Arms control 368-9w
War pensions, Social security appeals 670w
Widows, Income support 149w

Fife Health Board
Managers 127w

51 Squadron
708w

Fiji
Overseas aid 196w

Film industry
Monopolies & Mergers Commission 635w

Finance Act 1987
Questions
52w

Finance (No 2) Bill 1987/88
Questions
255-6w

Financial services
Disclosure of information 243-4w
Insurance Brokers' Registration Council 635w

Financial targets
Water authorities 66w

"Financing Public Library Service Consultation Paper"
Expenditure 257w

Fines
Litter 445w

Finlay, Ian Hamilton
France 618w

Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Questions
Teachers, Conditions of employment 234w

Fire prevention
Furniture 179-80w

Fire regulations
Exports 245w
Furniture 180-2w, 244-5w

Fire services
Air force bases 553w
Ferries 199

Firearms
(23:05:88) 80-170, (25:05:88) 392-492
Advertising controls 3w
Army in Northern Ireland 222w
Customs 55w
Greater London 380w

Firearms—continued
Northern Ireland 35w, 222w, 338-40w, 624w

Firearms (Amendment) Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
Recommital motion & Rep (23:05:88) 80-170
Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R* (25:05:88) 392-492

Firearms certificates
Clubs 280w
EC action 105-6w
Ryan, Michael 378w

Firearms Expert Consultative Committee
(25:05:88) 392-492

Fires
COD Donnington 157-8w, 187
Ferries 200
Furniture 179-80w
London Underground 58w
Seafreight Freeway 197-8

Firing ranges
Access to countryside 180
Dartmoor national park 180

First aid
Health education (27:05:88) 677-82

Firth of Forth
Official secrets 549w

Fish
Hospital catering 270w

Fish conservation
653w
Sea pollution 681w
White fish 654w

Fish farming
Pesticides 975-6
Pollution 974-5
Pollution control 679w
Research 975

Fisher, Mr Mark
Questions
"Financing Public Library Service Consultation Paper, Expenditure 257w
Office of Arts & Libraries, Accountants 258w
Public libraries 377w
Public libraries, Contracts for services 376-7w
Public libraries, Cost effectiveness 258w
Public libraries, Fees & charges 257-8w, 377w, 510w
Public libraries, Management 258w
Public libraries, Ministerial powers 257w
Tate Gallery, Manpower 376w

Fisheries
Government assistance to industry 680w
North Sea 673w

Fishery protection
Expenditure 679w

Fishing quotas
Scotland 514-5w

Fishing vessels
Decommissioning grants 677w
Government grants 677w, 684w
Licensing 679w
Shipping accidents 344-5w
Shipping safety 57w
Submarines 984

Fixed penalties
Water pollution 478w

Flannery, Mr Martin
Questions
Health & Safety Executive, Manpower 711w
Industrial accidents, Factory Inspectorate 710-1w
Industrial health & safety, Chemical industries 663w

Floods
Ealing 79w, 213w

Flynn, Mr Paul
Questions
Badgers, Nature conservation 678w
Business statements 1000-1
Community charge, Wales 3
Cruise missiles, USA 160w
Employment training, Community work 702
Hospital waiting lists, Gwent 9
Land pollution, Radioactivity 981
Official engagements, Rogerstone 229w
Transport of hazardous materials, Explosives 149w

FOE
see Friends of the Earth

Foetal tissue
House of Commons questions 92w
Medical ethics 557-8w
Transplant surgery 555-8w

Foetal Tissue Transplantation Advisory Group Review
555-8w

Food
EC external trade 680-2w
Radioactivity 980-1

Food Act 1984
Questions
Law reform 218w

Food additives
Cancer hazards 413-4w
Genetics 414-5w
Safety standards 723-4w
Slimming 723-4w

Food aid from UK
Aga Khan Foundation 473-4w

Food contamination
Developing countries 980
Emergency planning 138w

Food exports
UK trade with EC 482-3w, 684w

Food hygiene
House of Commons catering 24w

Food industry
EC internal trade 673w

Food labelling
Irradiated food 137w
Slimming 136-7w

Food poisoning
Salmonella 92w

Food standards
665w

Fookes, Miss Janet
Debates etc.
Women, Health (10:06:88) 1142-6
Questions
Chlorofluorocarbons, Ozone layer 481w
Dog collars, Animal cruelty 446w
Haverigg Prison, Drugs 719

Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Debates etc.
Business statements (24:05:88) 204
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (24:05:88) 226-30
Questions
Valleys initiative 5

Football
Hooliganism 193, 286w, 440w
Violence 355w

Foreign & Commonwealth Office
604w
Cash limits 119w
Equal opportunities 238-9w
Government information services 25w, 27w

Foreign & Commonwealth Office—continued
Languages education 465-6w

Foreign companies in UK
Takeovers 110-2w
USA 619-20w

Foreign investment in UK
Northern Ireland 219w
Rowntree 337
Welsh Development Agency 12

Foreign policy
Austria 609w
China 604w
Czechoslovakia 617w
Ethiopia 828-9
France 612-3w, 685w
Human rights 195w, 840
Kampuchea 615w
Kuwait 612w
Mexico 616w
North Korea 196w
Overseas trade 614w
Republic of Ireland 512-3, 615w
South Africa 618w
Southern Africa 463w
Syrian Arab Republic 196w
USSR 607w

Foreign tourists
131w
South East Asia 696w

Foreign trade
111-2w

Forest Windblow Action Committee
491-2w

Forestry
246w
Broadleaved woodlands 19-20w
Farms 431w
Scotland 19-20w
Wales 431w

Forestry Commission
19-20w, 491-2w
Motor sports 251w
Scotland 251w

Forestry grants
19-20w, 383w, 491-2w, 520-1w
Dornoch forest 20-2w
Scotland 194-5w

Forgery
Army in Northern Ireland 551w

Former Ministers
Defence industries 188

Forsyth, Mr Michael, Under-Secretary of State for Scotland
Debates etc.
Maternity services, Moray (10:06:88) 1180-4
Questions
Agricultural workers, Scotland 190-1w
AIDS, Abortion 511w
AIDS, Babies 599w
AIDS, Scotland 511w
Animal diseases, Research 17w
Cereals, Pulses & seeds 15w
Cervical cancer, Scotland 515w
Educational finance, Scotland 323
Elsie Inglis Memorial Maternity Hospital, Hospital closures 721-2w
Farmers, Radioactive fallout 129w
Farmers, Scotland 190w
Fife Health Board, Managers 127w
Fish conservation 653w
Fish conservation, White fish 654w
Fishing quotas, Scotland 514-5w
Health Care International, Official engagements 515-6w
Health service staff, Prosthetics 654w
Herring, Total allowable catches 653w
Hospital length of stay 722w
Hospital waiting lists, Scotland 191w, 516w
Hospitals, Contracts for services 184w

Forsyth, Mr Michael—continued
Hospitals, Motherwell 316
Hospitals, Scotland 190w, 511-2w, 516-7w
Industrial development, Renfrew 186w
Languages education, Educational exchanges 247-9w
Leukaemia, Dounreay 600-1w
Lothian Regional Council, School buildings 250w
Maternity services, Moray 600w
Maternity services, Rural areas 186-7w
Medical profession, Audit 189w
Mental illness, Scotland 246-8w
National Farmers' Union of Scotland, Official engagements 186w
NHS, Ayrshire 187w
NHS finance, Scotland 16w
Nuclear accidents, Scottish Office 520w
Nurses, Pay settlements 120-1w
Occupational pensions, Social security benefits overpayment 17w
Patients, Scottish health boards 522w
Patients' transport, Scotland 189-90w
Patients' transport, Western Isles Health Board 189w
Prescriptions, Scotland 128-9w
Private health services, Hospital beds 188w
Private health services, Scotland 518w
Prosthetics, NHS 654w
Prosthetics, Scotland 513w
Pupil-teacher ratios, Scotland 323
Ruchill Hospital, Hospital closures 188w
Schools, Scotland 185-6w, 600w
Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, Government grants to voluntary organisations 601w
Scottish health boards, Expenditure 246w, 253w
Scottish health boards, Finance 186w
Scottish health boards, Managers 128w
Scottish health boards, NHS finance 307-8
Scottish health boards, Rates & rating 17-8w
Scottish Trades Union Congress, Official engagements 363w
Secondary education, Scotland 322-3
Student grants, Scotland 253w
Surgery, Death 361w
Technical & vocational education initiative, Scotland 364w

Forsythe, Mr Clifford
Questions
Community charge, Northern Ireland 330w
Land drainage, Government grants 381-2w
Land drainage, Nature conservation 381-2w
Local Enterprise Development Unit, Northern Ireland 510
Lough Neagh, Government grants 381-2w
Lough Neagh, Land drainage 380w
Lough Neagh, Sites of special scientific interest 380-1w
Lough Neagh, Special protection areas 380w
Water supply industry, Bye laws 482w
Water supply industry, Orders & regulations 226w

Fort William
452w

Forth, Mr Eric
Debates etc.
Business statements (24:05:88) 202
"Developments in the European Community Six Monthly Report" (26:05:88) 540
Recess motions, Spring (25:05:88) 363
Scottish Bus Group, Privatisation (24:05:88) 209
Questions
Arms control negotiations 715
Average earnings, Scotland 314
Business statements 995
International organisations 616w
South Africa, Political prisoners 826
Vacancies 499w

Foulkes, Mr George
Debates etc.
Community charges register, House of Commons questions (23:05:88) 22
"Developments in the European Community Six Monthly Report" (26:05:88) 538, 570, 586-92, 596, 597
Scottish Bus Group, Privatisation (24:05:88) 213
Questions
Air force, Air accidents 188
Aircrew, Training 661w
Channel Islands, Employment discrimination 167w
Chile, Referenda 830-1
Church of Scotland, Prime Minister 14
Community charges register, Scotland 250w
Europassport, Isle of Man 640w
Fish conservation 653w
Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974 708
Isle of Man, EC internal trade 639-40w
Legal aid, Scotland 655-6w
NHS, Ayrshire 187w
Nuclear disarmament, Verification 24-5w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing, Sellafield 631w
Plutonium, Air freight transport 628w
Plutonium, Transport of radioactive materials 631w
Radiation hazards, Leukaemia 986
Rowntree, Unemployment 330-1
Scottish Legal Aid Board, Complaints 656w
Scottish Legal Aid Board, Expenditure 656w
Scottish Legal Aid Board, Manpower 656w
Tucano aircraft, Defence expenditure 322w
Vietnamese refugees, Hong Kong 643w

Fountain Forestry
19-20w

Fowler, Rt Hon Norman, Secretary of State for Employment
Debates etc.
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (24:05:88) 220-1, 275, 283-7
Questions
Cash limits, Dept of Employment 132-3w
Employment, EC countries 705-6
Employment, Takeovers 706
Employment training 496w
Hard core unemployed, Industrial training 704
Hard core unemployed, Northern Ireland 703
Hard core unemployed, Northern region 703-4
Hard core unemployed, South East region 702-3
Hard core unemployed, Young people 702-3
Inner city school compacts, Government assistance 711
Inner city school compacts, Government grants 710
Inner city school compacts, School leaving 711
Inner city school compacts, Vocational guidance 710-1
Social security abuse, Tax evasion 711-2
Social security abuse, West Midlands 711
Unemployment 706

Foxley Wood
Planning inquiries 635w

France
Finlay, Ian Hamilton 618w
Foreign policy 612-3w, 685w

Franks, Mr Cecil
Questions
McDonald Wheeler Fund Management, Company investigations 697w

Fraser, Mr John
Questions
Exceptional needs payments, Lambeth 144w, 214-5w
Police raids, Brownie's Health Club 377w

Fraser, Mr John—continued
Social security benefits, Administrative delays 215w

Fraud
Fetlar 251w

Free movement of labour
Nurses 270w

Free school meals
Durham 165w
Leicestershire 165-6w, 234-5w

Freeman, Mr Roger, Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces
Debates etc.
Rescue services, RAF Leuchars (23:05:88) 176-8
Questions
Air force, Air accidents 188, 540-1w
Aircrew, Training 661w
Armed forces, Community charge 39w, 162w
Armed forces, Ethnic monitoring 154w
Armed forces casualties 390w
Armed forces casualties, Aids for handicapped 389w
Armed forces casualties, Clothing 390w
Armed forces casualties, Complaints 390w
Armed forces casualties, Departmental correspondence 389w
Armed forces casualties, Military ceremonies 390w
Armed forces deployment, Rescue services 554-5w
Armed forces deployment, Wales 38w
Armed forces medical services 546w
Armed forces medical services, Defence 546w
Armed forces pensions, Armed forces casualties 389w
Armed forces storage depots, Safety measures 159w
Armed forces training, Devon 181
Armed forces training, P & O 324-5w
Armed forces training, South Africa 324w
Armed forces women, Maternity leave 387w
Army, A345 554w
Army, Intimidation 549-50w
Army bases, RAF Dishforth 179
Army in Northern Ireland, Charities 389w
Army in Northern Ireland, Forgery 551w
Artillery, Defence procurement 387w
AWACS, RAF Waddington 708w
BAOR, Military vehicles 388w
Bramley Camp, Housing construction 152w
"British Defence Policy 1988-89" 326w
Chipmunk aircraft, Air force 542-3w
Chipmunk aircraft, Armed forces training 542w
COD Donnington, Fires 157-8w
Connaught barracks, Historic buildings 41-2w
Courts martial, Cory, Major 325w
Defence contracts, Military vehicles 388w
Defence land, Motor sports 326w
Defence land, Property Services Agency 551w
Equal opportunities, Ministry of Defence 389w
Firing ranges, Dartmoor National Park 180
Glenmoriston Estates, Defence 159w
Harrier aircraft, Air accidents 553-4w
Helicopters, Dalmally 391w
Helicopters, Low flying 390-1w
HMS Sturdy, Inquiries 660w
Jet aircraft, Air accidents 541-2w
Jet Provost aircraft, Air force 544w
Joint Services Medical Planning Committee 546w
Low flying, Air accidents 541w
Low flying, Air force 541w
Low flying, Compensation 156w
Low flying, Military aircraft 156w, 158w
Marchwood military port, Merchant ships 387-8w
Marchwood military port, Ships 387-8w

Freeman, Mr Roger—continued
Military aircraft, Air accidents 39w
Military aircraft, Aircraft noise 158-9w
Military aircraft, Exhibitions 159w
Military exercises, Glasgow Airport 326w
Ministry of Defence, BBC 325-6w
Ministry of Defence, Insurance 187
P & O, Industrial training 391w
Radio engineering, Rugby 555w
Radio frequencies, Health hazards 555w
RAF Feltwell, Satellites 540w
RAF Greenham Common, Compulsory purchase 549w
RAF Greenham Common, Planning permission 549w
Redtop missiles, Armed forces training 543w
Rescue services 153w
Rescue services, Helicopters 153w
Royal Army Veterinary Corps, Dogs 157w
Sea King helicopters, Defence procurement 156w
Sea rescue 153w
Sea rescue, Air force bases 153w
Soldiers' & Airmen's Scripture Readers' Association, Official engagements 158w
Tanks, Defence procurement 387w
Tornado aircraft, Air accidents 323w, 542w
Tornado aircraft, RAF St Athan 390w
Ulster Defence Regiment, Departmental correspondence 40w

French, Mr Douglas
Questions
Charities 286w
Glue sniffing, Advisory services 561-2w
Glue sniffing, Death 144w
Intoxicating Substances (Supply) Act 1985, Prosecutions 169w
Intoxicating Substances (Supply) Act 1985, Punishment 169w
Office of Population Censuses & Surveys, Operating Costs 421w
Road tax, Tax evasion 197-8w

Friends of the Earth
Official engagements 222w

Furniture
Fire prevention 179-80w
Fire regulations 180-2w, 244-5w
Fires 179-80w

Furs
Farm diversification scheme 683w

Further education
Northern Ireland 31w

Further education teachers
Employment discrimination 458w
Northern Ireland 458w
Pay 341-2w

FUW
see Farmers' Union of Wales

Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Debates etc.
Departmental correspondence (07:06:88) 735
Questions
Low pay, Prosecutions 395-6w
Nicaragua, Official engagements 615w

Gaelic language
Curriculum 31w
HM Inspectorate of Schools 332w
Languages education 31w
Northern Ireland 30-1w
Professional qualifications 30w
Sinn Fein 120w
Teacher training 30-1w

Galbraith, Mr Sam
Questions
Chief Medical Officer for Scotland, Public appointments 189w
Fish farming, Pollution control 679w
Forestry 246w
Health Care International, Official engagements 515-6w

Galbraith, Mr Sam—continued
Health Care International, Private hospitals 515w
Health service staff, Prosthetics 654w
Hospital waiting lists, Scotland 516w
Hospitals, Scotland 190w, 511-2w, 516-7w
Medical profession, Audit 189w
Mental illness, Scotland 246-8w
NHS, Expenditure 200w
NHS, Scotland 346w
NHS finance, Scotland 16w
Patients, Scottish health boards 522w
Patients' transport, Scotland 189-90w
Patients' transport, Western Isles Health Board 189w
Private health services, Hospital beds 188w, 213w
Private health services, Scotland 518w
Private hospitals, Wales 287-8w
Prosthetics, NHS 561w, 654w
Prosthetics, Scotland 513w
Ruchill Hospital, Hospital closures 188w
Scottish health boards, Expenditure 246w
Scottish health boards, NHS finance 307-8
Scottish Office, Civil service manpower 120w
Scottish Trades Union Congress, Official engagements 363w
Surgery, Death 361w
Type 23 frigates, Computer applications 155w

Gale, Mr Roger
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 743-7, 760
Questions
Set-aside schemes 675w

Galloway, Mr George
Questions
Cervical cancer, Scotland 515w
Community charges register, Scotland 185w
Imports, Israel 690-2w
Kerb crawling, Glasgow 513w
Mandela, Nelson, Official visits 617w
Occupied territories, Human rights 827-8
Prostitution, Glasgow 514w
South Africa, Donnelly, Susan 27w, 465w
Type 23 frigates, Computer applications 155w

Garages & petrol stations
Alcoholic drinks 439w
Lead free petrol 82w
Prosecutions 150-1w
Wales 439w

Gardiner, Mr George
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 772-4
Questions
Dental charges exemptions, Departmental forms 580w
M25, Road damage 629-30w
Road construction, Contracts 629w
Road construction, Road damage 628-30w

Garel-Jones, Mr Tristan, Vice-Chamberlain of Her Majestys Household
Debates etc.
Rowntree (08:06:88) 878

Garrett, Mr John
Debates etc.
Property Services Agency (25:05:88) 344
Rowntree (08:06:88) 888-9
Questions
Defence research, Privatisation 548-9w
Rowntree, Takeovers 331-2

Gas Consumers' Council
693w

Gas disconnections

693w

Gases
Tipping of waste 736w

Gatwick Airport
343w
Airport security 696w
Military exercises 708-9w

GCE A level
713-4
Bolton 342w

GCHQ
see Government Communications Headquarters

Gee, Robert
Shipping accidents 590w

Genetic engineering
Livestock 218w, 681w

Genetics
Carbadox 414-5w
Food additives 414-5w
Immigration controls 278w, 643w

Geriatric patients
Mental patients 565w

Geriatrics
Health services (24:05:88) 300-6

Gibb, Francis
127w

Gibraltar
Army 661w
Bomb disposal 162-4w
IRA 119w, 164w, 331w, 346w, 465w, 661w
Special Air Service 985
Television programmes 331w

Gill, Mr Christopher
Questions
Hotels, Government grants 502w
Pigmeat 684w

Glasgow
Kerb crawling 513w
Prostitution 514w
Social security abuse 132w

Glasgow Airport
Military exercises 326w

Glasgow University
108-9w

Glasvey
Adult training centres 31w

Glaucoma
415w

Glen Garry
Radio frequencies 37w

Gleneyre & Burnside Children's Home
Sexual offences 35-6w

Glenmoriston Estates
Defence 159w

Glenrothes
Public sector housing 124w
Public sector housing sales 123-5w

Glenrothes Development Corporation
124w
Quality Street Housing Association 123w

Gloucester United Schools Charity
286w

Glue sniffing
Advisory services 561-2w
Death 144w

Godman, Dr Norman A
Debates etc.
Scottish Bus Group, Privatisation (24:05:88) 213
Shipbuilding, River Clyde (27:05:88) 631-5

Godman, Dr Norman A—continued
Questions
Cairngorms, Lifts 121-2w
Cairngorms, Nature conservation 121-2w
Cairngorms, Road construction 121w
Cairngorms, World Heritage Convention 121w
Fish farming, Pesticides 975-6

Golding, Mrs Llin
Questions
Food labelling, Slimming 136-7w
Slimming, Food additives 723-4w

Goodlad, Mr Alastair
Questions
A49, Traffic lights 173w

Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Debates etc.
Women, Health (10:06:88) 1171-3

Gordon, Ms Mildred
Debates etc.
Housing (23:05:88) 39
Housing Bill, Rep (09:06:88) 1051
Women, Health (10:06:88) 1161, 1172
Questions
Chemical weapons, USSR 157w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Contracts 307w
Official engagements, Canary Wharf 229w

Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Debates etc.
Girobank, Privatisation (07:06:88) 727
Housing Bill, Rep (09:06:88) 1050, 1053
Women, Health (10:06:88) 1129, 1133-7

Gould, Mr Bryan
Debates etc.
Girobank, Privatisation (07:06:88) 721-2
Rover Group (08:06:88) 900-7, 909, 937
Rowntree (08:06:88) 850-6, 857
Questions
Rowntree, Takeovers 327-8

Government assistance
Breast feeding 594w
Business 510
Harland & Wolff 503
Health & Safety Executive 709
Inner city school compacts 711
NHS complaints 578w
Scottish & Newcastle Breweries 321
Youth training scheme 704

Government assistance to industry
Airbuses 370-1w, 429w
Fisheries 680w

Government Bills
712-3w
Commons amendments 166w

Government buildings
Greater London 115w

Government Communications Headquarters
253-4w
Lie detectors 195-6

Government data network
446w, 529w
Community charges register 480w
Computer privacy 529-30w
Cost effectiveness 530w
Intelligence services 446w

Government departments
Disclosure of information 686w
Personal records 529w
Property transfer 703-6w
Vacant land 102w

Government grants
BBC external services 466w
Cyclotron Trust 565w
Fishing vessels 677w, 684w
Hotels 502w
Inner city school compacts 710
Land drainage 381-2w

Government grants—continued
Lough Neagh 381-2w
Northern Ireland 381-2w
Racial disadvantage 437-8w
Tourism 131w
Training 504w
Walker Park Newcastle 76-7w

Government grants to local authorities
Brent 279w

Government grants to voluntary organisations
Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations 601w

Government information services
Foreign & Commonwealth Office 25w, 27w

Government research establishments
Dept of Trade & Industry 429-30w

Government responses
Local Government Practices & Procedures Inquiry 651w

Gow, Mr Ian
Debates etc.
Girobank, Privatisation (07:06:88) 725
Housing (23:05:88) 48-50, 61
Housing Bill, Rep (09:06:88) 1006
Property Services Agency (25:05:88) 345
Questions
Business statements 992
Foreign policy, Human rights 840
Redundant churches 14-5w

Gower, Sir Raymond
Questions
Planning appeals, Wales 46w
Unemployment, Wales 11
Water pollution, Wales 4

Graham, Mr Thomas
Questions
Angola, Overseas aid 612w
Chemical Defence Establishment, USSR 153-4w
Community charge, Scotland 363-4w
Forestry, Broadleaved woodlands 19-20w
Forestry grants, Dornoch forest 20-2w
Hospital length of stay 722w
Housing benefits, Renfrew 412-3w
Invalid care allowances, Renfrew 418w
Invalidity benefits, Renfrew 417w
Scottish health boards, NHS finance 307
Sugar refineries, EC action 675-6w
War pensions, Renfrew 418w
Youth unemployment, Renfrew 363-4w

Grampian
Community charges register 311

Grampian Health Board
(10:06:88) 1177-84

Grandparents
Children in care (27:05:88) 670-6

Grant, Sir Anthony
Debates etc.
Arnold, RC, Compensation (07:06:88) 819-21
Questions
Business statements 522

Grazing land
Set-aside schemes 675w, 973-4

Greater London
Air routes 55-6w
Air safety 282w
Building industry 320-2w
Building sites 509w
Employment 500w
Firearms 380w
Government buildings 115w
Homelessness 313w, 712-3
Housing construction 731w
Land use 731w
Offices 62-3w
Pirate radio stations 112-3w
Social Security Commissioners 626w
Youth unemployment 503w

Greater Manchester
Alcoholic drinks 379w

Greater Manchester Residuary Body
70w

Green, John Francis
36-7w

Green pound
678w, 976-7
Wales 405w

Greencroft Hostel Deeside
Mentally handicapped 47w

Greenway, Mr Harry
Questions
Burnage School Manchester, Inquiries 13w
Business statements 523, 999
Dog wardens, Local government expenditure 478-9w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 693w
Floods, Ealing 79w, 213w
Heathrow Airport, Railway network 281w
Horses, Agriculture 977-8
Housing construction, Ealing 648w
Housing investment programmes, Ealing 116w
Hume, Donald, Mental patients 267w
Income tax 699-700w
Inner city school compacts, School leaving 711
Local government borrowing, Ealing 481-2w
Local government finance, Pension funds 117w
Local government pensions, Investment 311w
Lotteries, NHS 447w
Moore, Thomas Connolly, Mental patients 267w
New businesses 429-30w
Official engagements 230w, 475w
Perivale underpass, Land drainage 454w
Pupil-teacher ratios, Scotland 323
Skillcentres, Perivale 314w

Greenway, Mr John
Debates etc.
Rowntree (25:05:88) 493-5, (08:06:88) 883-5
Questions
Agricultural land, Land use 682w
Alcohol & crime, Police 714

Gregory, Mr Conal
Debates etc.
Rowntree (25:05:88) 496, (08:06:88) 865-8
Questions
Agricultural marketing, Management 263w
Customs officers, Manpower 527w
Dept of Trade & Industry, Switzerland 242w
Rowntree, Takeovers 328-9
Switzerland, Law reports 24w
Takeovers, Switzerland 242w

Gregory, Derrick
Malaysia 466w

Grenada
Human rights 196w

Griffiths, Sir Eldon
Debates etc.
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Rep (23:05:88) 91-2, 95-6, 98, 108, 111-3, 149-50, 167
Questions
Business statements 991-2
Tax burden, Personal income 52w

Griffiths, Mr Nigel
Debates etc.
South Africa, BBC (08:06:88) 898-9
Questions
Central America, Peace negotiations 605w
Community charge 305w
Community charge, Pensioners 79w
Fish conservation, White fish 654w
Housing standards, Scotland 318
Income tax, Tax rates & bands 52-4w

Griffiths, Mr Nigel—continued
Job training scheme, Per capita costs 597w
Ministry of Defence, BBC 325-6w
Tax yields 52w

Griffiths, Mr Peter
Debates etc.
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Rep (23:05:88) 93

Griffiths, Mr Win
Questions
Aids for handicapped, Wales 13
European Investment Bank, Local government borrowing 537-9w
Housing benefits, Expenditure 412w
Housing benefits, Social security reform 560w
Languages education 432w
Languages education, Educational exchanges 247-9w, 398-9w, 457-8w
Road traffic, Road accidents 174-6w
Social Security Commissioners, Greater London 626w
Water pollution, Pollution control 307w

Griffiths Committee
see Community Care Review

Grist, Mr Ian, Under-Secretary of State for Wales
Debates etc.
Housing Bill, Rep (09:06:88) 1011-103 passim
Questions
AIDS, Abortion 400w
AIDS, Babies 400w
AIDS, Mothers 400w
AIDS, Wales 399w
Aids for handicapped, Wales 13
Ambulance services, Wales 294-5w
Blood transfusion services, Wales 10-1
Building repairs, Wales 297w
Cardiff Bay Development Corporation 44w
Community charge, Farmers 406w
Community charge, Wales 2-3, 48-9w
Compulsorily detained mental patients, Wales 294-5w
Council house sales, Wales 6-7
Council house waiting lists, Wales 44w
Council housing, Wales 7
Death rate, Wales 407w
District health authorities, Transport costs 294w
District health authorities, Wales 289-92w
Greencroft hostel Deeside, Mentally handicapped 47w
Gwynedd Health Authority 9-10
Handicapped pupils, Physiotherapy 200w
Handicapped students, Access to buildings 200w, 202w
Health services finance, Wales 9, 431w
Homelessness, Gwynedd 286w
Homelessness, Wales 99w
Hospital admissions, Mentally ill 47w
Hospital admissions, Wales 47w
Hospital waiting lists, Gwent 9, 99w
Houses, Wales 409w
Housing, Clwyd 287-8w
Housing, Wales 7-8
Housing amenities, Wales 100w
Housing construction, Wales 46w, 99-100w
Housing standards, Cynon Valley 45w
Housing starts, Wales 44w
Local government expenditure, Wales 287-8w
Mental hospitals, Hospital closures 400-2w
National Rivers Authority, Wales 4, 408-9w
NHS, Expenditure 200w
NHS finance, Wales 295w
Nuclear accidents, Sellafield 45w
Nurses, Pay settlements 47w, 407w
Office of Water Regulation, Wales 200w
Pay beds, Wales 291-4w
Planning appeals, Wales 46w
Private health services, Wales 291w
Private hospitals, Wales 287-8w
Rate support grants, Torfaen Borough Council 403-4w

Grist, Mr Ian—continued
Rivers, Wales 199w
Slums, Wales 100w
Speech therapists, Wales 294w
Structure plans, Clwyd 6
Water charges, Wales 199w
Water pollution, Wales 4, 296w
Welsh Water Authority, Expenditure 199-200w
Welsh Water Authority, Manpower 200w

Grocott, Mr Bruce
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 800-2
Recess motions, Spring (25:05:88) 384-7
Questions
COD Donnington, Fires 157-8w
Employment, EC countries 705-6
Haverigg Prison, Prison overcrowding 719

Grylls, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
Girobank, Privatisation (07:06:88) 724
Rowntree (08:06:88) 872-4
Questions
Rowntree, Takeovers 331

Guatemala
Human rights 614w

Guatemala accord
605w

Guildford
Bombings 445w

Guinness
Company investigations 179w

Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn, Minister of State for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Questions
Agricultural land, Conservation 598w
Agricultural land, EC countries 386w
Agriculture, EC internal trade 673w
Agriculture, Exports 676-8w
Agriculture, Land use 673w
Beam trawlers, Licensing 678w
Farm diversification scheme 487-8w, 677w
Farm woodland scheme, Broadleaved woodlands 383w
Farms 386-7w
Fish conservation, Sea pollution 681w
Fish farming, Pesticides 975-6
Fish farming, Pollution 974-5
Fish farming, Pollution control 679w
Fish farming, Research 975
Fisheries, Government assistance to industry 680w
Fisheries, North Sea 673w
Fishery protection, Expenditure 679w
Fishing vessels, Decommissioning grants 677w
Fishing vessels, Government grants 677w, 684w
Fishing vessels, Licensing 679w
Food, Radioactivity 980-1
Food industry, EC internal trade 673w
Furs, Farm diversification scheme 683w
Hill livestock allowances, Marginal land 385w
Horses, Agriculture 977-8
International Whaling Commission, Official engagements 490w
Land pollution, Radioactivity 981
Nature Conservancy Council, Official engagements 678w
Nitrates, Pollution control 263w
Salmon, Agricultural research 263w
Sea Fish Industry Authority, Official engagements 682w
Sewage, Pollution control 136w
Sheep, Radioactivity 981
Sheep meat 671-3w
Tenant Farmers' Association, Official engagements 682w
Waste disposal, Irish Sea 136w
Wetlands, Somerset 487w
White fish, Lowestoft 138w

Gun sports
Palace of Westminster 476w

Gwent
Hospital waiting lists 9, 99w

Gwynedd
Homelessness 286w
Housing 287-8w

Gwynedd Health Authority
9-10
Expenditure 291-2w

Habitual offenders
Leicester Prison 278w
Litter 639w

Hamilton
Council house sales 16w

Hamilton, Mr Neil
Debates etc.
Girobank, Privatisation (07:06:88) 723
Rowntree (08:06:88) 976-80
Questions
House of Fraser, Company investigations 426w
Northern Ireland Prison Service, Cost effectiveness 461-2w
Togo, Official visits 617w

Hamilton District Council
16w

Hampshire
Unemployment 498w

Hampson, Dr Keith
Debates etc.
Property Services Agency (25:05:88) 346

Handicap benefits
574w
Expenditure 559w
Income support 575-6w
Prader-Willi syndrome 593w
Social security benefits rules 574w

Handicapped
574-5w
Availability for work 707-8
Concessionary television licences 697w
Ogwr valley 13
Restart programme 707

Handicapped children
Deaf 95w

Handicapped pupils
Physiotherapy 200w
Special education 201w
Wales 200w

Handicapped students
Access to buildings 200w, 202w
Wales 200w, 202w

Handicapped workers
Early retirement 711w
Employment services 504w
Employment training 28w
Home Office 169w
Job release scheme 393w
Remploy 394-6w
Sheltered employment 394-6w
Unemployment 506w

Hanley, Mr Jeremy
Questions
House of Commons broadcasting, Television 367w
Opposition parties, Finance 104-5w

Hannam, Mr John
Questions
Industrial health & safety, Legionnaires' disease 482w
Influenza 558w

Hard core unemployed
499w
Employment services 506w
Industrial training 704

Hard core unemployed—continued
Northern Ireland 703
Northern region 703-4
South East region 702-3
Young people 702-3

Hardy, Mr Peter
Questions
Employment schemes, Social security reform 506-7w
Housing benefits, Enterprise allowance scheme 215w
Planning permission, Opencast mining 117w
Sea rescue, Air force bases 153w

Hargreaves, Mr Ken
Debates etc.
Housing (23:05:88) 44-5
Questions
Access to Parliament, Weather 477w
Poland, Official engagements 615-6w

Harland & Wolff
502-3, (27:05:88) 641-50
Government assistance 503
Official engagements 330w

Harman, Ms Harriet
Debates etc.
Women, Health (10:06:88) 1118, 1121-2, 1133, 1143, 1163
Questions
North Peckham task force, Costs 690w
Portage, Pre-school education 11w

Harmonisation of legislation
Company law 428w

Harrier aircraft
Air accidents 553-4w

Harris, Mr David
Questions
Beam trawlers, Licensing 678w
Rio Tinto Zinc, Cornwall 635-6w
Unemployment, South West region 498w

Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 754-62
Questions
Low pay, Wealth distribution 983

Haverigg Prison
Drug abuse 641-2w
Drugs 719
Prison escapes 641-2w, 717-20
Prison overcrowding 719
Prison staff 717-9
Prisoners 642w, 719
Security 641-2w

Hawk jet trainer aircraft
Costs 543w

Hayes, Mr Jerry
Debates etc.
Business statements (24:05:88) 203
Questions
Arts council grants 256w

Haynes, Mr Frank
Questions
Armed forces storage depots, Safety measures 159w
Arms control negotiations, East West relations 714-5
Hong Kong, China 604w
Nature Conservancy Council, Official engagements 678w
Public libraries 510w

Hayward, Mr Robert
Debates etc.
Rover Group (08:06:88) 902, 903, 931-2
Questions
Enterprise allowance scheme, Efficiency scrutinies 711-2w
Industrial health & safety, EC countries 709

Hayward, Mr Robert—continued
Official engagements, Avon 103w
Unemployment 499w

Hazardous materials
Animal feed 683w

Hazardous wastes
Ports 303w
Transport of hazardous materials 480w

Headteachers
Early retirement 689-90w
Recruitment 690w

Health
Social class 559-60w
Women 672w, (10:06:88) 1111-76

Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974
Questions
395w, 708

Health & Safety at Work (Tobacco Smoking) Bill 1987/88
Questions
708

Health & Safety Commission
see Health & Safety Executive

Health & Safety Executive
482w, 504-5w, 509-10w
Government assistance 709
Manpower 711w

Health Care International
Official engagements 515-6w
Private hospitals 515w

Health education
First aid (27:05:88) 677-82

Health hazards
Blandford fly 411w
Radio frequencies 555w
Waste disposal 652w

Health service ancillary staff
Manpower 265-8w

Health Service Commissioner
578w, 725w

Health service staff
Medical profession 84-6w
Prosthetics 654w
Welsh language 294w

Health services
Geriatrics (24:05:88) 300-6
Northern Ireland 330w
Per capita costs 572w
Portavogie 30w

Health services finance
Wales 9, 431w

Health Services Information Steering Group
217w

Health warnings
Tobacco advertising 411-2w

Hearing aids
NHS 591-2w
VAT 373w

Heathcoat-Amory, Mr David
Debates etc.
Property Services Agency (25:05:88) 346
Questions
Church buildings 14w
Horticulture, Dumping 982
Mutual & balanced force reductions, Arms control negotiations 615w

Heathrow Airport
Entry clearances 833-4
Perry Oaks sludge works 281w
Private sector 283w
Railway network 281w, 283w

Heddle, Mr John
Debates etc.
Housing (23:05:88) 52-4
Housing Bill, Rep (09:06:88) 1037, 1039
Railway accidents, Colwich junction (09:06:88) 1104-7

Heddle, Mr John—continued
Questions
Commonhold land, Land ownership & tenure 9w
Derelict land grants, Staffordshire 66w
Housing & handicapped 303w
Housing standards, Housing compensation 60w
Local authorities, Barter trading 115w
Local government finance, Capital investment 117w

Heffer, Mr Eric S
Debates etc.
"Developments in the European Community Six Monthly Report" (26:05:88) 541
Housing (23:05:88) 34-5
Questions
Chile, Human rights 840
Human rights, USA 715-6
Merchant ships, Armed conflict 153w

Helicopters
Dalmally 391w
Defence procurement 555w
Low flying 390-1w
Northern Ireland 512
Rescue services 153w

Henderson, Mr Doug
Debates etc.
Rowntree (08:06:88) 874-6
Questions
Ammunition, Expenditure 157w
Rowntree, Unemployment 333

Hereditament maps
Public Record Office 254w

Herring
Total allowable catches 653w

Hertfordshire
Electorate 415-6w

Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Debates etc.
Property Services Agency (25:05:88) 342-3

Heveningham hall
356w

HI-CAMP programme
Defence research 548w

Hicks, Mr Robert
Questions
Middle East, Peace negotiations 827
Milk Marketing Board, Official engagements 972-3
New Zealand, Ethnic groups 118w

Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L
Debates etc.
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 394, 412
Questions
Honours 367-8w
Medals 368w
Parking, Westminster bridge 439w
Parliamentary parking, Parliamentary security 366w

Higginson Committee
see A Level Review Committee

Higher education
Science & technology 11w

Higher education administration
Veterinary services 108-9w

Higher pensioner premium
Pensioners 89w

Highland Health Board
Patients' transport 189w

Highlands of Scotland
Community charges register 184w

Hill livestock allowances
Marginal land 385w

Hinchliffe, Mr David
Questions
Chemical Defence Establishment, USSR 154w

Hind, Mr Kenneth
Debates etc.
Girobank, Privatisation (07:06:88) 728
Property Services Agency (25:05:88) 348
Scottish Bus Group, Privatisation (24:05:88) 210
Questions
British Coal Corporation, External financing limits 231-3w
Cash limits, Serious Fraud Office 172w
Defence 186
Defence Export Services Organisation 152w
Ferries, Fires 200
Unemployment, Scotland 319-20

Historic buildings
Connaught Barracks 41-2w
Direct labour departments 252w
Official engagements 222-3w
Scotland 252w

Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission for England
Dover Castle 310w
Official engagements 225w

Historic Buildings Council for Scotland
252w

Historic Wrecks Advisory Committee
150w

HL
see House of Lords

HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland
191w

HM Factory Inspectorate
see Factory Inspectorate

HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland
see HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland

HM Inspectorate of Schools
Gaelic language 332w

HMI
see HM Inspectorate of Schools

HMS Hermione
Inquiries 708w

HMS Sturdy
Inquiries 660w

Hodgson Committee
see Civil Justice Review

Hogg, Mr Douglas, Under-Secretary of State at the Home Office
Debates etc.
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Rep (23:05:88) 81-8, 95-9, 116-26, 156-9, 168-9
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 420-3, 425, 429-30, 432-4, 441-3, 446, 449, 457-60
Questions

Hogg, Mr Douglas—continued
Access to Parliament, Parking 106w
Alcoholic drinks, Greater Manchester 379w
Alcoholic drinks, Young people 166-7w
Breathalysers, Police powers 151w
Channel Islands, Employment discrimination 167w
Dog collars, Animal cruelty 446w
Downing Street, Members 445-6w
Ferrier, Charles, Prison escapes 444w
Firearms, Advertising controls 3w
Firearms, Greater London 380w
Firearms certificates, Clubs 280w
Firearms certificates, EC action 105-6w
Garages & petrol stations, Alcoholic drinks 439w
Gatwick Airport, Airport security 696w
Haverigg Prison, Drug abuse 641-2w
Haverigg Prison, Drugs 719
Haverigg Prison, Prison escapes 717-20
Haverigg Prison, Prison overcrowding 719
Haverigg Prison, Prison staff 719
Haverigg Prison, Prisoners 642w, 719
Haverigg Prison, Security 641-2w
Hooliganism, Football 440w
Immigrant detainees, Prisons 279-80w
Intoxicating Substances (Supply) Act 1985, Prosecutions 169w
Isle of Man, EC internal trade 639-40w
Leeds prison, Prison overcrowding 444-5w
Litter, Fines 445w
Litter, Prosecutions 638-40w
Litter, Railway property 639w
Liverpool Prison, Opticians 171w
Local government constituencies, Welwyn Hatfield 378w
Lonrho, Subsidiary companies 170w
Members' correspondence, Administrative delays 696w
Parking, Westminster bridge 439w
Parole, Northern Ireland 276w
Police, Aircraft 170w
Police, Evidence 170w
Police, Leicestershire 445w
Police, Manpower 439w
Police, Staffordshire 377w
Police civilians 277-8w
Police civilians, Manpower 439-40w
Police firearms, Merseyside 106w
Police interrogation, Tape recorders 171-2w
Police raids, Brownie's Health Club 377w
Prisoners, Ethnic minorities 378w
Prisoners, Eye tests 171w
Prisoners, Mother & baby units 1w, 645w
Prisoners, Opticians 171w
Prisoners on remand 379-80w
Prisoners' transfers, Northern Ireland 275-6w
Prisons, EC countries 446w
Remand in custody 695w
Remand in custody, Administrative delays 695w
Remand in custody, Army bases 695w
Remand in custody, Prison population 694-5w
Remand in custody, Women 275-6w, 695-6w
Ryan, Michael, Firearms certificates 378w
Wandsworth Prison, Industrial disputes 167w
Waste disposal, Convictions 639w
Yorkshire Ripper Case Inquiry 277w

Hogg, Mr Norman
Questions
British Waterways Board, Privatisation 478w
Cruise missiles, USA 179-80
Educational finance, Scotland 323

Holland, Mr Stuart
Questions
Bankruptcy, Building industry 5w
Bankruptcy, Manufacturing industries 4w
Building societies 135w
Building societies, Shares 51w
Corporation tax, Company taxation 531w
Council housing, Housing construction 75w

Holland, Mr Stuart—continued
Housing construction, Local government expenditure 76w
Housing construction, Wales 46w
Immigrant detainees, Prisons 279-80w
Languages education, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 465-6w
Languages education, Treasury 603w
Manufactured goods, Expenditure 51w
Manufacturing industries, Private sector 4w
Retail trade, Companies 5w
VAT registration, Companies 528w

Holloway Prison
2w

Holroyd, Fred
Photographs 36w

Holt, Mr Richard
Debates etc.
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (24:05:88) 259-60, 261, 269, 270
Property Services Agency (25:05:88) 348
Road construction, North East region (25:05:88) 378-9
Scottish Bus Group, Privatisation (24:05:88) 212
Questions
Business statements 991
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Blackpool 411w
Navy, Warships 185
Nursing homes, Private health services 411w
Property Services Agency, Efficiency scrutinies 477w

Holy Loch
Cruise missiles 179-80

Holywell Hospital
645w

Home Grown Cereals Authority
Official engagements 673w, 981

Home Office
Cash limits 379w
Equal opportunities 438-9w
Handicapped workers 169w

Home Robertson, Mr John
Debates etc.
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Rep (23:05:88) 120
Housing (23:05:88) 47
Housing Bill, Rep (09:06:88) 1004-5
Scottish Bus Group, Privatisation (24:05:88) 214, 215
Questions
Animal diseases, Research 17w, 219w
Cereals, Pulses & seeds 15w
Community charge, Religious orders 122w
Defective housing, Scotland 125-7w
Drugs, Prisoners 16-7w
Ferries, Safety standards 150w
Ferries, Scottish islands 124w
Housing standards, Scotland 319
Nicaragua, Peace negotiations 615w
Plants, Certification testing 138-9w

Homelessness
194, 735w
Clwyd 286w
Greater London 313w, 712-3
Gwynedd 286w
Wales 99w
Young people 982

Honduras
Armed forces deployment 837-8

Hong Kong
China 118w, 604w, 834-6
Emigration 834-5
Exhibitions 603w
Ministers' visits abroad 609-10w, 652-3w
Vietnamese refugees 643w, 652-3w

Honours
367-8w

Hood, Mr Jimmy
Questions
Armed forces, Ethnic monitoring 154w
Balance of trade, Manufactured goods 176w
Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation, Privatisation 8-9w
Community charge, Scotland 18w
EC action, Coal 26w
Exchange rates 198w
Foreign trade 111-2w
France, Finlay, Ian Hamilton 618w
Mental patients, Per capita costs 577-8w
Myalgic encephalomyelitis 577w
Myalgic encephalomyelitis, British Medical Association 577w
Myalgic encephalomyelitis, Official engagements 577w
Psychiatry, NHS finance 577w

Hooliganism
Football 193, 286w, 440w

Hordern, Sir Peter
Questions
Public Accounts Commission 15-6
Public Accounts Commission, Costs 16
Public Accounts Commission, Public expenditure 16-7

Hormone treatments
Beef 137w

Horniman Museum
10w

Horses
Agriculture 977-8

Horticulture
Dumping 982

Hospices
Nurses 416-7w

Hospital admissions
Mentally ill 47w
Wales 47w

Hospital beds
Antrim 620w
NHS 269w
Private health services 188w, 213w
Waltham Forest Health Authority 410w

Hospital catering
Fish 270w

Hospital closures
727w
Elsie Inglis Memorial Maternity Hospital 721-2w
Leicester Royal Infirmary 215w
Mental hospitals 400-2w, 665-8w
Ruchill Hospital 188w
St Peter's Hospital, London 726w
Withington Hospital 517

Hospital discharges
Mental patients 563-4w, 669w

Hospital length of stay
722w

Hospital patients
Teaching hospitals 146w

Hospital radio
VAT 527w

Hospital staff
Dentists 579-80w

Hospital visitor benefits
Social security recipients 668-9w

Hospital waiting lists
Dartford & Gravesham Health Authority 217w
Gwent 9, 99w
Information 217w

Hospital waiting lists—continued
Scotland 191w, 516w
Wales 9

Hospitals
Antrim 620w
Construction 315, 516-7w
Contracts for services 184w
Essex 418w
Motherwell 316
NHS & private practice 92-3w
Northern Ireland 645w
Scotland 184w, 190w, 315, 511-2w, 516-7w
Water supply 144w

Hostages
Lebanon 618w

Hostels
Mental hospitals 91w

Hotels
Government grants 502w
Residential care 268-9w

House of Commons accommodation
Cannon Row police station 18

HC broadcasting
Television 367w

House of Commons catering
23w
Food hygiene 24w
Members' facilities 24w

House of Commons debates
Procedure Select Committee 103w

House of Commons division of time
Abortion (Amendment) Bill 1987/88 23w
Public Bills 721w
Speaker's rulings & statements (07:06:88) 735

House of Commons divisions
Speaker's rulings & statements (25:05:88) 461-3, 474-9, 480, 481, (07:06:88) 743, 747

House of Commons procedure
(25:05:88) 371-5
Speaker's rulings & statements (07:06:88) 731

House of Commons questions
Foetal tissue 92w
Housing benefits 95w
Speaker's rulings & statements (23:05:88) 21-2
Welsh Office 8-9

House of Commons Refreshment Department
24w

House of Commons Select Committees
(25:05:88) 371-5

House of Commons times of sittings
712w

House of Fraser
Company investigations 179w, 426w

House of Lords
Parliamentary reform 192
Screening 19

House of Lords debates
Speaker's rulings & statements (24:05:88) 225

House prices
705w

House purchase
Local government services (25:05:88) 349-50
Young people (27:05:88) 621-30

House renovation grants
Expenditure 732-4w

Houses
Wales 409w

Housing
Clwyd 287-8w
Gwynedd 287-8w

Housing—continued
Milton Keynes 357w
Opposition days (23:05:88) 24-79
Planning appeals 356w
Poverty 475w
Public expenditure 702-4w
Scotland 475w
Wales 7-8

Housing amenities
Wales 100w

Housing & handicapped
303w

Housing association grant
68-9w

Housing associations
Local government finance 68-9w
London Docklands 649w

Housing benefits
Civil service manpower 96w
Elderly 253w
Enterprise allowance scheme 215w
Expenditure 412w
House of Commons questions 95w
Managers 96w
Renfrew 412-3w
Rent rebates 574w
Scotland 183w, 253w, 323-4
Social security appeals 96w
Social security recipients 560w
Social security reform 96w, (25:05:88) 366-8, 560-1w
Wales 44w

Housing Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
Rep (09:06:88) 1003-103
Questions
651w

Housing compensation
Housing standards 60w

Housing construction
Bramley Camp 152w
Council housing 75w
Ealing 648w
Greater London 731w
Local government expenditure 76w
National income 733-5w
Wales 46w, 99-100w

Housing Corporation
225w

Housing Defects (Reinstatement Grant) (Amendment of Conditions for Assistance) (Scotland) Order 1988
Debates etc.
(26:05:88) 600

Housing estates
Rushmoor 477w

Housing finance
Housing revenue accounts 225w

Housing insulation
Liverpool 101w

Housing investment programmes
Ealing 116w

Housing revenue accounts
Housing finance 225w

"Housing Scotland's People"
475w

Housing standards
Cynon Valley 45w
Dundee 656-8w
Housing compensation 60w
Official residences 319
Rural areas 43w
Scotland 318-9
Wales 43w, 45w

Housing starts
Wales 44w

Housing stock
306w

Housing subsidies
Expenditure 733-4w

Howard, Mr Michael, Minister of State for Local Government
Questions
Community charge 305w
Community charge, Disclosure of information 304-5w
Community charge, Pensioners 79w, 228w, 305w
Community charge, Price Waterhouse 305w
Community charge, Voluntary social work 735w
Community charge, Voluntary work 305w
Community charge rebates, Pensioners 227-8w
Community charges register, Disclosure of information 479w
Community charges register, Government data network 480w
Environment, EC action 306w
Local government finance, Capital investment 117w
Rates & rating, Consumer expenditure 305-6w
Uniform business rate 354w
Uniform business rate, Community charge 353-4w

Howarth, Mr George
Debates etc.
Housing (23:05:88) 50-2, 58
Housing Bill, Rep (09:06:88) 1016, 1046, 1059-60
Questions
Sheep, Animal breeding 683w

Howarth, Mr Gerald
Questions
Overtime, Manufacturing industries 505w
Republic of Ireland, Foreign policy 608w

Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Questions
China, Foreign policy 604w
Cyprus, Peace negotiations 832-3
East West relations 839
EC Foreign Affairs Council, Official engagements 618-9w
Hong Kong, China 604w, 834-6
Lebanon, Peace keeping operations 828
Middle East, Peace negotiations 618w, 827, 838-9
Middle East, UN resolutions 832
Occupied territories, Human rights 827-8
Occupied territories, Palestine 828, 831-2
Palestine Liberation Organisation, USA 838
Republic of Ireland, Foreign policy 608w
Sudan, Armed conflict 831
UN finances 833
United Nations, Official engagements 831
USA, Official engagements 837-8
USA, Presidential elections 838

Howell, Rt Hon David
Debates etc.
"Developments in the European Community Six Monthly Report" (26:05:88) 558-62, 566
Questions
Income tax assessment, Self-employed 50w
Schedule D income tax, Computers in Government departments 50w
Tax collection, Self-employed 50w
Tax exemption certificates, Self-employed 50w
USA, Presidential elections 838

Howell, Rt Hon Denis
Howell, Rt Hon Denis—continued
Debates etc.
Rowntree (08:06:88) 880-3
Questions
Persian Gulf, Merchant seamen 613w

Howell, Mr Ralph
Questions
Cereals 679-80w
NHS, Land values 89-90w

Howells, Mr Geraint
Debates etc.
"Developments in the European Community Six Monthly Report" (26:05:88) 537, 555-8
Questions
Common sheep meat regime 971-2
Housing standards, Rural areas 43w

Hoyle, Mr Doug
Questions
Business statements 527-8
Chile, Almeyda, Clodomiro 607w
Richmond house 714

HSE
see Health & Safety Executive

Hughes, Mr John
Debates etc.
Rover Group (08:06:88) 930-1
Women, Health (10:06:88) 1160-3
Questions
Multiple sclerosis, Social security benefits rules 573w
Navy 151w
Social security reform, Young offenders 573w

Hughes, Mr Robert
Questions
Ministers, Advertising 686w
NHS, Hospital beds 269w

Hughes, Mr Robert G
Debates etc.
Housing Bill, Rep (09:06:88) 1052
Property Services Agency (25:05:88) 346
Questions
Berlin, East West relations 610w
Business, Information services 710

Hughes, Mr Roy
Debates etc.
Housing Bill, Rep (09:06:88) 1008
Rover Group (08:06:88) 918, 924
Questions
Building repairs, Wales 297w
Community charge, Legislative process 193-4
Homelessness, Wales 99w
Hospital waiting lists, Gwent 99w
Houses, Wales 409w
Housing, Wales 7-8
Housing amenities, Wales 100w
Housing construction, Wales 99-100w
Slums, Wales 100w
Unemployment, Newport 11

Hughes, Mr Sean
Questions
Artillery, Defence procurement 387w
BAOR, Defence equipment 182
BAOR, Military vehicles 388w
Defence contracts, Military vehicles 388w
Eastern Health & Social Services Board, NHS finance 508-9
Marchwood military port, Merchant ships 387-8w
Marchwood military port, Ships 387-8w
Tanks, Defence procurement 387w
Tourist industry, Exchange rates 244w

Hughes, Mr Simon
Debates etc.
Housing (23:05:88) 54-7
Housing Bill, Rep (09:06:88) 1004-102 passim
Questions
Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference, Administration of justice 329w

Hughes, Mr Simon—continued
Consumer credit 637w
Environment protection, Expenditure 587-8w
Housing associations, London Docklands 649w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Public expenditure 650w
Norway, Official engagements 606w
Planning permission, Farms 650w
Population, London Docklands 650-1w
Private rented housing, London Docklands 650w
Private sector housing, London Docklands 649w

Human embryo experiments
Public Bills 556-8w

Human rights
Chile 467w, 829, 840
China 834
Ethiopia 608w
Foreign policy 195w, 840
Grenada 196w
Guatemala 614w
Occupied territories 827-8
Romania 464w
South Africa 825-6
Turkey 836-7
USA 715-6
USSR 25w, 609w

Humberside
Pay 985

Hume, Donald
Mental patients 267w

Hungary
Official engagements 604w, 610-1w

Hunter, Mr Andrew
Questions
Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference 331-2w
Angola, Peace negotiations 612w
Bramley Camp, Housing construction 152w
Cereals, Intervention stocks 680w
Courts martial, Cory, Major 325w
Lesotho, St John's Church Maseru 118-9w
Official engagements, Basingstoke 102w

Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas, Secretary of State for the Home Department
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 747-54
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 410-3
Questions
Bail, Disclosure of information 171w
Cash limits, Home Office 379w
Equal opportunities, Home Office 438-9w
Ethnic groups, Schools 279w
Home Office, Handicapped workers 169w
Immigration, EC action 643-4w
Terrorism, Acquittals 274w
Terrorism, Bail 274w
Terrorism, Remand in custody 274-5w

I spy strangers
(25:05:88) 480

ID Investment Development
Shareholders 356w

ILEA
see Inner London Education Authority

Illegal immigrants
Advanced College of Business & Cultural Studies 441-3w
Clapham 444w
Educational institutions 443-4w

Illsley, Mr Eric
Questions
Chile, Elections 609w
Economic situation, Belfast 333w
Mines & Quarries Act 1954 392w
Mines & Quarries Act 1954, British Coal Corporation 132w

Illsley, Mr Eric—continued
Mines & Quarries Act 1954, National Association Colliery Overmen Deputies Shotfirers 391-2w
Mines & Quarries Act 1954, National Union of Mineworkers 392w
Mining, Law reform 211w
Mining, Orders & regulations 28-9w
NATO Nuclear Planning Group, Military aircraft 154-5w
Official engagements 475w

ILO
see International Labour Organisation

Immigrant detainees
Prisons 279-80w

Immigrants
Church property 13
Standing Order No 20 applications (07:06:88) 732
Tower Hamlets (07:06:88) 732

Immigration
107-8w, 378w
EC action 643-4w

Immigration appeals
Administrative delays 585-6w
Costs 640w

Immigration controls
Administrative delays 833
English language 833
Genetics 278w, 643w
Political refugees 440-2w

Immigration officers
106-7w, 441-3w, 585-6w

Immigration rules
640-1w
Community charge 640w
Overseas students 444w
Social security reform 640w

Import controls
Industrial investment 425-6w

Imports
Capital goods 5w
Coal 518w
Domestic wastes 652w
Israel 690-2w
Sugar 979

Improvement notices
509-10w

Income
Church Commissioners 14-5
Museums & galleries 259-62w
Pay beds 291-4w
Water authorities 66-7w

Income support
Availability for work 575w
Capital rules 273w, 576w
Community care 147w
Handicap benefits 575-6w
Residential care 565-6w
School leaving 269w
Social security benefits rules 670w
Widows 149w
Young people 575w

Income tax
699-700w
Age allowances 198-9w
Married people 530-2w
Tax rates & bands 52-4w, 374w

Income tax assessment
Self-employed 50w

Income tax repayment
PAYE 53w

Independence movements
Ethiopia 829

Independent Living Fund
594w

India
Sikhs 464w

Indian subcontinent
Entry clearances 119w, 833

Industrial accidents
Building industry 319w
Factory Inspectorate 710-1w

Industrial development
Renfrew 186w

Industrial diseases benefits
Pneumoconiosis 417-8w

Industrial disputes
Air traffic control 729-30w
Lost working days 505w
Wandsworth Prison 167w

Industrial health & safety
506w
Building industry 321w, 504-5w, 509-10w
Chemical industries 663w
EC action (26:05:88) 600
EC countries 709
Escalators 316w
Factory Inspectorate 709
Legionnaires' disease 482w
Mining 28-9w
Quarrying 316w
Schools (27:05:88) 677-82

Industrial investment
540w
Import controls 425-6w
Northern region 540w

Industrial production
Manufacturing industries 530w

Industrial relations
Economic League 132w

Industrial safety
Cranes 395w
Penlac quarry 315w

Industrial training
Hard core unemployed 704
P & O 324-5w, 391w

Industrial Tribunals
(24:05:88) 219-98, 509w

Industries
Sterling 524w

Industry
Northern Ireland 454-5w

Industry Matters
454-5w

"Inequalities in Health"
559-60w

INF Treaty
118w, 549w

Infant foods
Child health 727-8w

Infant mortality
Africa 467-73w
District health authorities 140-2w

Inflation
523w
European monetary system 523w

Influenza
558w

Information
Hospital waiting lists 217w

Information services
Business 710
Companies Registration Office (England & Wales) 636w

Information services—continued
Northern Ireland 36w

Ingham, Bernard
Pay 16

Ingram, Mr Adam
Debates etc.
National Engineering Laboratory, Standing Order No 20 applications (08:06:88) 843
Questions
Abercrombie house, Tenancy agreements 735w
Business statements 992
Dept of Trade & Industry, Government research establishments 429-30w
East Kilbride Development Corporation, Public sector housing sales 122w
Fish conservation, Sea pollution 681w
New towns, Scotland 192-4w, 250-1w
New towns, Written questions 250w
New towns development corporations, Public sector housing 518-20w
Overseas Development Administration, Civil service dispersal 186w
Overseas Development Administration, Offices 688w

Inheritance tax
531-2w

Injuries
Baton rounds 285w

Inland Revenue
50w
Consultants 255w
Postal services 255w, 700w

Inner cities initiative
Advertising agencies 134w
Central Office of Information 6w
Departmental publications 134w

Inner city areas
Training Commission 317w

Inner city school compacts
Government assistance 711
Government grants 710
School attendance 710
School leaving 711
Vocational guidance 710-1

Inner London Education Authority
10w

Inquiries
Bombings 445w
Burnage School, Manchester 13w, 625w
Entry clearances 106-7w
HMS Hermione 708w
HMS Sturdy 660w
Railway accidents (09:06:88) 1104-10
Royal Ulster Constabulary 383w

Insurance
Ministry of Defence 187

Insurance Brokers' Registration Council
Financial services 635w

Integrated development operations
Dyfed 46w

Intelligence services
Government data network 446w

Interest rates
705w

Internal migration
South East region 60-2w

International Conference on the Protection of the North Sea
298-9w, 302-3w

International conferences
East West relations 610w
North Sea 298-9w, 302-3w

International cooperation
Defence procurement 160w
Defence research 548w

International Fund for Ireland
621-2w

International Labour Office
see International Labour Organisation

International Labour Organisation
Sex discrimination 313w
Youth employment 313w

International Maritime Organisation
57w, 59w

International organisations
616w

International Tropical Timber Organisation
633-4w

International Whaling Commission
Official engagements 490w

Intervention stocks
483-4w
Butter 674w
Cereals 680w

Interviews
Restart programme 503-4w

Intimidation
Army 549-50w

Intoxicating Substances (Supply) Act 1985
Questions
Prosecutions 169w
Punishment 169w

Invalid care allowances
Northern Ireland 382w
Renfrew 418w

Invalidity benefits
Renfrew 417w

Inverness Prison
191w

Investment
Business 528w
Local government pensions 311w

IRA
643-4w, 985
Darcy, Michael (07:06:88) 733
Gibraltar 119w, 164w, 331w, 346w, 465w, 661w
Northern Ireland 330-1w

Iran
Arms exports 463w

Iran-Iraq war
Arms exports 463w

Iraq
Bombings 613w

Ireland
Army 552w

Irish Republican Army
see IRA

Irish Sea
Waste disposal 136w

Irradiated food
Food labelling 137w

Irvine, Mr Michael
Questions
Scottish assembly 310

Irving, Mr Charles
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 783-5
Questions
Broadmoor Hospital, Land values 83w

Isle of Man
EC internal trade 639-40w
Europassport 640w

Isle of Wight
Police interrogation 171-2w

Israel
Imports 690-2w
Jihad, Abu 26w

Ivory Coast
Official engagements 611w

J Jarvis & Sons
Settle-Carlisle railway 281w

Jack, Mr Michael
Questions
Advanced gas-cooled reactors, Electricity generation 8w
Community charge, Pensioners 228w
Community charge rebates, Pensioners 227-8w
Dairy products, Milk Marketing Board 973
Defence land, Motor sports 326w
Energy conservation, Scotland 172w
Energy consumption 231-2w
Forestry Commission, Motor sports 251w
Income support, Capital rules 273w
Industrial investment, Northern region 540w
Meat & Livestock Commission, Official engagements 674w
Personal income, Pensioners 706-7w
Personal tax allowances, Pensioners 705-6w
Productivity 524w
Self-employed, Scotland 320
Tachographs, Repairs & maintenance 345w
Unemployment, North West region 500w

***Jackson, Mr Robert**, Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science*
Questions
Advisory Council on Science & Technology, Public appointments 432-4w
Higher education, Science & technology 11w
Medical research, Ageing 343w
Medical research, Postgraduate education 12w
Medical research, Student grants 12w
Medical research, Vacancies 12w
Open University, Educational finance 11w
Senile dementia, Research finance 342w
Student unions, Trade union membership 688-9w
Universities Funding Council, Zoological Society of London 235w
University finance 165w
Veterinary services, Higher education administration 108-9w
Welsh language, Departmental publications 341w

Jaguar aircraft
707w
Defence equipment 707w

Janman, Mr Tim
Questions
Defence 984
Defence, Opposition 713
Hard core unemployed, South East region 702-3

Janner, Mr Greville
Debates etc.
Business statements (24:05:88) 204
Questions
Austria, Foreign policy 609w
Business statements 524, 997
Confectionery, Takeovers 334-5
Entry clearances, Heathrow Airport 833-4
Equal opportunities, Attorney-General 447w
Equal opportunities, Dept of Education & Science 234w
Equal opportunities, Dept of Energy 348-9w
Equal opportunities, Dept of the Environment 304w
Equal opportunities, Dept of Trade & Industry 369-70w
Equal opportunities, Dept of Transport 281w
Equal opportunities, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 238-9w
Equal opportunities, Home Office 438-9w
Equal opportunities, Minister for the Civil Service 256w
Equal opportunities, Ministry of Agriculture 262w

Janner, Mr Greville—continued
Equal opportunities, Ministry of Defence 389w
Equal opportunities, Northern Ireland Office 381w
Equal opportunities, Office of Arts & Libraries 257w
Equal opportunities, Scottish office 249w
Equal opportunities, Treasury 254w
Equal opportunities, Welsh Office 397w
Equal Opportunities Commission, Official engagements 503w
Immigration appeals, Costs 640w
Immigration controls, Genetics 643w
Pens, Safety standards 370w
Racial disadvantage, Government grants 437-8w
Redundancy, Textile industry 700
School milk, Leicestershire 234-5w

Japan
Alcoholic drinks duties 690w
Military intelligence 118w
Official engagements 239w
Voluntary restraint agreements 427w

Jeffreys, Alec
278w

Jessel, Mr Toby
Debates etc.
Property Services Agency (25:05:88) 347

Jet aircraft
Air accidents 541-2w

Jet Provost aircraft
Air force 544w

Jihad, Abu
Israel 26w

Job centres
Northern Ireland 327w

Job release scheme
314-5w
Handicapped workers 393w

Job training scheme
507-8w, 661w
Per capita costs 597w
Wales 286-7w

Jobclubs
505w

John, Mr Brynmor
Questions
Civil servants' business appointments, Dept of Education & Science 13w
Civil servants' business appointments, Dept of Employment 29w
Civil servants' business appointments, Dept of Health & Social Security 93-4w
Civil servants' business appointments, Dept of the Environment 77w
Civil servants' business appointments, Dept of Trade & Industry 114-5w
Civil servants' business appointments, Ministry of Agriculture 139w
Civil servants' business appointments, Welsh Office 297w
Hospital admissions, Mentally ill 47w
Hospital admissions, Wales 47w
Welsh Office, Civil service 8

Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Questions
Nuclear weapons, Modernisation 183
Nuclear weapons, USSR 160w

Johnston, Sir Russell
Questions
Community charges register, Highlands of Scotland 184w
Iran, Arms exports 463w
Iran-Iraq war, Arms exports 463w
Scottish assembly 310

Joint Services Medical Planning Committee
546w

Joint strategic target planning staff
Armed forces deployment 544w

Joint ventures
USSR 177-8w

Jones, Mr Barry
Debates etc.
Housing (23:05:88) 60-1
Housing Bill, Rep (09:06:88) 1005
Questions
Caergwrle bypass 688w
Greencroft hostel Deeside, Mentally handicapped 47w
Hard core unemployed, Northern region 703-4
Homelessness, Gwynedd 286w
Housing, Clwyd 287-8w
Local education authorities, Wales 633w
Social security reform, Clwyd 12

Jones, Mr Gwilym
Questions
Cardiff Bay Development Corporation 44w
Community charge, Wales 3
Radioactive waste disposal, Magnox reactors 312w
Tax yields, Regional selective assistance 197w

Jones, Mr Ieuan Wyn
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 785-6
Questions
Agricultural land, EC countries 386w
Agricultural land, Set-aside schemes 384w
Agricultural research, Wales 405w
Agriculture, Manpower 493-6w
Armed forces deployment, Wales 38w
Central Electricity Generating Board, Official engagements 45-6w
Community care, Research finance 417w
Community charge, Farmers 406w
Dairy farming, Processed food 407w
Death rate, Wales 407w
Defence procurement, Defence expenditure 156w
EC internal trade, Economic regions 428w
EC internal trade, Wales 295-6w
Farm incomes 386w
Farm incomes, Wales 406w
Farmers, Compensation 405w
Farms 386-7w
Farms, Forestry 431w
Farms, Wales 407w
Green pound, Wales 405w
Hill livestock allowances, Marginal land 385w
Income tax, Tax rates & bands 374w
Land pollution, Radioactivity 385w
Medical research, Ageing 343w
Milk Marketing Board, Official engagements 482w
Ministerial duties, Common sheep meat regime 229w
Monetary compensatory amounts, Pigmeat 493w
Nuclear accidents, Sellafield 45w
Official engagements 475w
Pensioners, Official engagements 562w
Radiation hazards, Sellafield 90w
Senile dementia, Research finance 342w
Sheep meat, Agricultural stabilisers 404w
Sheep meat, New Zealand 492w
Sheep meat, Wales 404w
Sheep premiums, Wales 406w
Water pollution, Farms 405-6w
Welsh language 984-5

Jones, Mr Martyn
Debates etc.
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Rep (23:05:88) 119, 146-7
Questions
Agricultural products, Radioactivity 488-9w
Housing stock 306w

Jones, Mr Martyn—continued
Industrial diseases benefits, Pneumoconiosis 417-8w
Sheep meat, Wales 681-2w
Structure plans, Clwyd 6
Written questions, Welsh Office 47w

Jones, Mr Robert B
Questions
Electorate, Dacorum 144-6w
Electorate, Hertfordshire 415-6w
Electorate, Three Rivers 144-5w

Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Questions
AIDS 265-6w
AIDS, Blood tests 88w
Haverigg Prison, Prison escapes 718
School population, Cumbria 10-2w

Judgments
Torfaen Borough Council 365w
Waste disposal 355-6w

Junior hospital doctors
Working hours 579-80w

Juries
Conscientious objectors 106w
Languages 449w

Kampuchea
British residents abroad 463-4w
Foreign policy 615w

Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Questions
Mandela, Nelson 826

Keeni Meeni Services
Official engagements 3w

Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 745, 749, 784, 796, 809-10

Kelly, Charles
383w

Kennedy, Mr Charles
Debates etc.
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (24:05:88) 242
Radioactive waste disposal, Public participation in planning (25:05:88) 369-71
Questions
Agriculture, Land use 673w
Community charge, Scotland 184w
Electricity generation, North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board 722-3w
Glenmoriston Estates, Defence 159w
Occupational pensions, Social security benefits overpayment 17w
Training, Government grants 504w

Kensington & Chelsea
Maternity benefits 725w
Young people 308-9w
Youth training scheme 317-9w
Youth unemployment 318w

Kent
Road construction 343-4w

Kerb crawling
Glasgow 513w

Key, Mr Robert
Debates etc.
Oral question time intervention (09:06:88) 967
Questions
Armed forces housing, Boscombe Down 551-2w
Chemical weapons 192
Church buildings 14w
Defence land, Property Services Agency 551-w
Fish farming, Pollution 975
Task Group on Assessment & Testing, Examinations 434-6w

Kidnapping
Army in Northern Ireland 36w
Lebanon 238w

***Kidnapping**—continued*
Northern Ireland 36w

Kilfedder, Mr James
Questions
Armed forces women, Maternity leave 387w
Business statements 523-4
Eastern Health & Social Services Board, NHS finance 509-10
Pupils, Northern Ireland 508

King, Mr Roger
Debates etc.
Rover Group (08:06:88) 901, 902, 903, 929-30
Scottish Bus Group, Privatisation (24:05:88) 210
Questions
Cash limits, Overseas Development Administration 350w
China, Economic policy 834
Rover Group, Vacancies 517-8
"Spycatcher", Shops 365w

***King, Rt Hon Tom**, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland*
Questions
Anglo-Irish Agreement 329w
Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference 330-2w
Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference, Administration of justice 329w
Economic policy, Northern Ireland 513
Electronic surveillance, Northern Ireland 327w
Employment discrimination, Northern Ireland 219-20w
Equal opportunities, Northern Ireland 513
Gibraltar, Television programmes 331w
Helicopters, Northern Ireland 512
IRA, Northern Ireland 330-1w
Northern Ireland Prison Service, Cost effectiveness 461-2w
Police, Republic of Ireland 331w
Political parties, Northern Ireland 329-30w
Prison sentences, Northern Ireland 507
Prisoners, Northern Ireland 505-7
Republic of Ireland, Foreign relations 512-3
Royal Irish Rangers 511-2
Royal Ulster Constabulary, Inquiries 383w
Royal Ulster Constabulary, Recruitment 331w
Security, Northern Ireland 328w, 510-2
Weapons, Northern Ireland 327-8w

King's Cross
56-7w, 730w

Kingston upon Hull
Cancer 147-8w

Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Questions
Child benefit, Social security reform 191-2
Homelessness, Greater London 712-3
Rowntree, Takeovers 514-5

Kirkcaldy District Council
124w

Kirkhope, Mr Timothy
Questions
British Wool Marketing Board, Official engagements 674w
Employment training, Trades Union Congress 497w
Industrial investment, Northern region 540w

Kirkwood, Mr Archy
Debates etc.
Scottish Bus Group, Privatisation (24:05:88) 208
Questions
Community charges register, Scotland 311
Exchange rates 199w
Regional councils, Scotland 17w
Scottish health boards, Rates & rating 17-8w

KMS
see Keeni Meeni Services

Knapman, Mr Roger
Debates etc.
"Developments in the European Community Six Monthly Report" (26:05:88) 578
Questions
Business statements 995
Lost working days, Industrial disputes 505w

Knight, Mr Greg
Questions
International Whaling Commission, Official engagements 490w
Police, Aircraft 170w
Unemployment, East Midlands 699

Knight, Dame Jill
Questions
Pirate radio stations, Birmingham 111-2w

Knox, Mr David
Questions
British Petroleum, Shares 375w
Dairy farming 677w
EC external relations 617w
Secondary education, Scotland 322-3

Korner Committee
see Health Services Information Steering Group

Kuwait
Foreign policy 612w

Kvaerner Industries
(27:05:88) 631-40

Labelling
Milk 978

Labour costs
Productivity 706

Lambeth
Exceptional needs payments 144w, 214-5w

Lambie, Mr David
Debates etc.
Scottish Bus Group, Privatisation (24:05:88) 209
Questions
Co-Star, Company investigations 186w
Housing standards, Scotland 318

***Lamont, Rt Hon Norman**, Financial Secretary to the Treasury*
Questions
Community charges register, Disclosure of information 49w
Consultants, Inland Revenue 255w
Corporation tax, Company taxation 531w
Corporation tax, Tax yields 700w
Day nurseries 49w
Family income 699w
Hereditament maps, Public Record Office 254w
Income tax 699-700w
Income tax, Age allowances 198-9w
Income tax, Married people 530-2w
Income tax, Tax rates & bands 52-4w, 374w
Inheritance tax 531-2w
Inland Revenue, Postal services 255w, 700w
Mortgage relief 540w
Mortgage relief, Costs 700-2w
PAYE, Income tax repayment 53w
Personal income 197w
Personal income, Pensioners 706-7w
Personal income, Taxpayers 699w
Personal tax allowances, Pensioners 705-6w
Personal tax allowances, Tax yields 255-6w
Tax burden, Personal income 52w
Tax yields 52w
Tax yields, Child benefit 521w
Tax yields, Debts 197-8w
Tax yields, Personal taxation 698w
Tax yields, Regional selective assistance 197w

***Lamont, Rt Hon Norman**—continued*
Taxation, Budget 699w
Taxpayers, Tax rates & bands 54w

Lanarkshire Health Board
316

Land acquisition
South West Thames Regional Health Authority 572-3w

Land drainage
Government grants 381-2w
Lough Neagh 380w
Nature conservation 381-2w
Perivale underpass 454w

Land ownership & tenure
Commonhold land 9w
Petroleum production licences 347-8w
Portugal (07:06:88) 819-24
Property Services Agency 61-2w

Land pollution
Radioactivity 385w, 981

Land Rover
Production 517-8

Land use
Agricultural land 682w
Agriculture 673w
Greater London 731w
Vacant land (27:05:88) 662-9

Land values
Broadmoor Hospital 83w
NHS 89-90w
Surrey docks 225w

Landlord & tenant
Shorthold tenancies (09:06:88) 1003-103

***Lang, Mr Ian**, Minister of State for Scotland*
Questions
Average earnings, Scotland 314
Cairngorms, Lifts 121-2w
Cairngorms, Nature conservation 122w
Coal, Imports 518w
Community charge, Religious orders 122w
Community charge, Scotland 18w, 184w, 363-4w, 512-3w, 657w
Community charges register, Highlands of Scotland 184w
Community charges register, Scotland 184-5w, 250w, 311-2
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, Official engagements 188w
Cost of living, Scotland 314
Domestic rates, Scotland 18-9w
East Kilbride Development Corporation, Public sector housing sales 122w
EC internal trade, Scotland 309
Electricity generation, North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board 722-3w
Electricity generation, Scotland 184w
Electricity supply industry, Scotland 182w, 185w
Employment opportunities, Scotland 182-3w
Glenrothes Development Corporation, Quality Street Housing Association 123w
Health Care International, Private hospitals 515w
Housing benefits, Scotland 183w
Local government expenditure, Scotland 247w
Nationalised industries, Scotland 185w
New towns, Scotland 192-4w, 250-1w
New towns, Written questions 250w
New towns development corporations, Disclosure of information 123w
New towns development corporations, Property transfer 123-4w
New towns development corporations, Public appointments 123w
New towns development corporations, Public sector housing 518-20w
Overseas Development Administration, Civil service dispersal 186w
Pay, Scotland 361-2w

Lang, Mr Ian—continued
Poverty, Scotland 320
Public sector housing, Glenrothes 124w
Public sector housing, New towns 124-5w
Public sector housing sales, Glenrothes 124-5w
Public sector housing sales, New towns 125w
Public sector housing sales, Scotland 125w
Rateable value, Scotland 247-8w
Redundancy, Scotland 309
Regional aid, Tayside 130w
Scottish & Newcastle Breweries 321
Scottish & Newcastle Breweries, Government assistance 321
Scottish Development Agency, Official engagements 308
Self-employed, Scotland 320
South of Scotland Electricity Board, Coal 321-2
Unemployment, Paisley 15w
Unemployment, Scotland 188w, 319-20
Vacancies, Dundee 657w
Woodworking, Scotland 657w
Youth training scheme, Monklands 15w
Youth unemployment, Renfrew 363-4w

Languages
Juries 449w

Languages education
432w
Civil servants 465-6w, 603w
Educational exchanges 247-9w, 398-9w, 457-8w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office 465-6w
Gaelic language 31w
Northern Ireland 457-8w
Scotland 247-9w
Treasury 603w
Wales 398-9w

Laos
Diplomatic relations 24w

LASERPC
see London & South East Regional Planning Conference

Lasers
Cervical cancer 670w

Latham, Mr Michael
Questions
Business statements 522
De Lorean, Debts 460-1w
Defence procurement, Levene, Peter 188
Police, Leicestershire 445w
Royal Army Veterinary Corps, Dogs 157w
Set-aside schemes, Cereals 974

LAUTRO
see Life Assurance & Unit Trust Regulatory Organisation

Law Commission
9w

Law Hospital
Modernisation 316

Law Officers' Dept
see Attorney-General

Law reform
Food Act 1984 218w
Mining 211w
Waste disposal 646w

Law reports
Switzerland 24w

Lawrence, Robert
"Tumbledown" 325-6w

Lawrence, Mr Ivan
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 762, 787-91
Lorries, Spray suppression (08:06:88) 953-4
Questions
Breathalysers, Police powers 151w
Business statements 525

Lawrence, Mr Ivan—continued
NHS 194
Police, Staffordshire 377w
USSR, Emigration 606w

Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel, Chancellor of the Exchequer
Questions
British Petroleum, Shares 375w
Income tax assessment, Self-employed 50w
Schedule D income tax, Computers in Government departments 50w
Tax collection, Self-employed 50w
Tax exemption certificates, Self-employed 50w

LDDC
see London Docklands Development Corporation

Lead free petrol
Garages & petrol stations 82w
Official cars 78w

Leadbitter, Mr Ted
Questions
Sudan, Slavery 612w

League Against Cruel Sports
Official engagements 224w

Leasehold housing
Local government expenditure 226-7w

Leave
Offshore fixed platforms 102w

Lebanon
Hostages 618w
Kidnapping 238w
Peace keeping operations 828

Lee, Mr John, Under-Secretary of State for Employment
Questions
Availability for work, Handicapped 707-8
Ceramic industries, Manpower 317w
Civil servants' business appointments, Dept of Employment 29w
Employment 498w
Employment, Economic growth 507w
Employment, Economic regions 205-12w
Employment, Greater London 500w
Employment, North West region 596-8w, 661w
Employment, Rolls-Royce 700
Employment, Southwark 499w
Employment, Suffolk 498w
Employment discrimination, Age 595-6w
European Year of the Traveller 501w
Foreign tourists 131w
Handicapped workers, Early retirement 711w
Handicapped workers, Employment services 504w
Handicapped workers, Remploy 394-6w
Handicapped workers, Unemployment 506w
Hard core unemployed 499w
Hard core unemployed, Employment services 506w
Hotels, Government grants 502w
Job release scheme 314-5w
Job release scheme, Handicapped workers 393w
Jobclubs 505w
Lost working days, Industrial disputes 505w
Overtime, Manufacturing industries 505w
Pay, Economic regions 508-10w
Redundancy, Textile industry 699-700
Remploy, Pay 313-4w
Restart programme 707
Restart programme, Handicapped 707
Restart programme, Interviews 503-4w
Self-employed 503w
Social security abuse, Glasgow 132w
Tourism, Government grants 131w
Tourism, North West region 495w
Unemployment 499-500w
Unemployment, Blackpool 500w

Lee, Mr John—continued
Unemployment, East Anglia 499w
Unemployment, East Midlands 699
Unemployment, Economic regions 131w, 597-8w
Unemployment, Hampshire 498w
Unemployment, Leicester 499-500w
Unemployment, Liverpool 499w
Unemployment, North West region 500w
Unemployment, South West region 498w
Unemployment, West Midlands 498w
Unemployment, Yorkshire & Humberside 498w
Unemployment benefits, Social security benefits disqualification 130-1w
Vacancies 499w, 501w
Vacancies, Bury 502-3w
Vacancies, Durham 131w
Waste disposal, Manpower 710w
Youth unemployment, Greater London 503w
Youth unemployment, Kensington & Chelsea 318w

Lee-Potter, Lynda
451w

Leeds Prison
Prison overcrowding 444-5w

Legal advice & assistance
Citizens' Advice Bureaux 633w

Legal aid
Recovery of costs 722w
Scotland 192w, 655-6w, 722w

Legal Aid (Scotland) Act 1986
Questions
722w

Legal costs
"Spycatcher" 627w, 697w

Legal profession
Crown Prosecution Service 448w
Professional qualifications 448w

Leggett Freightways
356w

Legionnaires' disease
144w
BBC 94w
Industrial health & safety 482w
Palace of Westminster 303w

Legislative process
Community charge 193-4

Leicester
Unemployment 499-500w

Leicester Prison
Habitual offenders 278w

Leicester Royal Infirmary
Hospital closures 215w

Leicestershire
Free school meals 165-6w, 234-5w
Police 445w
School milk 234-5w

Leicestershire Health Authority
AIDS 411w
Cervical cancer 271w

Leigh, Mr Edward
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 808
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (24:05:88) 227-8
Rowntree (08:06:88) 869-70
Questions
Common agricultural policy 977
Haverigg Prison, Prison escapes 719-20

Leighton, Mr Ron
Debates etc.
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (24:05:88) 230-3, 239, 242, 281-2
Questions

Leighton, Mr Ron—continued
Day nurseries 49w
Employment schemes, Child care 507-8w
Inner city school compacts, Government assistance 711
Land values, Surrey docks 225w
London Docklands, Employment opportunities 225w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Schools 225w
National Council for Vocational Qualifications 28w

Leisure
Employment training 663w
Railway network 452w

Leisure facilities
Newcastle-under-Lyme 648w

Lesotho
St John's Church Maseru 118-9w

Lester, Mr Jim
Questions
Council of Ministers 240-2w
Employment 498w
Sudan, Armed conflict 831
Town & country planning, Opencast mining 586-7w
Universities Funding Council, Public appointments 238w

Lestor, Miss Joan
Questions
Defence industries, Civil servants' business appointments 153w
Development aid 7w
Factory Inspectorate, Manpower 501w
National income 51-2w
New businesses 29w
Nicaragua, Development aid 625-6w
Overseas aid, Public expenditure 105w
Public expenditure 374w
Sharpeville Six 613w
Southern Africa, Overseas aid 6-8w

Leukaemia
Dounreay 600-1w
Radiation hazards 986
Wales 45w

Levene, Peter
Defence procurement 188

Lewis, Mr Terry
Questions
Cruise missiles, USA 160w
Economic situation, Belfast 332-3w
Mink, Farms 683w
Planning inquiries, Opencast mining 80-1w

Licensing
Abortion 419w
Air routes 343w
Beam trawlers 678w
Driving instruction 627-8w
Employment agencies 662w
Fishing vessels 679w

Lie detectors
Government Communications Headquarters 195-6

Life Assurance & Unit Trust Regulatory Organisation
243-4w

Lifts
Cairngorms 121-2w

Lilley, Mr Peter, Economic Secretary to the Treasury
Questions
Building societies 135w
Building societies, Shares 51w
Central Office of Information, Advertising 51w
Central Office of Information, Television advertising 51w
Consumer credit 637w
Customs, Channel tunnel 136w, 537w

Lilley, Mr Peter—continued
Customs, Newry 528w
Customs & Excise, Cost effectiveness 371-3w
Customs & Excise, Overseas trade 372w
Customs & Excise, Trade formalities 372w
Customs officers, Manpower 527w
Debts, Developing countries 525-7w
Economic growth, European monetary system 523w, 525-6w
Employment, European monetary system 523w
Employment opportunities, European monetary system 524-5w
European Investment Bank, Local government borrowing 537-9w
Exchange rates 198-9w
Exchange rates, Employment 527-8w
Firearms, Customs 55w
Inflation 523w
Inflation, European monetary system 523w
Interest rates 705w
National savings, Privatisation 374w
Productivity, European monetary system 523-4w
Retail price index, Price increases 528-9w
Sterling, Exchange rates 524w
Sterling, Industries 524w
Tourist taxes, European Commission 705w
VAT, Accounting 52w
VAT, Administrative costs 528w
VAT, Hearing aids 373w
VAT, Hospital radio 527w
VAT, Small businesses 636-7w
VAT registration, Companies 528w
VAT threshold, EC action 371w

Lincoln
City technology colleges 236w

Linlithgow School
250w

Litherland, Mr Robert
Questions
Defence industries, Civil servants' business appointments 188

Litter
Convictions 638-40w
Fines 445w
Habitual offenders 639w
Prosecutions 638-40w
Railway property 639w
Waste disposal 480w

Liverpool
Housing insulation 101w
Official engagements 354-5w, 375-6w
Unemployment 499w

Liverpool Prison
Opticians 171w

Livestock
Genetic engineering 218w, 681w

Livingstone, Mr Ken
Questions
Army in Northern Ireland, Firearms 222w
Army in Northern Ireland, Forgery 551w
Army in Northern Ireland, Kidnapping 36w
Army in Northern Ireland, Psychology 36w
Army in Northern Ireland, Violence 222w
Criminal investigation, Northern Ireland 36-7w
Demonstrations, Orange Order 457w
Firearms, Northern Ireland 35w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Government information services 25w, 27w
Gleneyre & Burnside Children's Home, Sexual offences 35-6w
Holroyd, Fred, Photographs 36w
Information services, Northern Ireland 36w
Keeni Meeni Services, Official engagements 3w
Ministry of Defence, Educational institutions 39-40w
Ministry of Defence, Security industry 40-1w

Livingstone, Mr Ken—continued
Security, Northern Ireland 510-1
Security industry, Expenditure 27w
Ulster Defence Regiment, Departmental correspondence 40w
Written questions, Administrative delays 219w

Livsey, Mr Richard
Questions
A44, Wales 2
Set-aside schemes, Grazing land 675w
Valleys initiative 4-5

Lloyd, Sir Ian
Questions
Angola, Armed forces deployment 984

Lloyd, Mr Tony
Debates etc.
Lorries, Spray suppression (08:06:88) 948-52, 956, 959-60
Questions
British Waterways Board, Takeovers 356w
Capital goods, Imports 5w
Cars, Production 633w
Child Abuse in Cleveland Judicial Inquiry 566w
COD Donnington, Fires 158w
Community nurses, Psychiatric nurses 85-6w
District health authorities, NHS administration 84-6w
Electroconvulsive therapy, Administrative delays 571w
Electroconvulsive therapy, Codes of practice 566w, 570w
Electroconvulsive therapy, Manpower 570w
Electroconvulsive therapy, Mental Health Act Commission 571w
Electroconvulsive therapy, Mental health services 567-70w
Electroconvulsive therapy, Mental patients 566-7w
Employment, Economic regions 205-12w
Employment, North West region 596-8w, 661w
Ferries, Merchant seamen 200
Ferries, Safety standards 58-9w, 344w
Ferries, Shipping safety 59w
Fishing vessels, Shipping safety 57w
Human rights, Foreign policy 195w
London Underground, Fires 58w
London Underground, Safety measures 56-7w
Marine surveys, Civil service manpower 59w
Milk, Bovine somatotropin 218w
Pupils, Equal opportunities 342w
Regional planning & development, Economic policy 602w
Road accidents 450-1w
Unemployment, Northern Ireland 327w

Local authorities
Barter trading 115w
Pigs 978

Local authority associations
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Act 1986 573w, 723w

Local Authority Searches & Enquiries etc Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
1R (25:05:88) 349-50

Local education authorities
Wales 633w

Local enterprise agencies
500-1w, 505w

Local Enterprise Development Unit
Employment opportunities 457w
Northern Ireland 510

Local government
Scotland 187w

Local government borrowing
Ealing 481-2w
European Investment Bank 537-9w

Local Government Boundary Commission for England
378w

Local government constituencies
Welwyn Hatfield 378w

Local government expenditure
79-80w, 226w
Block grant 71-6w
Dog wardens 478-9w
Housing construction 76w
Leasehold housing 226-7w
London Docklands 79w
Scotland 247w
Settle-Carlisle railway 282w, 451w
Wales 287-8w
West Ham 80w

Local government finance
Capital investment 117w
Housing associations 68-9w
Pension funds 117w

Local government pensions
Investment 311w

Local Government Practices & Procedures Inquiry
Government responses 651w

Local Government (Prescribed Expenditure) (Amendment) Regulations 1988
Questions
79-80w, 226-7w

Local government services
House purchase (25:05:88) 349-50
Racial discrimination 357w

Local government staff
Occupational pensions 116-7w, 303-4w

Local radio
Radio broadcasting licences 172w

Lofthouse, Mr Geoffrey
Debates etc.
Rowntree (08:06:88) 884, 885-6, 887
Questions
Rowntree, Takeovers 335-6

Log books
170w

London & South East Regional Planning Conference
Costs 357w
Manpower 357w

London boroughs
Cruelty to children 267-8w

London City Airport
150w

London Docklands
Employment opportunities 225w
Housing associations 649w
Local government expenditure 79w
Population 650-1w
Private rented housing 650w
Private sector housing 649w

London Docklands Development Corporation
79w, 649-51w
Company accounts 307-8w
Consultants 358w
Contracts 307w
Private investment 650w
Public expenditure 650w
Public sector housing 649w
Schools 225w

London Regional Transport
Railway signals 730w
Resignations 730w

London Regional Transport Bill 1986/87
Debates etc.
Order for resuming adjourned debate on consideration read (26:05:88) 501, (09:06:88) 969

London Underground

London Underground—continued
730w
Fires 58w
Safety measures 56-7w

Long Distance Walkers' Association
Official engagements 224w

Long stay patients
563-4w, 665-8w

Lonrho
Subsidiary companies 170w

Lord, Mr Michael
Questions
Entry clearances, Fees & charges 464w

Lord Chancellor
103-4w
Pay (26:05:88) 600

Lord Chancellor's Office
see Lord Chancellor

Lord Chancellor's Salary Order 1988
Debates etc.
(26:05:88) 600

Lords amendments
Speaker's rulings & statements (24:05:88) 219

Lorries
Spray suppression (08:06:88) 944-60

Lost working days
Industrial disputes 505w

Lothian Regional Council
School buildings 250w

Lotteries
Crown Prosecution Service 447w
NHS 447w

Lough Beg
380-2w

Lough Neagh
Government grants 381-2w
Land drainage 380w
Sites of special scientific interest 380-1w
Special protection areas 380w

Low flying
Air accidents 541w
Air force 541w
Compensation 156w
Helicopters 390-1w
Military aircraft 156w, 158w

Low incomes
95w
Scotland 413w, 726-7w

Low pay
Prosecutions 395-6w
Wealth distribution 983

Lowestoft
White fish 138w

Loyden, Mr Eddie
Questions
Business statements 994
Ferries, Merchant seamen 199-200
Fishing vessels, Decommissioning grants 677w
Merchant ships, Armed conflict 153w

LRT
see London Regional Transport

Luce, Rt Hon Richard, Minister of State Privy Council Office (Minister for the Arts)
Questions
Arts council grants 256w
Arts sponsorship, British Telecom 510w
Civil servants' secondment 637-8w
Equal opportunities, Minister for the Civil Service 256w
Equal opportunities, Office of Arts & Libraries 257w

Luce, Rt Hon Richard—continued
"Financing Public Library Service Consultation Paper, Expenditure 257w
Liverpool, Official engagements 375-6w
Museums & galleries 134-5w
Museums & galleries, Admission charges 260w
Museums & galleries, Arts finance 135w
Museums & galleries, Income 259-62w
Museums & galleries, Property transfer 258-60w
Office of Arts & Libraries, Accountants 258w
Public appointments, Women 135w
Public libraries 377w, 510w
Public libraries, Contracts for services 376-7w
Public libraries, Cost effectiveness 258w
Public libraries, Fees & charges 257-8w, 377w, 510w
Public libraries, Management 258w
Public libraries, Ministerial powers 257w
Tate Gallery, Manpower 376w

Lynx
40-1w

M1
Road works 452-3w

M3
452w

M6
Road works 452-3w

M8
Public inquiries 251w

M25
Road damage 629-30w

M42
170w

McAllion, Mr John
Debates etc.
Rescue services, RAF Leuchars (23:05:88) 175-6
Scottish Bus Group, Privatisation (24:05:88) 212
Questions
Community charge, Scotland 657w
Cuba, Ministers' visits abroad 239w
Devolution, Scotland 183w
Educational finance, Scotland 323
European Social Charter 662w
Housing standards, Dundee 656-8w
Jihad, Abu, Israel 26w
Regional aid, Tayside 130w
Social security abuse 671w
Social security abuse, Expenditure 671w
Social security benefits disqualification, Unemployment benefits 727w
Tucano aircraft 37w
Vacancies, Dundee 657w

McAvoy, Mr Thomas
Questions
Defence procurement, International cooperation 160w
Food Act 1984, Law reform 218w
Schools, Scotland 185w

McCarthy, John
618w

McCartney, Mr Ian
Debates etc.
Housing Bill, Rep (09:06:88) 1007-84 passim
Questions
Animal feed, Hazardous materials 683w
Business statements 1001

McCrea, Rev William
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 758, 779, 798
Darcy, Michael, Standing Order no 20 applications (07:06:88) 733
Questions
Security, Northern Ireland 328w, 511

McCrindle, Mr Robert
Questions
Air transport, Civil Aviation Authority 729w
Channel tunnel, Railway network 283w
Dartford tunnel, Road tankers 453w
East London river crossing, Bridges 453w
Financial services, Disclosure of information 243-4w
Heathrow Airport, Railway network 283w
Roads, Private sector 282w
Sports, Public order policing 477w
Tunnels, Road tankers 453w
Waste disposal, Air pollution control 478w
Water pollution, Fixed penalties 478w

McCusker, Mr Harold
Debates etc.
Employment discrimination, Northern Ireland (25:05:88) 351-4
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 478
Questions
Anglo-Irish Agreement 329w
Business statements 530-1, 992
Civil servants, Religion 528w, 552w
Civil service manpower, Northern Ireland 602-3w
Republic of Ireland, Foreign relations 513

Macdonald, Mr Calum
Debates etc.
Scottish Bus Group, Privatisation (24:05:88) 211
Questions
Advertising, Expenditure 585-6w
Defence equipment, North Sea 157w
Electricity supply industry, Scotland 182w

MacDonald Committee
see Burnage High School Inquiry

McDonald Wheeler Fund Management
Company investigations 697w

McFall, Mr John
Questions
NATO, Navy 158w
Schools, Scotland 185w

McGrady, Mr Eddie
Questions
Gaelic language, Curriculum 31w
Gaelic language, HM Inspectorate of Schools 332w
Gaelic language, Languages education 31w
Gaelic language, Professional qualifications 30w
Gaelic language, Teacher training 30-1w
Official engagements 230w, 475w, 686w
Social security recipients, Northern Ireland 328w
Social security reform, Northern Ireland 504
Submarines, Fishing vessels 984

MacGregor, Rt Hon John, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Questions
Agricultural land, Land use 682w
Agricultural land, Set-aside schemes 384w, 973-4
Agricultural research, Research finance 676w
Bovine somatotropin 972, 978-9
British Poultry Federation, Official engagements 682w
Cereals 679-80w
Cereals, EC grants & loans 263-4w
Cereals, Intervention stocks 680w
Cereals, Production 29-30w
Common agricultural policy 977
Common agricultural policy, EC reform 384-5w
Common sheep meat regime 971-2
Country Landowners' Association, Official engagements 678-9w
Dairy farming 677w
EC Agriculture Council 218w, 684w
EC free food scheme, South Hams 490w
EC law, Council of Ministers 385w

MacGregor, Rt Hon John—continued
Farm woodland scheme, Tree planting 683w
Farms, Pollution 972
Food, EC external trade 680-2w
Green pound 678w, 976-7
Home Grown Cereals Authority, Official engagements 673w, 981
Intervention stocks 483-4w
Monetary compensatory amounts, Pigmeat 674w
National Farmers' Union, Official engagements 482w, 677w
Pigmeat, EC internal trade 971
Pigmeat, Northern Ireland 970-1
Pigmeat, Prices 970
Pigs, Animal husbandry 970
Set-aside schemes 675w
Set-aside schemes, Cereals 974
Set-aside schemes, Grazing land 675w
Sheep meat, Agricultural stabilisers 681w
Sugar beet, Norfolk 971
Tree planting, Storms 491-2w
Women's Farmers' Union, Official engagements 676w

McKay, Mr Allen
Debates etc.
Housing (23:05:88) 59
Questions
Social Fund, Northern Ireland 503-4

MacKay, Mr Andrew
Questions
Artillery, Defence procurement 586w
Business statements 998-9
Debts, Africa 983
Employment 498w
Energy Efficiency Office 632-3w
Hong Kong, Ministers' visits abroad 609-10w
Inflation 523w
Palace of Westminster, Members' facilities 19

McKelvey, Mr William
Questions
East West relations 614-5w
Herring, Total allowable catches 653w
Schools, Scotland 185-6w

McLeish, Mr Henry
Debates etc.
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (24:05:88) 242, 267-8, 270, 279-81
Questions
EC internal trade, Scotland 316-7
Fife Health Board, Managers 127w
Glenrothes Development Corporation, Quality Street Housing Association 123w
Handicapped workers, Remploy 394-6w
New towns development corporations, Disclosure of information 123w
New towns development corporations, Property transfer 123-4w
New towns development corporations, Public appointments 123w
North Sea oil, Offshore fixed platforms 349-50w
Parents' rights, Unmarried fathers 698w
Public sector housing, Glenrothes 124w
Public sector housing, New towns 124-5w
Public sector housing sales, Glenrothes 124-5w
Public sector housing sales, New towns 125w
Public sector housing sales, Scotland 125w
Scottish health boards, Managers 128w
Tobacco advertising, Health warnings 411-2w

Maclennan, Mr Robert
Questions
Electricity supply industry, Scotland 182w

McLoughlin, Mr Patrick
Debates etc.
Rowntree (08:06:88) 851
Questions
Domestic energy conservation, Departmental initiatives 631-2w

McLoughlin, Mr Patrick—continued
Foetal tissue, Transplant surgery 556-8w
Potato Marketing Board, Official engagements 674w

McNair-Wilson, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 773
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Rep (23:05:88) 105-6, 117-8, 142-5, 149, 161
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 403-4, 440-1, 442
Questions
Firearms, Customs 55w
Firearms, Greater London 380w
Helicopters, Northern Ireland 512
Ministry of Defence, Insurance 187
Negligence, Compensation 409-10w
Political parties, Northern Ireland 329-30w
RAF Greenham Common 549w

McNamara, Mr Kevin
Questions
Army in Northern Ireland, Armed forces strength 323-4w
Army in Northern Ireland, Motor vehicle theft 338w
Army in Northern Ireland, Prisoners' transfers 339w
Arrests, Northern Ireland 334w
Assaults on police, Northern Ireland 338w
Bail, Northern Ireland 333-4w
Baton rounds, Northern Ireland 285w, 337-8w
Belfast Telegraph, Recruitment 35w
Bombs, Northern Ireland 221-2w
Cancer, Kingston upon Hull 147-8w
Crimes of violence, Armed forces 285w
Employment discrimination, Appeals 32-4w
Employment discrimination, Compensation 34w
Employment discrimination, Northern Ireland 32w, 35w, 220-1w, 456-7w
Employment discrimination, Religious discrimination 646w
Firearms, Northern Ireland 338-40w, 624w
Gibraltar, Bomb disposal 162-4w
North Eastern Library & Education Board, Employment discrimination 463w
Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Acts, Arrests 334w
Parole, Northern Ireland 276w
Police informers, Northern Ireland 333w
Prison population, Northern Ireland 335-7w
Prison sentences, Northern Ireland 337w
Prison sentences, Women 249w, 275w
Prisoners' transfers, Northern Ireland 275-6w
Prisoners' transfers, Scotland 249w
Remand in custody, Northern Ireland 333-5w, 337w
Remand in custody, Women 275-6w
Royal Ulster Constabulary, Inquiries 383w
Royal Ulster Constabulary, Manpower 338w
Terrorism, Acquittals 274w
Terrorism, Appeals 332w
Terrorism, Bail 274w
Terrorism, Death 249-50w
Terrorism, Remand in custody 274-5w
Trials, Northern Ireland 623-4w
Ulster Defence Regiment 324w
Ulster Defence Regiment, Armed forces strength 324w

McTaggart, Mr Bob
Questions
Angola, Peace negotiations 612w
Defence industries, Civil servants' business appointments 153w
Public sector housing, Scotland 323-4

Madden, Mr Max
Debates etc.
Business statements (24:05:88) 204
Social Fund, Deposited papers (07:06:88) 736

Madden, Mr Max—continued
Social Fund, House of Commons questions (23:05:88) 21
Woollen industry, West Yorkshire (27:05:88) 656-7
Questions
Business statements 525, 998
Entry clearances, Inquiries 106-7w
Indian subcontinent, Entry clearances 119w, 833
Industrial health & safety 506w
Industrial health & safety, Factory Inspectorate 709
NATO, Nuclear weapons 152w
Official engagements 685-6w
Short time working, Textile industry 134w
Social Fund, Disclosure of information 725w
Textiles, Turkey 113w
VAT, Hearing aids 373w

Madel, Mr David
Questions
Industrial health & safety, Building industry 504-5w, 708-9
Turkey, EC accession 837
Warsaw Pact, Conventional weapons 605w

MAFF
see Ministry of Agriculture

Maginnis, Mr Ken
Questions
Retirement pensions, British residents abroad 87w

Magistrates' courts
283-4w
Criminal proceedings 449w

Magnox reactors
694w
Radioactive waste disposal 312w

Mahon, Mrs Alice
Debates etc.
Rowntree (08:06:88) 864-5

Major, Rt Hon John, Chief Secretary to the Treasury
Questions
Business, Investment 528w
Economic growth 527w
Economic situation, Unemployment 601w
Government departments, Property transfer 703-6w
House prices 705w
Industrial investment 540w
Industrial investment, Northern region 540w
Manufactured goods, Expenditure 51w
Manufactured goods, Overseas trade 601-2w
Manufacturing industries, Industrial production 530w
National income 51-2w
Nationalised industries, Finance 50w
Overseas investment 373w
Productivity 524w
Public expenditure 374w, 526w
Public expenditure, Fees & charges 374-6w
Public expenditure, Housing 702-4w
Regional planning & development, Economic policy 602w
Regional planning & development, Merseyside 602w
Tax rates & bands, Employment 705w
Taxable benefits, Child benefit 197w

Malaysia
Gregory, Derrick 466w
Water supply 105w

Mallon, Mr Seamus
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 773, 774-6, 777
Questions
Customs, Newry 528w
Milk, Production quotas 461w
Parking offences, Newry 461w, 693w

Mallon, Mr Seamus—continued
Royal Irish Rangers 511-2
Royal Irish Rangers, Army in Northern Ireland 552w
Security, Newtown Hamilton 461w
Street lighting, Newry 622-3w
Supplementary benefits, Farmers 622w
Supplementary benefits, Nursing homes 622w
Urban development grants, Northern Ireland 621-2w

Managers
Fife Health Board 127w
Housing benefits 96w
Scottish health boards 128w

Manchester Airport
(25:05:88) 354-6

Mandela, Nelson
825-6
BBC 694w
Official visits 617w

Manpower Services Commission
44w

Mans, Mr Keith
Questions
Milk Marketing Board, Official engagements 675w
Nuclear weapons, Modernisation 184
Skill shortages 496w
Turkey, Official engagements 608w

Manufactured goods
Balance of trade 176w, 633w
Expenditure 51w
Overseas trade 601-2w

Manufacturing industries
Bankruptcy 4w
Energy prices 230w
Industrial production 530w
Northern Ireland 619-20w
Overtime 505w
Private sector 4w

Maples, Mr John
Debates etc.
Rowntree (08:06:88) 852-3
Questions
Bail, Disclosure of information 171w
Rowntree, Foreign investment in Uk 337

Marchwood military port
Merchant ships 387-8w
Ships 387-8w

Marek, Dr John
Questions
Bovine somatotropin 978
Handicapped workers, Employment services 504w
Nature conservation, EC action 310w
Sprinter trains, Design 454w
Sprinter trains, Noise 454w

Marginal land
Hill livestock allowances 385w

Marine surveys
Civil service manpower 59w

Marland, Mr Paul
Debates etc.
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Rep (23:05:88) 99, 143, 154-5

Marlow, Mr Tony
Debates etc.
Lorries, Spray suppression (08:06:88) 945-6
Rover Group (08:06:88) 901
Questions
Immigration controls, English language 833
UK contributions to EC budget 539w

Married people
Disposable income 580-4w
Income tax 530-2w
Social security benefits 272-3w

Marshall, Mr David
Debates etc.
Scottish Bus Group, Privatisation (24:05:88) 210-1
Questions
BBC External Services, Government grants 466w
Defence contracts, Competition 552-3w
Defence procurement, Military vehicles 553w
Housing benefits, Scotland 183w

Marshall, Mr Jim
Questions
Business statements 533
Employment opportunities, Belfast 332w
Harland & Wolff, Government assistance 503
Hong Kong, China 834-5
Livestock, Genetic engineering 681w

Marshall, Mr John
Debates etc.
"Developments in the European Community Six Monthly Report" (26:05:88) 563, 568, 569, 576-83, 588
Girobank, Privatisation (07:06:88) 729
Rowntree (08:06:88) 852
Questions
Church Commissioners, Income 14
Development aid, Multinational companies 233-4w
Economic growth, European monetary system 523w, 525-6w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 313
Employment, European monetary system 523w
Employment opportunities, European monetary system 524-5w
Employment opportunities, Scotland 182-3w
ID Investment Development, Shareholders 356w
Inflation, European monetary system 523w
Old persons' pensions, Age addition 216w
Old persons' pensions, Costs 215w
Overseas investment 373w
Overseas investment, South Africa 243w
Productivity, European monetary system 523-4w
Rates & rating, Consumer expenditure 305-6w
Sterling, Exchange rates 524w
USSR, Visas 840-2

Martin, Mr David
Questions
Food industry, EC internal trade 673w

Martin, Mr Michael J
Debates etc.
Housing (23:05:88) 45-8, 66
Questions
Beaches, Scotland 516w
Housing benefits, Elderly 253w
Redundancy, Scotland 309

Martlew, Mr Eric
Debates etc.
Rowntree (08:06:88) 890-1
Settle-Carlisle railway (26:05:88) 601-3, 615, 616
Questions
Bovine somatotropin 683-4w
Employment training, Community work 701-2
Farmers, Radioactive fallout 129w
NATO, Navy 158w
Pigmeat, Prices 970
Railway network, Private sector 452w
Railway network, Railway travel 452w
Ribblehead viaduct, Repairs & maintenance 589w
Settle-Carlisle railway, Bus services 451w
Settle-Carlisle railway, Local government expenditure 451w
Settle-Carlisle railway, Official engagements 149w
Settle-Carlisle railway, Operating costs 451w

Maternity benefits
Kensington & Chelsea 725w

Maternity leave
Armed forces women 387w

Maternity services
Moray 600w, (10:06:88) 1177-84
Rural areas 186-7w

Mathematics education
Primary education 237-8w
Teacher training 237w
Teachers 236-7w

***Maude, Mr Francis**, Under-Secretary of State for Corporate and Consumer Affairs*
Debates etc.
Rowntree (25:05:88) 498-500, (08:06:88) 893-5
Questions
Bankruptcy, Building industry 5w
Bankruptcy, Manufacturing industries 4w
Brush, Company accounts 425w
Cash limits, Dept of Trade & Industry 371w
Cemetery Assets United Kingdom, Official Receiver 426w
Companies Registration Office (England & Wales) 428w
Companies Registration Office (England & Wales), Information services 636w
Company law, Harmonisation of legislation 428w
Competition law, EC action 425w
EC internal trade, Business education 242-3w
EC internal trade, Economic regions 428w
Fab Fashions, Company investigations 426w
Film industry, Monopolies & Mergers Commission 635w
Financial services, Disclosure of information 243-4w
Guinness, Company investigations 179w
House of Fraser, Company investigations 179w, 426w
Insurance Brokers Registration Council, Financial services 635w
New businesses 429-30w
Takeovers, Foreign companies in UK 110-2w
Takeovers, Switzerland 242w
Wyebrow, John, Official Receiver 426w

***Mawhinney, Dr Brian**, Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland*
Questions
Community charge, Northern Ireland 330w
Examinations, Northern Ireland 507-8
Further education, Northern Ireland 31w
Further education teachers, Employment discrimination 458w
Gaelic language, Curriculum 31w
Gaelic language, HM Inspectorate of Schools 332w
Gaelic language, Languages education 31w
Gaelic language, Professional qualifications 30w
Gaelic language, Teacher training 30-1w
Languages education, Educational exchanges 457-8w
Northern Ireland Education & Library Boards 620w
Primary education, Ballyharry School 458w
Primary education, School closures 458-9w
Pupils, Northern Ireland 508
School meals, Northern Ireland 328w
Schools, Northern Ireland 329w
Travel grants, Spirit of Enniskillen bursaries 505

Maxton, Mr John
Questions
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 313

Maxwell-Hyslop, Mr Robin
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 743, 747, 749
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Rep (23:05:88) 80, 99, 102, 154-5
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 430
Questions
Armed forces training, Devon 181
Bovine somatotropin 978-9

***Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick**, Attorney-General*
Questions
Baton rounds, Northern Ireland 285w
Cash limits, Serious Fraud Office 172w
Charities 286w
Civil Justice Review 449w
Commonhold land, Land ownership & tenure 9w
Crimes of violence, Armed forces 285w
Crown Prosecution Service, Criminal proceedings 447w
Crown Prosecution Service, Legal profession 448w
Crown Prosecution Service, Manpower 284-5w
Crown Prosecution Service, Pay 284-5w
Crown Prosecution Service, Pay incentives 448w
Equal opportunities, Attorney-General 447w
Football, Hooliganism 286w
Juries, Languages 449w
Lotteries, NHS 447w
McDonald Wheeler Fund Management, Company investigations 697w
Magistrates' courts 283-4w
Magistrates' courts, Criminal proceedings 449w
Morgan, Daniel, Death 448-9w
Parents' rights, Unmarried fathers 698w
Prosecutions, Crown Prosecution Service 364-6w
Rowntree, Charitable trusts 697-8w
Social Security Commissioners, Departmental correspondence 698w
Social Security Commissioners, Greater London 626w
"Spycatcher", Legal costs 627w, 697w
"Spycatcher", Shops 365w
Torfaen Borough Council, Judgments 365w

Meale, Mr Alan
Questions
AIDS, District health authorities 411w
Armed forces storage depots, Safety measures 159w
Business statements 532, 999-1000
Coal, Self-sufficiency 348w
Coal mine closures, Nottinghamshire 349w
Coal mining, Subsidence 349w
"Coal Mining Subsidence Compensation Consultation Paper" 349w
Energy prices, Unfair competition 349w
Panama, USA 614w
School meals, Northern Ireland 328w

Means tested benefits
Publicity 723w
Take-up 723w

Meat & Livestock Commission
Official engagements 674w

Medals
367-8w

Medical certificates
Severe disability premium 563w

Medical education
Cervical cancer 96-8w
Midwives 93w

Medical ethics
Foetal tissue 557-8w

Medical examinations
Social security recipients 671-2w

Medical laboratory scientific officers
96-8w

Medical Practitioners' Union
189w

Medical profession
Audit 189w
Health service staff 84-6w
Scotland 189w

Medical research
Ageing 343w
Cancer hazards 90w
Electroconvulsive therapy 265w
Postgraduate education 12w
Student grants 12w
Vacancies 12w

Medical Research Council
12w, 343w

Medical treatments
Ambulance services 591w, 724w
Electroconvulsive therapy 410w
Mental patients 212w

***Mellor, Mr David**, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs*
Questions
Arms control, Advisory bodies 466w
Arms control negotiations, Verification 118w
Central America, EC action 27w
Chemical weapons, Arms control 195-6w
Cuba, Ministers' visits abroad 239w
Czechoslovakia, Foreign policy 617w
Defence expenditure 25w
East West relations 614-5w
East West relations, International conferences 610w
EC action, Transport of radioactive materials 26w
Fiji, Overseas aid 196w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Government information services 25w, 27w
Gibraltar, IRA 119w, 465w
Grenada, Human rights 196w
Hong Kong, China 118w
Honours 367-8w
Human rights, Foreign policy 195w
Hungary, Official engagements 604w, 610-1w
Indian subcontinent, Entry clearances 119w
Iran, Arms exports 463w
Iran-Iraq war, Arms exports 463w
Iraq, Bombings 613w
Japan, Military intelligence 118w
Japan, Official engagements 239w
Jihad, Abu, Israel 26w
Kuwait, Foreign policy 612w
Laos, Diplomatic relations 24w
Lebanon, Hostages 618w
Lebanon, Kidnapping 238w
Medals 368w
Mutual & balanced force reductions, Arms control negotiations 615w
New Zealand, Ethnic groups 118w
Nicaragua, Ministers' visits abroad 25w
North Korea, Foreign policy 196w
North Korea, Recognition of states 196w
Nuclear disarmament, Verification 24-5w
Nuclear test ban, Warsaw Pact 195w
Occupied territories, Armed conflict 613-4w
Occupied territories, Death 613w
Persian Gulf, Merchant seamen 613w
Poland, Official engagements 615-6w
Poland, Solidarity 606w
Romania, Human rights 464w
Security industry, Expenditure 27w
South Africa, Donnelly, Susan 27w
Sudan, Slavery 612w
Syrian Arab Republic, Foreign policy 196w
UN disarmament 616w

Mellor, Mr David—continued
UN disarmament, Arms control 368-9w, 607w
USSR, Emigration 605-6w
USSR, Foreign policy 607w
USSR, Human rights 25w, 609w
USSR, Persian Gulf 611w
USSR, Visas 840-2
Warsaw Pact, Conventional weapons 605w
West Germany, Nuclear safeguards 26w
Western European Union 617w
Western European Union, Ministers' visits abroad 610w

Members
Downing Street 445-6w

Members' conduct
18
Speaker's rulings & statements (23:05:88) 126, 135, 140, (25:05:88) 445, 452, 481-2, (08:06:88) 846, 847

Members' correspondence
Administrative delays 689w, 696w
Children & Young Persons (Amendment) Act 1986 574w

Members' facilities
House of Commons catering 24w
Palace of Westminster 17, 19

Members' interests
Speaker's rulings & statements (08:06:88) 844

Members' interventions
Speaker's rulings & statements (23:05:88) 36, 49, 70, 145, (24:05:88) 212, 231, (25:05:88) 452, 459, (26:05:88) 584, (27:05:88) 665, (07:06:88) 707, 784, 810

Members' pensions
Top Salaries Review Body 103-4w

Members' speeches
Speaker's rulings & statements (23:05:88) 44, 60, 98, 158, (25:05:88) 375, 403, (26:05:88) 592, (08:06:88) 921, 923, 924, (10:06:88) 1154

Men
Sexual offences 3w

MENCAP
see Royal Society for Mentally Handicapped Children & Adults

Mental Health Act 1959
Questions
558-9w

Mental Health Act 1983
Questions
142-3w, 211-2w, 294-5w

Mental Health Act Commission
142-3w
Electroconvulsive therapy 571w

Mental health community care
Community care 590-1w
Mentally ill 91w

Mental health services
Electroconvulsive therapy 567-70w
Property transfer 562w

Mental hospitals
Hospital closures 400-2w, 665-8w
Hostels 91w
Wales 400-2w

Mental illness
Scotland 246-8w
Surgery 143w

Mental patients
Electroconvulsive therapy 142-3w, 211-2w, 566-7w
Geriatric patients 565w
Hospital discharges 563-4w, 669w
Hume, Donald 267w
Medical treatments 212w

Mental patients—continued
Moore, Thomas Connolly 267w
Per capita costs 577-8w
Supplementary benefits 413w

Mentally handicapped
Community care 725w
Greencroft hostel Deeside 47w
Special education 203-4w

Mentally ill
Hospital admissions 47w
Mental health community care 91w

Merchant seamen
Defence 186
Ferries 199-200
Manpower 191
Persian Gulf 613w

Merchant Shipping (Passenger Boarding Cards) Regulations 1988
Questions
282w

Merchant Shipping (Passenger Boarding Cards) (Application to non-UK Ships) Regulations 1988
Questions
282w

Merchant ships
Armed conflict 153w, 191
Defence 185
Marchwood military port 387-8w
Shipbuilding 185

Mergers
Rowntree 332-3

Mersey barrage
8w

Mersey Barrage Company
Official engagements 8w

Mersey Regional Health Authority
724-6w

Merseyside
Agency nurses 724-6w
Nurses 724-6w
Police firearms 106w
Regional planning & development 602w

Merseyside Council for Voluntary Services
101w

Metropolitan Police
377w, 380w

Mexico
Foreign policy 616w
Ministers' visits abroad 606w

Meyer, Sir Anthony
Debates etc.
"Developments in the European Community Six Monthly Report" (26:05:88) 538, 556, 574-6
Questions
Council house sales, Wales 7
Roads, Wales 1-2

Michael, Mr Alun
Questions
Road construction, South Glamorgan 10

Michie, Mr Bill
Questions
Chemical weapons, USSR 157w
Family practitioner committees, Finance 86-7w
Fisheries, Government assistance to industry 680w
Prime Minister, Church of Scotland 518

Michie, Mrs Ray
Questions
British merchant fleet, Defence 155w
Scottish Bus Group, Privatisation 324-5
Sub post offices 588w

Middle East
Peace negotiations 618w, 827, 838-9
UN resolutions 832

Midwives
Medical education 93w

Military aircraft
Air accidents 39w
Aircraft noise 158-9w
Defence contracts 546w
Exhibitions 159w
Low flying 156w, 158w
NATO Nuclear Planning Group 154-5w, 182-3
Polaris submarines 37w
Short Brothers 544w

Military ceremonies
Armed forces casualties 390w

Military exercises
Gatwick Airport 708-9w
Glasgow Airport 326w

Military intelligence
Japan 118w

Military vehicles
BAOR 388w
Defence contracts 388w
Defence procurement 553w

Milk
Bovine somatotropin 218w
Labelling 978
Northern Ireland 461w, 463w
Production quotas 263w, 461w, 463w

Milk Marketing Board
Dairy products 973
Official engagements 482w, 674-5w, 972-3

Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Questions
Electricity supply industry, Scotland 182w
Rowntree, Takeovers 333-4

Miller, Mr Hal
Debates etc.
Rover Group (08:06:88) 907, 923-5

Mills, Mr Iain
Debates etc.
Lorries, Spray suppression (08:06:88) 957-8

Milton Keynes
Housing 357w

Mines & Quarries Act 1954
Questions
28-9w, 211w, 392w
British Coal Corporation 132w
National Association Colliery Overmen Deputies Shotfirers 391-2w
National Union of Mineworkers 392w

Mines & Quarries Inspectorate
316w
Penlee Quarry 314w
Prosecutions 315-6w, 395w
Training 315-6w

Mining
Industrial health & safety 28-9w
Law reform 211w
Orders & regulations 28-9w

Minister for the Civil Service
Equal opportunities 256w

Ministerial duties
Common sheep meat regime 229w
Community care 229w

Ministerial powers
Public libraries 257w

Ministerial speeches
Speaker's rulings & statements (23:05:88) 98

Ministerial statements
National Girobank (07:06:88) 721-31
Property Services Agency (25:05:88) 339-48
Scottish Bus Group (24:05:88) 205-15
Speaker's rulings & statements (25:05:88) 343, 346, 348, (07:06:88) 736, (08:06:88) 836

Ministers
Advertising 686w
Offices 250w

Ministers' visits abroad
Belize 604-5w
Bermuda 605w
Caribbean 607w
Cuba 239w
Falkland Islands 603w
Hong Kong 609-10w, 652-3w
Mexico 606w
Nicaragua 25w
Western European Union 610w

Ministry of Agriculture
475-6w
Civil servants' business appointments 139w
Equal opportunities 262w
Nuclear accidents 490w

Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food
see Ministry of Agriculture

Ministry of Defence
157w, (25:05:88) 339-48, 552-3w
BBC 325-6w
Civil service manpower 707w
Educational institutions 39-40w
Equal opportunities 389w
Insurance 187
Security industry 40-1w

Mink
Farms 683w

Minority Arts Advisory Service
256w

Miscampbell, Mr Norman
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 762-4,
Questions
Independent Living Fund 594w
Unemployment, Blackpool 500w

Mitchell, Mr Andrew
Debates etc.
Recess motions, Spring (25:05:88) 377
Questions
Agriculture, Exports 676w
AIDS Monitoring & Surveillance Committee 148w
Business statements 524
Dispensing doctors, Prescriptions 139-40w
Elderly, National income 559w
Youth training scheme 505w

Mitchell, Mr Austin
Debates etc.
Rover Group (08:06:88) 919, 933-7
Questions
Corporation tax, Tax yields 700w

***Mitchell, Mr David**, Minister of State for Transport*
Debates etc.
Railway accidents, Colwich junction (09:06:88) 1107-10
Settle-Carlisle railway (26:05:88) 608, 614-20
Questions
British Rail, Privatisation 590w
British Railways Board, Public appointments 451w
Bus services, Bexley 450w
Channel tunnel, Railway network 283w
Channel tunnel, Railway transport 590w
Employment opportunities, Channel tunnel 504w
Ferries, Boarding cards 282w
Ferries, Compensation 198
Ferries, Fire services 199
Ferries, Fires 200
Ferries, Merchant seamen 199-200
Ferries, Safety standards 58-9w, 150w, 344w
Ferries, Shipping safety 59w, 198-9, 280-1w
Ferries Safety Steering Committee, Barrett, Tony 173w
Ferries Safety Steering Committee, Pay 173w

***Mitchell, Mr David**—continued*
Fishing vessels, Shipping accidents 344-5w
Fishing vessels, Shipping safety 57w
Gee, Robert, Shipping accidents 590w
Heathrow Airport, Railway network 281w, 283w
London Regional Transport, Railway signals 730w
London Underground, Fires 58w
London Underground, Safety measures 56-7w
Marine surveys, Civil service manpower 59w
Railway closures 730w
Railway network, Private sector 452w
Railway network, Railway travel 452w
Ribblehead viaduct, Repairs & maintenance 589w
Sea transport, EC action 58w
Seafreight Freeway, Fires 197-8
Settle-Carlisle railway, Bus services 451w
Settle-Carlisle railway, J Jarvis & Sons 281w
Settle-Carlisle railway, Local government expenditure 282w, 451w
Settle-Carlisle railway, Official engagements 149w
Settle-Carlisle railway, Operating costs 451w
Settle-Carlisle railway, Private sector 57-8w
Settle-Carlisle railway, Railway closures 281-2w
Sprinter trains, Design 454w
Sprinter trains, Noise 454w
Wrecks, Departmental publications 150w

Mitterrand, Francois
685w

Mobility of disabled
Advisory services 345w

MOD
see Ministry of Defence

Modernisation
Law Hospital 316
NATO Nuclear Planning Group 155w, 182
Nuclear weapons 183-4

Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Debates etc.
Business statements (24:05:88) 202
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 467, 478
Recess motions, Spring (25:05:88) 352
Questions
Security, Northern Ireland 510-1

Monetary compensatory amounts
Pigmeat 493w, 674w, 970

Monklands
Youth training scheme 15w

Monopolies & Mergers Commission
327-8, (08:06:88) 850-99
Film industry 635w
Nationalised industries 245-6w

Monro, Sir Hector
Debates etc.
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Rep (23:05:88) 86-97 passim, 119, 130-3, 156, 159
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 400-2, 421, 424-7, 433, 442, 451-3, 458, 459
Rescue services, RAF Leuchars (23:05:88) 173-4
Questions
Hospitals, Scotland 315
Legal aid, Recovery of costs 722w
Legal aid, Scotland 192w
Nestlé, Dumfries 338
Scottish health boards, NHS finance 307
Student grants, Scotland 253w

Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Debates etc.
Manchester Airport (25:05:88) 354-6
Questions

***Montgomery, Sir Fergus**—continued*
Arms control negotiations 515
Republic of Ireland, Foreign policy 608w

Moonie, Dr Lewis
Questions
Armed forces storage depots, Safety measures 159w
Fishing vessels, Government grants 677w
Post-neonatal mortality, Death rate 670w
Scottish health boards, Finance 186w
South of Scotland Electricity Board, Coal 322

Moore, Thomas Connolly
Mental patients 267w

***Moore, Rt Hon John**, Secretary of State for Social Services*
Questions
Elderly, National income 559w
NHS, Hospital beds 269w
Nurses' training, Project 2000 90w

Moray
Maternity services 600w, (10:06:88) 1177-84

Morgan, Daniel
Death 448-9w

Morgan, Mr Rhodri
Debates etc.
Housing (23:05:88) 34, 35
Housing Bill, Rep (09:06:88) 1005
Questions
Blood transfusion services, Wales 10-1

Morley, Mr Elliot
Questions
Cereals, Bread 976
Cervical cancer, Medical education 96-8w
Cervical cancer, Screening 271-2w
Defence equipment, Western Europe 160w
Ferrier, Charles, Prison escapes 444w
Furs, Farm diversification scheme 683w
Turkey, EC accession 836-7

Morris, Rt Hon Alfred
Questions
Community charge, Voluntary work 305w
Concessionary television licences, Fees & charges 697w
Concessionary television licences, Handicapped 697w
Deaf, Handicapped children 95w
Members' pensions, Top Salaries Review Body 103-4w

Morris, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
Property Services Agency (25:05:88) 345

Morrison, Sir Charles
Debates etc.
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 423-4

***Morrison, Mr Peter**, Minister of State for Energy*
Questions
Advertising, Expenditure 585w
Domestic energy conservation, Departmental initiatives 631-2w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 632w
Energy conservation, Scotland 172w
Energy consumption 231-2w
Energy Efficiency Office 632-3w
Gas disconnections 693w
North Sea oil, Offshore fixed platforms 349-50w
North Sea oil, Oil pollution control 101w
Offshore fixed platforms, Leave 102w
Oil industry safety, Fees & charges 101-2w
Petroleum production licences 347w
Petroleum production licences, Land ownership & tenure 347-8w
Petroleum (Production) Regulations 1976 348w

Mortgage relief
540w
Costs 700-2w

Mortgages
Supplementary benefits 724w

Moss, Mr Malcolm
Debates etc.
Local Authority Searches & Enquiries etc Bill, 1R (25:05:88) 349-50
Questions
Country Landowners' Association, Official engagements 678-9w
East West relations, International conferences 610w

Mother & baby units
Prisoners 1w, 645w

Mothers
AIDS 400w

Motherwell
Hospitals 316

Motor sports
Defence land 326w
Forestry Commission 251w

Motor vehicle theft
Army in Northern Ireland 338w

Motorcycles
Noise control 56w

Motorways
Driving 453w
Finance 589-90w
Road construction 628w

Mowlam, Ms Marjorie
Debates etc.
"Developments in the European Community Six Monthly Report" (26:05:88) 575, 583, 584
Geriatrics, Health services (24:05:88) 305
Questions
Business statements 533-4
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Opinion polls 562w
Examinations, Northern Ireland 508
Occupied territories, Death 613w
Restart programme, Handicapped 707
Security, Northern Ireland 512
Social security reform, Northern Ireland 329w

***Moynihan, Mr Colin**, Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Sport)*
Questions
Advertising, Expenditure 586w
Air pollution control, Standards enforcement 301w
Barn owls 355w
Birds, Farm buildings 78w
British Waterways Board, Privatisation 478w
British Waterways Board, Takeovers 356w
Chlorofluorocarbons, Air pollution 648-9w
Chlorofluorocarbons, Ozone layer 481w
Council for Environmental Conservation, Official engagements 298w
Council for the Protection of Rural England, Official engagements 298w
Detergents, Phosphates 300w
Domestic wastes, Imports 652w
Dover Castle, Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission for England 310w
Environmental policy, EC law 731-2w
Football, Violence 355w
Hazardous wastes, Ports 303w
Hazardous wastes, Transport of hazardous materials 480w
ID Investment Development, Shareholders 356w
Lead free petrol, Garages & petrol stations 82w
Litter, Waste disposal 480w
National Consumer Council, Official engagements 298w
National Federation of Anglers, Official engagements 298w
National Rivers Authority Advisory Committee, Business expenses 311w

***Moynihan, Mr Colin**—continued*
National Rivers Authority Advisory Committee, Public appointments 80w, 311w
National Trust, Official engagements 298w
Nature Conservancy Council, Ramsar Convention 306w
Nature conservation, EC action 310w
North Sea, International conferences 298-9w, 302-3w
North Sea, Pollutants 299-300w
North Sea, Pollution control 299-302w
North Sea, Pollution monitoring 301w
Official engagements, British Waterways Board 224w
Official engagements, Countryside Commission 223w
Official engagements, Friends of the Earth 222w
Official engagements, Historic buildings 222-3w
Official engagements, Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission for England 225w
Official engagements, League Against Cruel Sports 224w
Official engagements, Long Distance Walkers' Association 224w
Official engagements, Nature Conservancy Council 224w
Official engagements, Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive 350w
Official engagements, Ordnance Survey 224w
Official engagements, Ramblers' Association 224w
Official engagements, Royal parks 223-4w
Official engagements, Sports 358-60w
Official engagements, Water authorities 223w
Official engagements, Water Authorities' Association 224-5w
Official engagements, Water supply industry 223w
Radioactive waste disposal, Capenhurst 481w
Radioactive waste disposal, Magnox reactors 312w
Radioactive waste disposal, Nuclear power stations 9w
Radioactive waste disposal, Seas & oceans 648w
Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee, Public appointments 357w
Radioisotopes, Transport of radioactive materials 360-1w
Rivers, Water authorities 67-8w
Sea pollution, Pollution control 350w
Sewage, Agricultural land 115w
Sewage, Water pollution 479w, 587w
Sewers, Costs 66w
Sites of special scientific interest, Somerset 304w
Sports, Public order policing 477w
Tipping of waste, Environmental health 736w
Tipping of waste, Gases 736w
Tipping of waste, Pollution monitoring 647-8w, 736w
Tipping of waste, Warwickshire 736w
Wadden Sea, Pollution monitoring 303w
Waste disposal 646-7w
Waste disposal, Air pollution control 478w
Waste disposal, Judgments 355-6w
Waste disposal, Law reform 646w
Waste disposal, Pollution control 736w
Waste disposal, Seas & oceans 302w
Waste disposal, Water pollution 647w
Water authorities, Capital investment 351-4w
Water authorities, Debts 352w
Water authorities, Expenditure 67w
Water authorities, Finance 351-2w
Water authorities, Financial targets 66w
Water authorities, Income 66-7w
Water authorities, Public sector assets 66w
Water authorities, Shares 313w
Water charges, Water authorities 81w
Water charges, Water meters 64w

***Moynihan, Mr Colin**—continued*
Water distribution, Corrosion 67w
Water meters, Costs 64-5w
Water pollution, Beaches 355w
Water pollution, EC action 310-1w
Water pollution, Fixed penalties 478w
Water pollution, Pesticides 63w
Water pollution, Pollution control 307w, 311w
Water pollution, Pollution monitoring 63-4w
Water pollution, Prosecutions 309w
Water supply 67w
Water supply disconnections, Thames Water Authority 63w
Water supply industry, Bye laws 482w
Water supply industry, Orders & regulations 226w
Water supply industry, Privatisation 65-6w, 353w

MRC
see Medical Research Council

MSC
see Manpower Services Commission

Mudd, Mr David
Questions
Foreign tourists, South East Asia 696w

Mullin, Mr Chris
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 768, 791-5
Questions
Bombings, Birmingham 277-8w
Bombings, Guildford 445w
Business statements 529
China, Human rights 834
China, Official engagements 616w
Consultants, Inland Revenue 255w
Hospital catering, Fish 270w
NATO Nuclear Planning Group, Military aircraft 154-5w
Prisoners, Northern Ireland 505-6

Multinational companies
Development aid 233-4w

Multiple sclerosis
Social security benefits rules 573w

Murphy, Mr Paul
Questions
Community charge, Wales 2-3
Rate support grants, Torfaen Borough Council 403-4w
Torfaen Borough Council, Judgments 365w
Waste disposal, Judgments 355-6w

Museums & galleries
134-5w
Admission charges 260w
Arts finance 135w
Income 259-62w
Property transfer 258-60w

Mutual & balanced force reductions
Arms control negotiations 615w

Myalgic encephalomyelitis
577w
British Medical Association 577w
Official engagements 577w

NAAC
see National Association of Arts Centres

NACODS
see National Association Colliery Overmen Deputies Shotfirers

Namibia
South Africa 603w
Uranium 7-8w

Nantergannick Quarry
Equipment 315w

NAO
see National Audit Office

National Association Colliery Overmen Deputies Shotfirers
Mines & Quarries Act 1954 391-2w

National Association of Arts Centres
256w

National Audit Office
16-7, 562w
BAOR 182
Civil service dispersal 15

National Coal Board
see British Coal Corporation

National Consumer Council
Official engagements 298w

National Council for Vocational Qualifications
28w

National Deaf Children's Society
95w

National Dock Labour Board
Dock workers 662w

National Engineering Laboratory
Standing Order No 20 applications (08:06:88) 843

National Farmers' Union
400w, 598w, 677w, 971
Official engagements 482w, 677w

National Farmers' Union of Scotland
Official engagements 186w

National Federation of Anglers
Official engagements 298w

National finance
see Treasury

National Girobank
Ministerial statements (07:06:88) 721-31
Privatisation (07:06:88) 721-31

National income
51-2w, 468w
Defence expenditure 162w
Elderly 559w
Housing construction 733-5w

National Museum of Wales
Public Accounts Committee 43w

National Radiological Protection Board
708w

National Rivers Authority
80w
Public appointments 4
Wales 4, 408-9w

National Rivers Authority Advisory Committee
Business expenses 311w
Public appointments 80w, 311w

National savings
Privatisation 374w

National Trust
Official engagements 298w

National Union of Mineworkers
Mines & Quarries Act 1954 392w

National Union of Students
688-9w

Nationalised industries
Finance 50w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission 245-6w
Scotland 185w

NATO
25w, 40w, 162w
Armed forces deployment 548w
Conventional weapons 160-1w, 190
Defence procurement 189
Navy 158w
Nuclear weapons 152-3w

NATO ministerial meetings
Official engagements 162w

NATO Nuclear Planning Group
161-2w
Military aircraft 154-5w, 182-3

NATO Nuclear Planning Group—continued
Modernisation 155w, 182

Nature Conservancy Council
Official engagements 224w, 678w
Ramsar Convention 306w

Nature conservation
Badgers 678w
Cairngorms 121-2w
EC action 310w
Land drainage 381-2w
Northern Ireland 381-2w

Navy
151w
Conventional weapons 162w
NATO 158w
Nuclear weapons 161w
Trident 186
Warships 185

NCB
see British Coal Corporation

NCC
see National Consumer Council

***Needham, Mr Richard**, Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland*
Questions
Adult training centres, Glasvey 31w
Eastern Health & Social Services Board 509
Eastern Health & Social Services Board, NHS finance 508-10
Economic situation, Belfast 332-3w
Electricity tariffs, Northern Ireland 504
Employment opportunities, Belfast 327w, 332w
European Charter of Local Self-Government, Northern Ireland 462w
Health services, Northern Ireland 330w
Health services, Portavogie 30w
Hospital beds, Antrim 620w
Hospitals, Antrim 620w
Hospitals, Northern Ireland 645w
Invalid care allowances, Northern Ireland 382w
Land drainage, Government grants 381-2w
Land drainage, Nature conservation 381-2w
Lough Neagh, Government grants 381-2w
Lough Neagh, Land drainage 380w
Lough Neagh, Sites of special scientific interest 380-1w
Lough Neagh, Special protection areas 380w
NHS, Expenditure 382-3w
Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Employment discrimination 455-6w
Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Equal opportunities 619w
Parking, Newtownards 621w
Parking offences, Newry 693w
Property development, Newtownards 619-20w
Public bodies, Northern Ireland 620w
Road works, Comber 31-2w
Sinn Fein, Gaelic language 120w
Social Fund, Northern Ireland 326w, 503-4
Social security recipients, Northern Ireland 328w
Social security reform, Northern Ireland 219w, 329w, 504-5
Street lighting, Newry 622-3w
Supplementary benefits, Farmers 622w
Supplementary benefits, Nursing homes 622w
Urban development grants, Northern Ireland 621-2w

Negligence
Compensation 409-10w

Neighbourhood watch schemes
108w

NEL
see National Engineering Laboratory

Nellist, Mr Dave
Debates etc.
Air accidents, Coventry (07:06:88) 736
Girobank, Privatisation (07:06:88) 730
Rover Group (08:06:88) 904, 910, 911
Questions
Business statements 990-1
Restart programme 707
Social security reform, Coventry 422-4w

Nestle
327-8, (25:05:88) 493-500, 697-8w, (08:06:88) 850-99
Dumfries 338

Netway communication system
544-5w

New businesses
29w, 429-30w

New clauses
Speaker's rulings & statements (07:06:88) 742, 743, 747

New towns
Public sector housing 124-5w
Public sector housing sales 125w
Scotland 192-4w, 250-1w
Written questions 250w

New towns development corporations
Disclosure of information 123w
Property transfer 123-4w
Public appointments 123w
Public sector housing 518-20w
Scotland 123-4w

New Zealand
Butter 385w, 972-3
Ethnic groups 118w
Sheep meat 492w

Newcastle-under-Lyme
Leisure facilities 648w

Newcastle upon Tyne Town Moor Bill (HL) 1986/87
Debates etc.
2R order read (26:05:88) 501, (09:06:88) 969

Newham
Cattle diseases 684w
Exceptional needs payments 95w

Newport
Unemployment 11

Newry
Customs 528w
Parking offences 461w, 693w
Street lighting 622-3w

News on Sunday
117w

Newspaper press
Disclosure of information 401w

Newton, Rt Hon Tony, Minister of State for Health
Debates etc.
Women, Health (10:06:88) 1124
Questions
Abortion, Clinics 419w
Abortion, Fees & charges 418w
Abortion, Licensing 419w
Abortion, Prosecutions 419w
AIDS 265-6w
AIDS, Babies 561w
AIDS, Blood tests 88w
AIDS, Death 88w
AIDS, District health authorities 411w
AIDS, Leicestershire Health Authority 411w

Newton, Rt Hon Tony—continued
AIDS Monitoring & Surveillance Committee 148w
Benzodiazepines, Drug industry 728w
Broadmoor Hospital, Land values 83w
Burnley Pendle & Rossendale Health Authority, Finance 82-4w
Cash limits, Dept of Health & Social Security 216-7w
Child Abuse in Cleveland Judicial Inquiry 566w
Child care 142w
Children & Young Persons (Amendment) Act 1986, Members' correspondence 574w
Community care 269-70w
Community care, Public Accounts Committee 89w
Community care, Vocational training 269w
Community Care Review 89w
Community health services, Costs 83w
Community nurses, Psychiatric nurses 85-6w, 92w
Cruelty to children, London boroughs 267-8w
Cyclotron Trust, Government grants 565w
Dispensing doctors, Prescriptions 139-40w
District health authorities, NHS administration 84-6w, 140-2w, 147w
Doctors, Contracts of employment 88-9w
Doctors, Women 579w
Family doctors, Psychiatry 91w
Family practitioner committees, Finance 86-7w
Foetal tissue, House of Commons questions 92w
Foetal tissue, Medical ethics 557-8w
Foetal tissue, Transplant surgery 555-8w
Health service ancillary staff, Manpower 265-8w
Health services, Per capita costs 572w
Hospices, Nurses 416-7w
Hospital patients, Teaching hospitals 146w
Hospital waiting lists, Dartford & Gravesham Health Authority 217w
Hospital waiting lists, Information 217w
Junior hospital doctors, Working hours 579-80w
Mentally ill, Mental health community care 91w
Midwives, Medical education 93w
NHS, Temporary staff 212-4w
NHS administration, Temporary staff 214w
Nurses, Free movement of labour 270w
Nurses, Merseyside 724-6w
Nurses, Pay settlements 271w
Nurses' training, Recruitment 84w
Opren, Prescriptions 87-8w
Pharmacists, Manpower 86w
Psychiatry, NHS finance 577w
Regional health authorities, Finance 419-20w
St Peter's Hospital, London 593-4w
St Peter's Hospital, London, Hospital closures 726w
St Peter's Hospital, London, Property transfer 726w

Newtown Hamilton
Security 461w

Newtownards
Parking 621w
Property development 619-20w

NFA
see National Federation of Anglers

NFU
see National Farmers' Union

NFUS
see National Farmers' Union of Scotland

NHS
194
Ayrshire 187w
Buildings 273w
Contracts for services 146w, 572w
Cornwall 591w
Expenditure 200w, 382-3w
Hearing aids 591-2w

NHS—continued
Hospital beds 269w
Land values 89-90w
Lotteries 447w
Northern Ireland 382-3w
Patients 571-2w
Prosthetics 561w, 654w
Scotland 346w
Temporary staff 212-4w
Wales 200w

NHS administration
District health authorities 84-6w, 140-2w, 147w
Temporary staff 214w

NHS & private practice
Hospitals 92-3w

NHS complaints
Government assistance 578w

NHS finance
Eastern Health & Social Services Board 508-10
Employment 705w
Nottingham Health Authority (25:05:88) 375-8
Psychiatry 577w
Scotland 16w
Scottish health boards 307-8
South Manchester Health Authority 517
Wales 295w, 407w

NI Office
see Northern Ireland Office

Nicaragua
Development aid 625-6w
Ministers' visits abroad 25w
Official engagements 615w
Overseas aid 474w
Peace negotiations 615w

Nicholls, Mr Patrick, Under-Secretary of State for Employment
Debates etc.
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (24:05:88) 251-5, 262-4, 270-1, 274, 287-9, 294-6
Questions
Building industry 320-2w
Building industry, Industrial accidents 319w
Building industry, Industrial health & safety 319-20w, 504-5w, 509-10w
Building industry, Prosecutions 321w
Building industry, Safety 708-9
Building sites, Greater London 320-2w, 509w
Community programme 663w
Dock labour scheme, Dock workers 211w
Dock labour scheme, Retirement 314w
Dock workers, National Dock Labour Board 662w
Economic League, Industrial relations 132w
Employment agencies, Licensing 662w
Employment schemes, Social security reform 506-7w
Employment training 496-7w
Employment training, Aids for handicapped 711w
Employment training, Child care 497w
Employment training, Community work 701-2
Employment training, Handicapped workers 28w
Employment training, Leisure 663w
Employment training, Pay incentives 392w
Employment training, Social security benefits rules 497w
Employment training, Trades Union Congress 497w
Employment training, Training allowances 497w
Employment training, Women 702
Enterprise allowance scheme 663w
Equal Opportunities Commission, Official engagements 503w
Equal pay 495w
Escalators, Industrial health & safety 316w

Nicholls, Mr Patrick—continued
Escalators, Warning signs 316-7w
Factory Inspectorate, Manpower 501w
Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974 708
Health & Safety Executive, Government assistance 709
Health & Safety Executive, Manpower 711w
Industrial accidents, Factory Inspectorate 710-1w
Industrial health & safety 506w
Industrial health & safety, Chemical industries 663w
Industrial health & safety, EC countries 709
Industrial health & safety, Factory Inspectorate 709
Industrial health & safety, Legionnaires' disease 482w
Industrial safety, Cranes 395w
Job training scheme 661w
Job training scheme, Per capita costs 597w
Low pay, Prosecutions 395-6w
Mines & Quarries Act 1954 392w
Mines & Quarries Act 1954, British Coal Corporation 132w
Mines & Quarries Act 1954, National Association Colliery Overmen Deputies Shotfirers 391-2w
Mines & Quarries Act 1954, National Union of Mineworkers 392w
Mines & Quarries Inspectorate, Prosecutions 315-6w, 395w
Mining, Law reform 211w
Mining, Orders & regulations 28-9w
National Council for Vocational Qualifications 28w
Parental leave, EC countries 393w
Part-time employment, Employment protection 501w
Penlee quarry, Industrial safety 315w
Penlee quarry, Mines & Quarries Inspectorate 314w
Quarrying, Cranes 315w
Quarrying, Industrial health & safety 316w
Redundancy, Northern region 501w
Redundancy pay, Equal opportunities 394w
"Restrictions on Employment of Young People & the Removal of Sex Discrimination in Legislation Consultation Paper" 393-4w
Skillcentres, Perivale 314w
Stallite Batteries, Factory Inspectorate 319-20w
Tenosynovitis, Poultry 664w
Trades Union Congress, Official engagements 662w
Training, Government grants 504w
Unemployed workers centres, Employment training 506w
Unfair dismissal, Trade unions 509w
Voluntary work, Unemployment benefits 502w
Youth employment, International Labour Organisation 313w

Nicholson, Mr David
Debates etc.
Vacant land, Land use (27:05:88) 666
Questions
Country Landowners' Association, Official engagements 678-9w
Czechoslovakia, Foreign policy 617w
Manufactured goods, Overseas trade 601-2w
Sheep, Radioactivity 981
Small Firms Service 503w

Nicholson, Miss Emma
Debates etc.
Women, Health (10:06:88) 1163-6
Questions
Bovine somatotropin 972
Mexico, Ministers' visits abroad 606w

Nickson, David
166w

Nigeria
Water supply 112w

NIREX
see Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive

Nitrates
Pollution control 263w

No-strike agreements
Air traffic control 729-30w

Noise
Sprinter trains 454w

Noise control
Motorcycles 56w

Norfolk
Sugar beet 971

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
see NATO

North East region
Road construction (25:05:88) 378-9

North Eastern Library & Education Board
Employment discrimination 463w

North Killingholme Cargo Terminal Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
2R order read (26:05:88) 501, (09:06:88) 969

North Korea
Foreign policy 196w
Recognition of states 196w

North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board
Electricity generation 722-3w

North Peckham task force
Costs 690w

North Sea
Defence equipment 157w, 544w
Fisheries 673w
International conferences 298-9w, 302-3w
Offshore structures 545w
Pollutants 299-300w
Pollution control 299-302w
Pollution monitoring 301w

North Sea oil
Employers' contributions 146w
Offshore fixed platforms 349-50w
Oil pollution control 101w

North Staffordshire Health Authority
Finance 671w

North West region
Defence contracts 37w
Employment 596-8w, 661w
Tourism 495w
Unemployment 500w

North Western Regional Health Authority
Finance 82-4w
Psychiatric nurses 85-6w

Northern Ireland
Appeals 332w
Arrests 334w
Artificial insemination of animals 462w, 623w
Assaults on police 338w
Bail 333-4w
Baton rounds 285w, 337-8w
Bombs 221-2w
Business 510
Civil servants 528w, 552w
Civil service manpower 602-3w
Community charge 330w
Community relations 505
Criminal investigation 36-7w
Demonstrations 457w
Economic policy 513
Electricity tariffs 504

Northern Ireland—continued
Electronic surveillance 327w
Employment 619-20w
Employment discrimination 32-5w, 219-21w, (25:05:88) 351-4, 456-7w
Employment opportunities 457w
Equal opportunities 331w, 340w, 513
European Charter of Local Self-Government 462w
Examinations 507-8
Exceptional needs payments 503-4
Farmers 622w
Firearms 35w, 222w, 338-40w, 624w
Foreign investment in UK 219w
Further education 31w
Further education teachers 458w
Gaelic language 30-1w
Government grants 381-2w
Hard core unemployed 703
Health services 330w
Helicopters 512
Hospitals 645w
Industry 454-5w
Information services 36w
Invalid care allowances 382w
IRA 330-1w
Job centres 327w
Kidnapping 36w
Languages education 457-8w
Local Enterprise Development Unit 510
Manufacturing industries 619-20w
Milk 461w, 463w
Nature conservation 381-2w
NHS 382-3w
Nursing homes 622w
Parole 276w
Personal social services 330w
Photographs 36w
Pigmeat 970-1
Police informers 333w
Political parties 329-30w
Primary education 458-9w
Prison population 335-7w
Prison sentences 337w, 507
Prisoners 460w, 505-7
Prisoners' transfers 275-6w
Public bodies 620w
Pupils 508
Remand in custody 333-5w, 337w
School meals 328w
Schools 329w
Security 36w, 328w, 331w, 510-2
Social Fund 326w, 503-4
Social Security Commissioners 626w
Social security recipients 328w
Social security reform 219w, 329w, 504-5
Trials 623-4w
Unemployment 327w
Urban development grants 621-2w
Weapons 327-8w

Northern Ireland Commissioner for Complaints
458w

Northern Ireland Education & Library Boards
620w

Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Acts
Questions
Arrests 334w

Northern Ireland Health & Social Services Boards
330w, 420w

Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Employment discrimination 455-6w
Equal opportunities 619w

Northern Ireland Office
36w
Equal opportunities 381w
Nuclear accidents 693w

Northern Ireland Prison Service
Cost effectiveness 461-2w

Northern region
Factories (08:06:88) 962-8
Hard core unemployed 703-4

Northern region—continued
Industrial investment 540w
Official engagements 102-3w
Redundancy 501w
Regional development grants 177-8w

Northumbria Police Authority
Police civilians 439-40w

Norway
Official engagements 606w

Nottingham Health Authority
NHS finance (25:05:88) 375-8

Nottinghamshire
Coal mine closures 349w

NRPB
see National Radiological Protection Board

NSHEB
see North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board

Nuclear accidents
Armed forces training 553w
Ministry of Agriculture 490w
Northern Ireland Office 693w
Nuclear weapons deployment 161w
Scottish Office 520w
Sellafield 45w
USSR 430-1w, 490w, 520w, 693w
Welsh Office 430-1w

Nuclear disarmament
Verification 24-5w

Nuclear fuel reprocessing
Sellafield 631w

Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive
173w, (25:05:88) 369-71, 586w
Official engagements 187w, 350w
Radioactive waste disposal 545w

Nuclear power
Trades Union Congress 7w

Nuclear power stations
Radioactive waste disposal 9w

Nuclear safeguards
West Germany 26w

Nuclear safety
Sellafield 321w

Nuclear submarines
Radioactive waste disposal 160w, 547w

Nuclear test ban
Warsaw Pact 195w

Nuclear weapons
Arms control negotiations 182-3
Defence Estimates 182
Modernisation 183-4
NATO 152-3w
Navy 161w
USSR 160w

Nuclear weapons deployment
Cruise missiles 40w
Nuclear accidents 161w
USA 161w

Nuclear weapons tests
Exservicemen 708w

NUM
see National Union of Mineworkers

Nurses
Birmingham Children's Hospital 148-9w
Free movement of labour 270w
Hospices 416-7w
Merseyside 724-6w
Pay settlements 47w, 120-1w, 271w, 407w
Scotland 120-1w, 253w
Wales 47w

Nurses' training
Project 2000 90w
Recruitment 84w

Nursing homes
Northern Ireland 622w
Private health services 411w
Supplementary benefits 622w

NUS
see National Union of Students

Nutrition labelling
490-1w

OAL
see Office of Arts & Libraries

O'Brien, Mr William
Questions
Rent increases, West Yorkshire 77w
Rents, West Yorkshire 77-8w
Wealth distribution, City of London 514

Occupational pensions
Local government staff 116-7w, 303-4w
Scotland 17w
Social security benefits overpayment 17w
Widowers' benefits 216w
Women 396w

Occupied territories
Armed conflict 613-4w
Death 613w
Human rights 827-8
Palestine 613-4w, 828, 831-2
Palestine Liberation Organisation 827

ODA
see Overseas Development Administration

OECD countries
Development aid 475w

Offences against children
Sexual offences 3-4w

Office of Arts & Libraries
Accountants 258w
Equal opportunities 257w

Office of Population Censuses & Surveys
574-5w
Operating costs 421w

Office of the Minister for the Civil Service
see Minister for the Civil Service

Office of the Social Security Commissioners
see Social Security Commissioners

Office of Water Regulation
Wales 200w

Offices
Greater London 62-3w
Ministers 250w
Overseas Development Administration 688w

Official cars
Lead free petrol 78w

Official engagements
103w, 229-30w, 407-8w, 475w, 685-6w
Avon 103w
Basingstoke 102w
British Poultry Federation 682w
British Waterways Board 224w
British Wool Marketing Board 674w
Cameroon 616w
Canada 608w
Canary Wharf 229w
Central Electricity Generating Board 45-6w
Ceramic industries 243w
China 616w
Church Commissioners 13
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities 188w
Council for Environmental Conservation 298w
Council for the Protection of Rural England 298w
Council of Europe 611w
Country Landowners' Association 678-9w
Countryside Commission 223w
Cyprus 610w
Denmark 102w, 604w

Official engagements—continued
EC Foreign Affairs Council 618-9w
EC Labour & Social Affairs Council 700-1
Equal Opportunities Commission 503w
Friends of the Earth 222w
Harland & Wolff 330w
Health Care International 515-6w
Historic buildings 222-3w
Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission for England 225w
Home Grown Cereals Authority 673w, 981
Hungary 604w, 610-1w
International Whaling Commission 490w
Ivory Coast 611w
Japan 239w
Keeni Meeni Services 3w
League Against Cruel Sports 224w
Liverpool 354-5w, 375-6w
Long Distance Walkers' Association 224w
Meat & Livestock Commission 674w
Mersey Barrage Company 8w
Milk Marketing Board 482w, 674-5w, 972-3
Myalgic encephalomyelitis 577w
National Consumer Council 298w
National Farmers' Union 482w, 677w
National Farmers' Union of Scotland 186w
National Federation of Anglers 298w
National Trust 298w
NATO ministerial meetings 162w
Nature Conservancy Council 224w, 678w
Nicaragua 615w
Northern region 102-3w
Norway 606w
Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive 187w, 350w
Ordnance Survey 224w
Pensioners 562w
Poland 615-6w
Potato Marketing Board 674w
Ramblers' Association 224w
Rogerstone 229w
Royal parks 223-4w
Scottish Development Agency 308
Scottish Trades Union Congress 363w
Sea Fish Industry Authority 682w
Settle-Carlisle railway 149w
Soldiers' & Airmen's Scripture Readers' Association 158w
Sports 358-60w
Tenant Farmers' Association 682w
Trades Union Congress 662w
Turkey 608w
United Nations 831
USA 606w, 616w, 837-8
Water authorities 223w
Water Authorities' Association 224-5w
Water supply industry 223w
Women's Farmers' Union 676w

Official Receiver
Cemetery Assets United Kingdom 426w
Wyebrow, John 426w

Official residences
Housing standards 319

Official secrets
Firth of Forth 549w

Official visits
Mandela, Nelson 617w
Togo 617w
Turkey 476w

Offshore fixed platforms
Leave 102w
North Sea oil 349-50w

Offshore structures
North Sea 545w

Ofwat
see Office of Water Regulation

Ogwr valley
Handicapped 13

Oil industry safety
Fees & charges 101-2w

Oil pollution control
North Sea oil 101w

Olaquindox
370w, 414-5w, 488w
Animal feed 384w

Old persons' pensions
Age addition 216w, 576w
Costs 215w

O'Neill, Mr Martin
Questions
Defence, Merchant seamen 186
South of Scotland Electricity Board, Coal 321-2

Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Questions
Juries, Languages 449w
Salmon, Agricultural research 263w
Sewage, Water pollution 479w, 587w
Wrecks, Departmental publications 150w

OPCS
see Office of Population Censuses & Surveys

Open University
Educational finance 11w

Opencast mining
Planning inquiries 80-1w
Planning permission 117w
Town & country planning 586-7w

Operating costs
Office of Population Censuses & Surveys 421w
Settle-Carlisle railway 451w

Opinion polls
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 562w

Oppenheim, Mr Phillip
Debates etc.
Rover Group (08:06:88) 904, 908-9
Rowntree (08:06:88) 873
Questions
Economic situation, Unemployment 601w
Scottish Development Agency, Official engagements 308
Vacancies 501w

Opposition
Defence 713

Opposition days
Housing (23:05:88) 24-79
Rover Group (08:06:88) 900-43
Rowntree (08:06:88) 850-99

Opposition parties
Finance 104-5w

Opposition Whips' Office
104-5w
Carpets 81w

Optra
Prescriptions 87-8w

Opticians
Liverpool Prison 171w
Prisoners 171w

Oral questions
Speaker's rulings & statements (25:05:88) 313, (07:06:88) 727, 799

Orange Order
Demonstrations 457w

Orders & regulations
Mining 28-9w
Water supply industry 226w

Ordnance Survey
Official engagements 224w

Orkney
Technical & vocational education initiative 393w

Overseas aid
Angola 612w
Fiji 196w
Nicaragua 474w
Public expenditure 105w
South Africa 825
Southern Africa 6-8w

Overseas development
see Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Overseas Development Administration
105w, 634w
Cash limits 350w
Civil service dispersal 186w
Offices 688w

Overseas investment
373w
South Africa 243w
USSR 178w

Overseas students
Immigration rules 444w

Overseas trade
China 834
Customs & Excise 372w
Foreign policy 614w
Manufactured goods 601-2w

Overtime
Manufacturing industries 505w

Owen, Rt Hon David
Questions
House of Lords, Parliamentary reform 192

Ozone layer
Chlorofluorocarbons 481w

P & O
58-9w
Armed forces training 324-5w
Industrial training 324-5w, 391w

PAC
see Public Accounts Committee

Page, Mr Richard
Questions
Belize, Ministers' visits abroad 604w
Cash limits, Dept of Trade & Industry 371w
Insurance Brokers Registration Council, Financial services 635w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission, Nationalised industries 245-6w
Regional enterprise grants, Cash limits 371w
Sugar, Imports 979

Paice, Mr James
Questions
Jobclubs 505w
Youth employment, School leaving 709w

Paint
Sheep 489-90w

Paisley
Unemployment 15w

Paisley, Rev Ian
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 753, 776-81
Questions
Business statements 989-90
Electricity tariffs, Northern Ireland 504
Pigmeat, Northern Ireland 970-1
Prison sentences, Northern Ireland 507
Royal Ulster Constabulary, Recruitment 331w
Sinn Fein, Gaelic language 120w

Palace of Westminster

Palace of Westminster—continued
81w, 106w, 366w, 477w
Access to Parliament 18, 664w
Accidents 664w
Cash dispensing 22w
Contract cleaning 117w
Gun sports 476w
Legionnaires' disease 303w
Manpower 664w
Members' facilities 17, 19
Press conferences 22w
Sanitation 23w, 82w, 479w
Screening 19-20
Shops 17
Sports facilities 477w
Telephones 23w
Water supply 736-8w

Palestine
Occupied territories 613-4w, 828, 831-2

Palestine Liberation Organisation
26w
Occupied territories 827
USA 838

Palterton School
School buildings 235w

Panama
USA 614w

Paper industry
Scotland 657w

Parachuting
Defence equipment 545w

Parental leave
EC countries 393w

Parents' rights
Unmarried fathers 698w

Parking
Access to Parliament 106w
Newtownards 621w
Westminster bridge 439w

Parking offences
Newry 461w, 693w

Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil, Secretary of State for Energy
Questions
British Coal Corporation, Deficit grants 232w
British Coal Corporation, External financing limits 231-3w
Cash limits, Dept of Energy 233w
Energy prices, Manufacturing industries 230w
Energy prices, Unfair competition 349w
Equal opportunities, Dept of Energy 348-9w
Housing insulation, Liverpool 101w
Radioactive waste disposal 233w

Parliamentary gifts
St Christopher & Nevis (26:05:88) 535

Parliamentary parking
Parliamentary security 366w

Parliamentary privilege
Speaker's rulings & statements (08:06:88) 844

Parliamentary reform
House of Lords 192

Parliamentary security
Parliamentary parking 366w

Parole
Northern Ireland 276w
Republic of Ireland 276w

Parry, Mr Robert
Questions
Criminal injuries compensation 277w
Criminal Injuries Compensation Board 276w
Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, Administrative delays 276w

Parry, Mr Robert—continued
Defence industries, Civil servants' business appointments 153w
Ferries, Safety standards 58-9w
Housing insulation, Liverpool 101w
Liverpool, Official engagements 354-5w, 375-6w
North Korea, Foreign policy 196w
North Korea, Recognition of states 196w
Unemployment, Liverpool 499w
Unemployment, Northern Ireland 327w

Part-time employment
Employment protection 501w

Passports
Administrative delays 643w

Patchett, Mr Terry
Questions
Building industry 320-2w
Building industry, Industrial accidents 319w
Building industry, Industrial health & safety 319-20w, 509-10w
Building industry, Prosecutions 321w
Building sites, Greater London 320-2w, 509w
Fisheries, North Sea 673w
NATO Nuclear Planning Group 155w
Stallite Batteries, Factory Inspectorate 319-20w

Patients
NHS 571-2w
Scottish health boards 522w

Patients' transport
Highland Health Board 189w
Scotland 189-90w
Western Isles Health Board 189w

Patnick, Mr Irvine
Questions
Butter, Intervention stocks 674w
Civil defence, Emergency planning 2w

Patten, Mr Chris, Minister of State for Overseas Development
Questions
Africa, School admission 467-73w
Aga Khan Foundation, Food aid from UK 473-4w
Angola, Overseas aid 612w
Cash limits, Overseas Development Administration 350w
Development aid 7w
Development aid, Multinational companies 233-4w
Development aid, OECD countries 475w
Malaysia, Water supply 105w
Nicaragua, Development aid 625-6w
Nicaragua, Overseas aid 474w
Overseas aid, Public expenditure 105w
Population 468w
South America, Employment 474w
Southern Africa, Overseas aid 6-8w
World Bank 475w

Patten, Mr John, Minister of State at the Home Office
Questions
Body searches, Prisons 2w
Bombings, Birmingham 277-8w
Bombings, Guildford 445w
Civil defence, Emergency planning 2w, 273w
Civil defence, Telecommunications technology 167-8w
Criminal injuries compensation 277w
Criminal Injuries Compensation Board 276w
Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, Administrative delays 276w
Habitual offenders, Leicester Prison 278w
Intoxicating Substances (Supply) Act 1985, Punishment 169w
Juries, Conscientious objectors 106w
Neighbourhood watch schemes 108w
Prison sentences, Women 275w
Probation, Ethnic monitoring 2w

Patten, Mr John—continued
Racial disadvantage, Government grants 437-8w
Sexual offences, Men 3w
Sexual offences, Offences against children 3-4w

Pawsey, Mr James
Questions
A Level Review Committee 433-4w
Headteachers, Early retirement 689-90w
Headteachers, Recruitment 690w
Kuwait, Foreign policy 612w
Tipping of waste, Environmental health 736w
Tipping of waste, Gases 736w
Tipping of waste, Pollution monitoring 736w
Tipping of waste, Warwickshire 736w

Pay
Crown Prosecution Service 284-5w
Economic regions 508-10w
Ferries Safety Steering Committee 173w
Further education teachers 341-2w
Humberside 985
Ingham, Bernard 16
Lord Chancellor (26:05:88) 600
Regional development grants 370w
Remploy 313-4w
Scotland 361-2w
Teachers 625w
Wales 401w

Pay beds
Income 291-4w
Wales 291-4w

Pay incentives
Crown Prosecution Service 448w
Employment training 392w

Pay settlements
Nurses 47w, 120-1w, 271w, 407w

PAYE
Income tax repayment 53w

Payroll deduction scheme
255w

Peace keeping operations
Lebanon 828

Peace negotiations
Angola 612w
Central America 605w
Cyprus 832-3
El Salvador 617w
Middle East 618w, 827, 838-9
Nicaragua 615w
Southern Africa 611w

Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 758, 802-4

Peat Marwick McLintock
244w

Pendry, Mr Tom
Questions
Council for Environmental Conservation, Official engagements 298w
Council for the Protection of Rural England, Official engagements 298w
National Consumer Council, Official engagements 298w
National Federation of Anglers, Official engagements 298w
National Trust, Official engagements 298w
Official engagements, British Waterways Board 224w
Official engagements, Countryside Commission 223w
Official engagements, Friends of the Earth 222w
Official engagements, Historic buildings 222-3w
Official engagements, Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission for England 225w

Pendry, Mr Tom—continued
Official engagements, League Against Cruel Sports 224w
Official engagements, Long Distance Walkers' Association 224w
Official engagements, Nature Conservancy Council 224w
Official engagements, Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive 350w
Official engagements, Ordnance Survey 224w
Official engagements, Ramblers' Association 224w
Official engagements, Royal parks 223-4w
Official engagements, Sports 358-60w
Official engagements, Water authorities 223w
Official engagements, Water Authorities' Association 224-5w
Official engagements, Water supply industry 223w
Sugar refineries, EC action 675w

Penlee quarry
Equipment 314w
Industrial safety 315w
Mines & Quarries Inspectorate 314w

Penn
Safety standards 370w

Pension funds
Local government finance 117w

Pensioners
Canada 595w
Community charge 79w, 228w, 305w
Community charge rebates 227-8w
Higher pensioner premium 89w
Official engagements 562w
Personal income 706-7w
Personal tax allowances 705-6w
Slums 100w

Pensions
Social security appeals 669-70w

Pensions Appeal Tribunals
669-70w

Per capita costs
Health services 572w
Job training scheme 597w
Mental patients 577-8w

Perivale
Skillcentres 314w

Perivale underpass
Land drainage 454w

Perry Oaks sludge works
Heathrow Airport 281w

Persian Gulf
Merchant seamen 613w
Shipping 613w
USSR 611w

Personal income
197w
Pensioners 706-7w
Tax burden 52w
Taxpayers 699w

Personal records
Disclosure of information 529w
Government departments 529w

Personal social services
Northern Ireland 330w

Personal tax allowances
Pensioners 705-6w
Tax yields 255-6w

Personal taxation
Tax yields 698w

Pesticides
Fish farming 975-6
Water pollution 63w

Petroleum production licences
347w
Land ownership & tenure 347-8w

Petroleum (Production) Regulations 1976
Questions
348w

Pharmacists
Manpower 86w

Phosphates
Detergents 300w

Photographs
Holroyd, Fred 36w
Northern Ireland 36w

Physiotherapy
Handicapped pupils 200w

Pigmeat
684w
EC internal trade 971
Monetary compensatory amounts 493w, 674w, 970
Northern Ireland 970-1
Prices 970

Pigs
Animal breeding 684w
Animal husbandry 970
Cheshire 978
Local authorities 978

Pike, Mr Peter L
Debates etc.
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 477
Girobank, Privatisation (07:06:88) 727-8
Property Services Agency (25:05:88) 343
Settle-Carlisle railway (26:05:88) 613-4
Questions
Agricultural land, Set-aside schemes 973-4
Burnley Pendle & Rossendale Health Authority, Finance 82-4w
Employment opportunities, Belfast 327w
Energy prices, Manufacturing industries 230w
Gas disconnections 693w
Job training scheme 661w
Mandela, Nelson 825
NATO Nuclear Planning Group 182
Office of Water Regulation, Wales 200w
Official engagements 103w, 685-6w
Radioactive waste disposal, Seas & oceans 648w
Sewers, Costs 66w
Sterling, Industries 524w
Water authorities, Capital investment 351-4w
Water authorities, Debts 352w
Water authorities, Finance 351-2w
Water authorities, Financial targets 66w
Water authorities, Income 66-7w
Water authorities, Public sector assets 66w
Water distribution, Corrosion 67w
Water pollution, EC action 310-1w
Water pollution, Pollution control 311w
Water supply 67w
Water supply industry, Privatisation 65-6w, 353w

Pirate radio stations
Birmingham 111-2w
Greater London 112-3w

Planning
Civil service manpower 356w
Costs 357w

Planning appeals
Housing 356w
Wales 46w

Planning inquiries
343w
Foxley Wood 635w
Opencast mining 80-1w

Planning permission
Dartford 730-1w
East London river crossing 150w
Farms 67w, 650w
Opencast mining 117w
RAF Greenham Common 549w

Plants
Certification testing 138-9w

PLO
see Palestine Liberation Organisation

Plowden, Lord
166w

Plutonium
Air freight transport 628w
Transport of radioactive materials 102w, 631w

Pneumoconiosis
Industrial diseases benefits 417-8w

POA
see Prison Officers' Association

Poetry Society
256w

Points of order
Speaker's rulings & statements (25:05:88) 490, (26:05:88) 528, 618, (08:06:88) 889

Poland
Official engagements 615-6w
Solidarity 606w

Polaris missiles
Testing 548w

Polaris submarines
Military aircraft 37w

Police
Aircraft 170w
Alcohol & crime 714
Evidence 170w
Leicestershire 445w
Manpower 439w
Republic of Ireland 331w
Staffordshire 377w
West Midlands 170w
West Yorkshire 277w

Police Authority for Northern Ireland
383w

Police civilians
277-8w
Manpower 439-40w
Northumbria Police Authority 439-40w

Police firearms
Merseyside 106w

Police informers
Northern Ireland 333w

Police interrogation
Isle of Wight 171-2w
Tape recorders 171-2w

Police powers
Breathalysers 151w

Police raids
Brownie's Health Club 377w

Political parties
Northern Ireland 329-30w

Political prisoners
South Africa 613w, 825-6

Political refugees
Immigration controls 440-2w

Polkinghorne Committee
see Foetal Tissue Transplantation Advisory Group Review

Pollutants
North Sea 299-300w

Pollution
Farms 972
Fish farming 974-5

Pollution control
Fish farming 679w
Nitrates 263w
North Sea 299-302w

Pollution control—continued
Sea pollution 350w
Sewage 136w
Standards specifications 300-1w
Waste disposal 736w
Water pollution 307w, 311w

Pollution monitoring
North Sea 301w
Tipping of waste 647-8w, 736w
Wadden Sea 303w
Water pollution 63-4w

Population
468w
London Docklands 650-1w
Regional health authorities 420w
Scottish health boards 420w

Population studies
South East Thames Regional Health Authority 420w

Portage
Pre-school education 11w

Portavogie
Health services 30w

Porter, Mr David
Questions
Gee, Robert, Shipping accidents 590w
Motorcycles, Noise control 56w
NHS, Contracts for services 146w, 572w
White fish, Lowestoft 138w

Portillo, Mr Michael, Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security
Debates etc.
Geriatrics, Health services (24:05:88) 302-6
Questions
Attendance allowance, Social security appeals 94-5w
Civil servants' business appointments, Dept of Health & Social Security 93-4w
Computers in Government departments, Privatisation 267w
Dental charges exemptions, Departmental forms 580w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Blackpool 411w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Courier services 270w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Opinion polls 562w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Southampton 418w
Departmental leaflets, Welsh language 91w
Employers' contributions, North Sea oil 146w
Exceptional needs payments, Lambeth 144w, 214-5w
Exceptional needs payments, Newham 95w
Exceptional needs payments, Shetland 592w
Floods, Ealing 213w
Handicap benefits, Social security benefits rules 574w
Hospital visitor benefits, Social security recipients 668-9w
Housing benefits, Elderly 253w
Housing benefits, Enterprise allowance scheme 215w
Housing benefits, Expenditure 412w
Housing benefits, Renfrew 412-3w
Housing benefits, Rent rebates 574w
Housing benefits, Social security recipients 560w
Housing benefits, Social security reform 560-1w
Income support, Availability for work 575w
Income support, Capital rules 273w
Income support, Community care 147w
Income support, School leaving 269w
Invalid care allowances, Renfrew 418w
Invalidity benefits, Renfrew 417w
Low incomes 95w
Low incomes, Scotland 413w, 726-7w
Maternity benefits, Kensington & Chelsea 725w

Portillo, Mr Michael—continued
Means tested benefits, Publicity 723w
Mental patients, Supplementary benefits 413w
Occupational pensions, Women 396w
Pensions, Social security appeals 669-70w
Residential care, Income support 565-6w
Social Fund, Disclosure of information 725w
Social Fund, Publicity 576w
Social security abuse 671w
Social security abuse, Expenditure 671w
Social security benefits, Administrative delays 215w
Social security benefits, Capital rules 272-3w
Social security benefits disqualification, Unemployment benefits 727w
Social security payments, Banks 578w
Social security reform, Training 217w
Student grants 727w
Supplementary benefits, Mortgages 724w
Supplementary benefits, Residential care 419w
Supplementary benefits, Social security claims 141w
Supplementary benefits, Social security recipients 726w
Supplementary benefits, Young people 95-6w
War pensions, Renfrew 418w
War pensions, Social security appeals 670w
Widows, Income support 149w

Porton Down
153-4w

Ports
Hazardous wastes 303w

Portugal
Land ownership & tenure (07:06:88) 819-24

Postal services
Inland Revenue 255w, 700w

Postgraduate education
Medical research 12w

Post-neonatal mortality
Death rate 670w

Potato Marketing Board
Official engagements 674w

Poultry
Tenosynovitis 664w

Poverty
City of London 514
Housing 475w
Scotland 193-5, 320

Powell, Charles
604w
Diplomatic service (25:05:88) 379-81

Powell, Mr Ray
Debates etc.
Children in care (27:05:88) 670-3
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 477
Recess motions, Spring (25:05:88) 371
Questions
Business statements 531-2
Employment training, Wales 44w

Powell, Mr William
Debates etc.
House of Commons procedure (25:05:88) 371-5
Recess motions, Spring (25:05:88) 359
Questions
Arms control negotiations, Chemical weapons 986
Denmark, Official engagements 604w
EC Foreign Affairs Council 239-40w

Power stations
Competition 693-4w

Prader-Willi syndrome
Handicap benefits 593w

Pre-school education
Community programme 433w
Portage 11w

Prescription charges exemptions
Ulcerative colitis 269w

Prescriptions
Dispensing doctors 139-40w
Opren 87-8w
Scotland 128-9w

Presidential elections
USA 838

Press conferences
Palace of Westminster 22w

Press releases
Scottish Information Office 121w

Prestatyn
43w

Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984
Questions
274w

Price, Sir David
Questions
A33, Road accidents 452w
Chandler's Ford bypass, Road works 452w
Company law, Harmonisation of legislation 428w
Employment, EC internal trade 509w
Ferries, Shipping safety 199
Health services, Per capita costs 572w
Hospital patients, Teaching hospitals 146w
Patients, NHS 571-2w
Payroll deduction scheme 255w

Price increases
Retail price index 528-9w

Price Waterhouse
Community charge 305w

Prices
Bread 976
Pigmeat 970

Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Debates etc.
Housing Bill, Rep (09:06:88) 1013, 1033
Questions
NATO Nuclear Planning Group 155w

Primary education
Ballyharry School 458w
Mathematics education 237-8w
Northern Ireland 458-9w
School closures 458-9w
Science education 237-8w

Prime Minister
22w, 103-4w, (07:06:88) 736-7
Church of Scotland 14-5, 191, 194, 515-6, 518

Prime Minister's Office
see Prime Minister

Prime Minister's questions
20
Speaker's rulings & statements (24:05:88) 190

Prison escapes
Ferrier, Charles 444w
Haverigg Prison 641-2w, 717-20

Prison Officers' Association
167w

Prison overcrowding
Haverigg Prison 719
Leeds prison 444-5w

Prison population
Northern Ireland 335-7w
Remand in custody 694-5w

Prison sentences
Northern Ireland 337w, 507
Scotland 249w
Terrorism 275w
Thain, Ian Richard 505-6

Prison sentences—continued
Women 249w, 275w

Prison staff
Haverigg Prison 717-9

Prisoners
Drugs 16-7w
Ethnic minorities 378w
Eye tests 171w
Haverigg Prison 642w, 719
Mother & baby units 1w, 645w
Northern Ireland 460w, 505-7
Opticians 171w
Scheduled offences 460w
Women 460w

Prisoners of war
Death (25:05:88) 356-62

Prisoners on remand
379-80w

Prisoners' release
Army in Northern Ireland 339w

Prisoners' transfers
Army in Northern Ireland 339w
Northern Ireland 275-6w
Scotland 249w
Turkey 466w

Prisons
Body searches 2w
EC countries 446w
Immigrant detainees 279-80w
Scotland 191w

Private health services
Ambulance services 93w
Hospital beds 188w, 213w
Nursing homes 411w
Scotland 188w, 518w
Wales 291w

Private hospitals
Health Care International 515w
Wales 287-8w

Private investment
London Docklands Development Corporation 650w

Private Members' Bills
23w, 712-21w

Private Members' motions
(26:05:88) 528

Private notice questions
Speaker's rulings & statements (24:05:88) 199, (07:06:88) 710

Private rented housing
London Docklands 650w

Private sector
Channel tunnel 283w
Heathrow Airport 283w
Manufacturing industries 4w
Railway network 452w
Roads 282w
Settle-Carlisle railway 57-8w

Private sector housing
London Docklands 649w

Privatisation
British Rail 590w
British Waterways Board 478w
Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation 8-9w
Computers in Government departments 267w
Defence research 548-9w
Electricity supply industry 101w, 173w, 231w, 312-4, 454w, 585w, 632w, 693-4w
National Girobank (07:06:88) 721-31
National savings 374w
Rover Group (08:06:88) 900-43
Scottish Bus Group (24:05:88) 205-15, 324-5
Water authorities 298w, 307w, 310-1w, 313w

Privatisation—continued
Water supply industry 65-6w, 353w

PRO
see Public Record Office

Probation
Ethnic monitoring 2w

Procedure Select Committee
(27:05:88) 690
House of Commons debates 103w

Processed food
Dairy farming 407w

Production quotas
Milk 263w, 461w, 463w

Productivity
524w
Employment 706
European monetary system 523-4w
Labour costs 706

Professional qualifications
Gaelic language 30w
Legal profession 448w
Teachers 109-10w

Prohibition notices
509-10w

Project 2000
Nurses' training 90w

Property development
Newtownards 619-20w

Property Services Agency
62-3w, 115w
Armed forces housing 551w
Central London 62w
Defence land 551w
Efficiency scrutinies 477w
Land ownership & tenure 61-2w
Ministerial statements (25:05:88) 339-48

Property transfer
Council housing 587w
District health authorities 563w
Government departments 703-6w
Mental health services 562w
Museums & galleries 258-60w
New towns development corporations 123-4w
St Peter's Hospital, London 726w

Prosecutions
Abortion 419w
Building industry 320-2w
Crown Prosecution Service 364-6w
Factory Inspectorate 710-1w
Garages & petrol stations 150-1w
Intoxicating Substances (Supply) Act 1985 169w
Litter 638-40w
Low pay 395-6w
Mines & Quarries Inspectorate 315-6w, 395w
Rates & rating 78w
Water pollution 296w, 309w

Prosthetics
Health service staff 654w
NHS 561w, 654w
Scotland 513w, 654w

Prostitution
Glasgow 514w

Provisional IRA
see IRA

Provisional Sinn Fein
see Sinn Fein

PSA
see Property Services Agency

Psychiatric nurses
Community nurses 85-6w, 92w
North Western Regional Health Authority 85-6w

Psychiatry
Family doctors 91w
NHS finance 577w

Psychology
Army in Northern Ireland 36w

Public access
Downing Street 445-6w

Public Accounts Commission
15-6
Costs 16
Defence expenditure 16-7
Public expenditure 16-7

Public Accounts Committee
680w
Community care 89w
National Museum of Wales 43w

Public appointments
Advisory Council on Science & Technology 432-4w
British Railways Board 451w
Chief Medical Officer for Scotland 189w
National Rivers Authority 4
National Rivers Authority Advisory Committee 80w, 311w
New towns development corporations 123w
Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee 357w
Universities Funding Council 238w
Women 135w

Public Bills
House of Commons division of time 721w
Human embryo experiments 556-8w

Public bodies
Accounting 532-8w
Northern Ireland 620w

Public expenditure
374w, 526w
Fees & charges 374-6w
Housing 702-4w
London Docklands Development Corporation 650w
Overseas aid 105w
Public Accounts Commission 16-7
South Wales 296w
Wales 296w

Public inquiries
M8 251w

Public libraries
377w, 510w
Contracts for services 376-7w
Cost effectiveness 258w
Fees & charges 257-8w, 377w, 510w
Management 258w
Ministerial powers 257w

Public order policing
Sports 477w

Public participation in planning
Radioactive waste disposal (25:05:88) 369-71

Public petitions
RAF Chivenor (08:06:88) 960-1

Public Record Office
118w
Hereditament maps 254w

Public sector assets
Water authorities 66w

Public sector housing
Basildon (27:05:88) 692-8
Glenrothes 124w
London Docklands Development Corporation 649w
Management 519w
New towns 124-5w
New towns development corporations 518-20w
Scotland 124-5w, 323-4, 518-20w

Public sector housing sales
East Kilbride Development Corporation 122w

Public sector housing sales—continued
Glenrothes 123-5w
New towns 125w
Scotland 125w

Publicity
Means tested benefits 723w
Social Fund 576w
Valleys initiative 403w

Pulses & seeds
Cereals 15w
EC action 492w
Scotland 15w

Punishment
Intoxicating Substances (Supply) Act 1985 169w

Pupil-teacher ratios
Scotland 323

Pupils
Equal opportunities 342w
Northern Ireland 508

Puppet Centre Trust
256w

Quality Assurance Directorate
Woolwich Arsenal 41-2w

Quality Street Housing Association
125w
Glenrothes Development Corporation 123w

Quarrying
Cranes 315w
Industrial health & safety 316w

Quin, Ms Joyce
Questions
Armed forces storage depots, Safety measures 159w
Channel tunnel, Railway transport 590w

Race relations
985

Racial disadvantage
Government grants 437-8w

Racial discrimination
Local government services 357w

Radar
AWACS 545w

Radiation hazards
Leukaemia 986
Sellafield 90w

Radice, Mr Giles
Debates etc.
Factories, Northern region (08:06:88) 962-4, 968
Questions
Fab Fashions, Company investigations 426w

Radio
Rescue services 16w
Surveillance 588w

Radio Britannia
112-3w

Radio broadcasting licences
Local radio 172w
Surveillance 588w

Radio engineering
Rugby 555w

Radio frequencies
Glen Garry 37w
Health hazards 555w
Rugby 555w

Radioactive fallout
Farmers 129w

Radioactive waste disposal
233w
Capenhurst 481w

Radioactive waste disposal—continued
Magnox reactors 312w
Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive 545w
Nuclear power stations 9w
Nuclear submarines 160w, 547w
Public participation in planning (25:05:88) 369-71
Seas & oceans 648w

Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee
Public appointments 357w

Radioactivity
Agricultural products 488-9w
Food 980-1
Land pollution 385w, 981
Sheep 981
Sheep meat 136w

Radiochemical Inspectorate
360-1w

Radioisotopes
Transport of radioactive materials 360-1w

RAF Brawdy
USA 544w

RAF Catterick
553w

RAF Chivenor
Public petitions (08:06:88) 960-1

RAF Dishforth
Armed forces housing 179
Army bases 179

RAF Feltwell
Satellites 540w

RAF Fylingdales
Early warning systems 38w

RAF Greenham Common
549w
Compulsory purchase 549w
Planning permission 549w

RAF Leuchars
Rescue services (23:05:88) 171-8

RAF Manston
553w

RAF St Athan
Tornado aircraft 161w, 390w

RAF Waddington
AWACS 708w
Construction costs 544w

Raffan, Mr Keith
Questions
A55, Clwyd County Council 2
A55, Road signs 43w
Cash limits, Welsh Office 297w
Structure plans, Clwyd 6

Railway accidents
Colwich junction (09:06:88) 1104-10
Inquiries (09:06:88) 1104-10

Railway closures
730w
Settle-Carlisle railway 281-2w, 589w

Railway Inspectorate
(09:06:88) 1104-10

Railway network
Bradford 306w
Channel tunnel 283w
Heathrow Airport 281w, 283w
Leisure 452w
Private sector 452w
Railway travel 452w

Railway property

Litter 639w

Railway signals
London Regional Transport 730w

Railway transport
Channel tunnel 590w

Railway travel
Railway network 452w

Ramblers' Association
117w
Official engagements 224w

Ramsar Convention
Nature Conservancy Council 306w

Ramsgate harbour
Roads 479w

Randall, Mr Stuart
Questions
Illegal immigrants, Advanced College of Business & Cultural Studies 441-3w
Illegal immigrants, Clapham 444w
Illegal immigrants, Educational institutions 443-4w
Immigration rules, Overseas students 444w
Political refugees, Immigration controls 440-2w

Rate fund contributions
733-4w

Rate rebates
Wales 44w

Rate support grants
South East region 115-6w
Torfaen Borough Council 403-4w

Rateable value
71-6w
Scotland 247-8w
Wales 288w

Rates & rating
Consumer expenditure 305-6w
Prosecutions 78w
Scottish health boards 17-8w

RAVC
see Royal Army Veterinary Corps

Reade, George
277-8w

Reagan, Ronald
606w

Recess motions
(25:05:88) 351-91

ReChem International
355-6w, 365w, 403-4w

Recognition of states
North Korea 196w

Recommittal of Bills
Speaker's rulings & statements (23:05:88) 80

Recovery of costs
Legal aid 722w

Recruitment
Belfast Telegraph 35w
Crown Prosecution Service 284-5w
Headteachers 690w
Nurses' training 84w
Royal Ulster Constabulary 331w

Redmond, Mr Martin
Questions
Civil defence, Emergency planning 273w
Civil defence, Telecommunications technology 167-8w
Community health services, Costs 83w
Rates & rating, Prosecutions 78w

Redtop missiles
Armed forces training 543w

Redundancy
Northern region 501w
Scotland 309

Redundancy—continued
Textile industry 699-700

Redundancy pay
Equal opportunities 394w

Redundant churches
14-5w

Redwood, Mr John
Questions
Government buildings, Greater London 115w
Housing construction, Greater London 731w
Internal migration, South East region 60-2w
London & South East Regional Planning Conference, Costs 357w
London & South East Regional Planning Conference, Manpower 357w
Offices, Greater London 62-3w
Planning, Civil service manpower 356w
Planning, Costs 357w
Planning permission, Dartford 730-1w
Property Services Agency, Central London 62w
Property Services Agency, Land ownership & tenure 61-2w
Regional planning & development, Civil service manpower 356w
Regional planning & development, Costs 356-7w
Ulcerative colitis, Prescription charges exemptions 269w

Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 775, 788-9, 811-3
Questions
Business statements 991

Referenda
Chile 829-31

Regional aid
Tayside 130w
Wales 4-6, 401-3w

Regional councils
Scotland 17w

Regional development grants
Economic regions 175-8w
Northern region 177-8w
Pay 370w

Regional enterprise grants
Cash limits 371w

Regional health authorities
Finance 419-20w
Population 420w

Regional planning & development
Civil service manpower 356w
Costs 356-7w
Economic policy 602w
Merseyside 602w
Synthetic index 45-6w

Regional secure units
267w

Regional selective assistance
130w
Tax yields 197w

Registered dock workers
662w

Reid, Dr John
Debates etc.
Scottish Bus Group, Privatisation (24:05:88) 212-3
Vaccine Damage (Compensation Arrangements) Bill, 1R (24:05:88) 216-8
Questions
Electricity supply industry, Scotland 185w
Nicaragua, Ministers' visits abroad 25w
Nicaragua, Peace negotiations 615w
Taxation, Budget 699w

Reinstatement grants
125-7w
Defective housing 358w, (26:05:88) 600

Religion
Civil servants 528w, 552w

Religious discrimination
Employment discrimination 646w

Religious education
Church schools 14w

Religious orders
Community charge 122w

Remand in custody
695w
Administrative delays 695w
Army bases 695w
Northern Ireland 333-5w, 337w
Prison population 694-5w
Terrorism 274-5w
Women 275-6w, 695-6w

Remploy
Handicapped workers 394-6w
Pay 313-4w

Renewable Energy Development Agency (Establishment) Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
1R (07:06:88) 738-41

Renfrew
Housing benefits 412-3w
Industrial development 186w
Invalid care allowances 418w
Invalidity benefits 417w
War pensions 418w
Youth unemployment 363-4w

Rent Act 1977
Debates etc.
Rep (09:06:88) 1003-103

Rent assessment committees
(09:06:88) 1003-103

Rent increases
West Yorkshire 77w

Rent rebates
Housing benefits 574w

Renton, Mr Tim, Minister of State at the Home Office
Questions
Broadcasting Standards Council 2w
Concessionary television licences, Fees & charges 697w
Concessionary television licences, Handicapped 697w
Concessionary television licences, Residential care 279w
Data networks, Computer privacy 446w
Entry clearances, Inquiries 106-7w
Europassport, Isle of Man 640w
Foreign tourists, South East Asia 696w
Government data network, Intelligence services 446w
Illegal immigrants, Advanced College of Business & Cultural Studies 441-3w
Illegal immigrants, Clapham 444w
Illegal immigrants, Educational institutions 443-4w
Immigration 107-8w, 378w
Immigration appeals, Administrative delays 585-6w
Immigration appeals, Costs 640w
Immigration controls, Genetics 278w, 643w
Immigration rules 640-1w
Immigration rules, Community charge 640w
Immigration rules, Overseas students 444w
Immigration rules, Social security reform 640w
Local radio, Radio broadcasting licences 172w
Passports, Administrative delays 643w
Political refugees, Immigration controls 440-2w
Satellite broadcasting, Broadcasting controls 168-9w

Renton, Mr Tim—continued
Vietnamese refugees, Hong Kong 643w

Rents
West Yorkshire 77-8w

Repairs & maintenance
Ribblehead viaduct 589w
Tachographs 345w

Report stage
Speaker's rulings & statements (07:06:88) 742, (09:06:88) 1004-8

Republic of Ireland
Beef 137w
Foreign policy 608w
Foreign relations 512-3
Parole 276w
Police 331w

Repurchase of defective housing
125-7w, (26:05:88) 600

Rescue services
153w
Armed forces deployment 554-5w
Helicopters 153w
Radio 16w
RAF Leuchars (23:05:88) 171-8
Scotland 16w

Research
Animal diseases 17w, 219w
Fish farming 975

Research finance
Agricultural research 676w
Community care 417w
Science & technology research 369w
Senile dementia 342w
Special education 13w

Residential care
Concessionary television licences 279w
Hotels 268-9w
Income support 565-6w
Supplementary benefits 419w

Resignations
London Regional Transport 730w

Resource Allocation Working Party
559-60w

Restart programme
707
Handicapped 707
Interviews 503-4w

"Restrictions on Employment of Young People & the Removal of Sex Discrimination in Legislation Consultation Paper"
393-4w

Restrictive labour practices
635w

Retail price index
Price increases 528-9w

Retail trade
Companies 5w

Retirement
Dock labour scheme 314w

Retirement pensions
562w
British residents abroad 87w

Rhyl
Tourism 43w

Ribblehead viaduct
Repairs & maintenance 589w

Richardson, Ms Jo
Debates etc.
Women, Health (10:06:88) 1122-33, 1145
Questions
Palace of Westminster, Gun sports 476w
Palace of Westminster, Sports facilities 477w
RAF Greenham Common, Compulsory purchase 549w

Richardson, Ms Jo—continued
RAF Greenham Common, Planning permission 549w
Redundancy pay, Equal opportunities 394w
"Restrictions on Employment of Young People & the Removal of Sex Discrimination in Legislation Consultation Paper" 393-4w
Training Commission, Inner city areas 317w

Richmond house
714

Riddick, Mr Graham
Debates etc.
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (24:05:88) 258-9, 285
Rowntree (08:06:88) 886-8
Questions
Milk Marketing Board, Official engagements 674-5w

Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas, Secretary of State for the Environment
Debates etc.
Property Services Agency, Ministerial statements (25:05:88) 339-48
Questions
Cash limits, Dept of the Environment 357-8w
Civil servants' business appointments, Dept of the Environment 77w
Council housing, Property transfer 587w
Environment protection, Expenditure 587-8w
Environmental impact assessment, Enterprise zones 649-50w
Equal opportunities, Dept of the Environment 304w
London & South East Regional Planning Conference, Costs 357w
London & South East Regional Planning Conference, Manpower 357w
Planning, Civil service manpower 356w
Planning, Costs 357w
Regional planning & development, Civil service manpower 356w
Regional planning & development, Costs 356-7w

Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm, Secretary of State for Scotland
Debates etc.
Scottish Bus Group, Ministerial statements (24:05:88) 205-15
Questions
Cash limits, Scottish Office 251-2w
Chief Medical Officer for Scotland, Public appointments 189w
Departmental correspondence, Disclosure of information 599w
Devolution, Scotland 183w
EC internal trade, Scotland 316-8
EC internal trade, Scottish Assembly 317
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 313-4
Electricity supply industry, Scotland 182w, 312-3
Equal opportunities, Scottish office 249w
Hospitals, Scotland 315
Local government, Scotland 187w
M8, Public inquiries 251w
Ministers, Offices 250w
Scottish assembly 309-11
Scottish Information Office, Press releases 121w
Scottish Office, Civil service manpower 120w
Seals, Scotland 187w

Rights of special groups
Children in care (27:05:88) 670-6

RINA
see Royal Institution of Naval Architects

Rio Tinto Zinc
Cornwall 635-6w

River Clyde
653w
Shipbuilding (27:05:88) 631-40

Rivers
Wales 199w
Water authorities 67-8w

Road accidents
450-1w
A33 452w
Road traffic 174-6w

Road construction
A40 174w
Cairngorms 121w
Contracts 629w
Kent 343-4w
Motorways 628w
North East region (25:05:88) 378-9
Road damage 628-30w
Settle bypass 729w
South Glamorgan 10

Road damage
M25 629-30w
Road construction 628-30w

Road finance
South Glamorgan County Council 10

Road signs
A55 43w

Road tankers
Dartford tunnel 453w
Tunnels 453w

Road tax
Tax evasion 197-8w

Road tolls
173-4w
Dartford tunnel 383w

Road traffic
Dual carriageways 451-2w
Road accidents 174-6w
Urban areas 630w

Road works
281w
Chandler's Ford bypass 452w
Comber 31-2w
M1 452-3w
M6 452-3w

Roads
Private sector 282w
Ramsgate harbour 479w
Wales 1-2

Roberts, Mr Allan
Debates etc.
Girobank, Privatisation (07:06:88) 724, 731
Housing (23:05:88) 49, 64-8
Housing Bill, Rep (09:06:88) 1015, 1017, 1020, 1021-3, 1040-2, 1044-5
Questions
Homelessness 194
Nuclear weapons, NATO 152-3w

Roberts, Mr Wyn, Minister of State for Wales
Questions
A44, Wales 2
A55, Clwyd County Council 2
A55, Road signs 43w
Caergwrle bypass 688w
Handicapped pupils, Special education 201w
Job training scheme, Wales 286-7w
Languages education, Educational exchanges 398-9w
Local education authorities, Wales 633w

Roberts, Mr Wyn—continued
Mentally handicapped, Special education 203-4w
National Museum of Wales, Public Accounts Committee 43w
Road construction, South Glamorgan 10
Roads, Wales 1-2
Teachers, Wales 203w
Welsh language, Departmental circulars 202w
Welsh language, Educational advisers 687w
Welsh language, School leaving certificates 687w
Welsh language, Secondary education 200w
Welsh language, Special education 687w

Robertson, Mr George
Debates etc.
"Developments in the European Community Six Monthly Report" (26:05:88) 537-8, 543-51, 573, 594, 596
Questions
Arms control, Advisory bodies 466w
Chatelherault, Departmental correspondence 16w
Council house sales, Hamilton 16w
East West relations 839
Hospitals, Motherwell 316
Housing benefits, Scotland 183w

Robinson, Mr Peter
Debates etc.
Harland & Wolff (27:05:88) 641-5
Questions
Harland & Wolff 502

Roe, Mrs Marion, Under-Secretary of State for the Environment
Debates etc.
House purchase, Young people (27:05:88) 625-30
Housing (23:05:88) 68-72
Public sector housing, Basildon (27:05:88) 695-8
Questions
Council house sales, Southwark 115w
Council housing, Housing construction 75w
Housing, Milton Keynes 357w
Housing construction, Local government expenditure 76w
Housing investment programmes, Ealing 116w
Housing revenue accounts, Housing finance 225w
Housing stock 306w
Rent increases, West Yorkshire 77w
Rents, West Yorkshire 77-8w

Rogers, Mr Allan
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 793
Questions
Agusta Helicopters 708w
Air force, Air accidents 540-1w
Armed forces deployment, Rescue services 554-5w
ASR 1238, Defence procurement 543w
AWACS, RAF Waddington 708w
Canberra aircraft, Air force 543w
Canberra aircraft, Arms trade 543w
Chipmunk aircraft, Air force 542-3w
Chipmunk aircraft, Armed forces training 542w
Defence industries, Former Ministers 188
European fighter aircraft, Aircraft engines 543w
51 Squadron 708w
Hawk jet trainer aircraft, Costs 543w
Jaguar aircraft 707w
Jaguar aircraft, Defence equipment 707w
Jet aircraft, Air accidents 541-2w
Jet Provost aircraft, Air force 544w
Low flying, Air accidents 541w
Low flying, Air force 541w
Military aircraft, Short Brothers 544w
RAF Waddington, Construction costs 544w
Redtop missiles, Armed forces training 543w

Rogers, Mr Allan—continued
Sea rescue 153w
Tornado aircraft 707-8w
Tornado aircraft, Air accidents 542w
Tornado aircraft, Defence equipment 542w
Tornado aircraft, Defence procurement 542w

Rogerstone
Official engagements 229w

Roll-on roll-off ships
59w, 150w, 173w, 280-1w

Rolls-Royce
Economic situation 516-7
Employment 700

Romania
Human rights 464w

Rooker, Mr Jeff
Debates etc.
War crimes, Wormhoudt (25:05:88) 356-62
Questions
Civil service pensions, Armed forces pensions 253-4w
National savings, Privatisation 374w
Palace of Westminster, Screening 19

Rosenbaum, Professor
108w

Ross, Mr Ernie
Questions
East West relations 614-5w
Hospitals, Scotland 315
Housing benefits, Scotland 183w
NATO, Conventional weapons 160-1w
Palestine Liberation Organisation, USA 838

Ross, Mr William
Debates etc.
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Rep (23:05:88) 85, 92-8, 101-18, 133-45 passim
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 399-482 passim
Questions
Adult training centres, Glasvey 31w
Firearms certificates, Clubs 280w
Invalid care allowances, Northern Ireland 382w
Prisoners, Northern Ireland 506
Ryan, Michael, Firearms certificates 378w
Security, Northern Ireland 328w

Rossi, Sir Hugh
Debates etc.
Property Services Agency (25:05:88) 341

Rover Group
Opposition days (08:06:88) 900-43
Privatisation (08:06:88) 900-43
Vacancies 517-8

Rowe, Mr Andrew
Debates etc.
Community care (25:05:88) 381-2
Questions
Business statements 994
Dartford tunnel, Road tolls 383w
Ferries, Fire services 199
Productivity, Employment 706
Teachers, Pay 625w

Rowlands, Mr Ted
Questions
Housing benefits, Wales 44w
Valleys initiative 5

Rowntree
Charitable trusts 697-8w
Employment 337-8
Foreign investment in UK 337
Mergers 332-3
Opposition days (08:06:88) 850-99
Takeovers 327-36, (25:05:88) 493-500, 514-5, (08:06:88) 850-99
Unemployment 330-1, 333

Royal Army Veterinary Corps
Dogs 157w

Royal Institution of Naval Architects
59w

Royal Irish Rangers
511-2
Army in Northern Ireland 552w

Royal parks
Official engagements 223-4w

Royal Society for Mentally Handicapped Children & Adults
47w

Royal Ulster Constabulary
36-7w, 331w, 338w, 624w
Inquiries 383w
Manpower 338w
Recruitment 331w

RTZ
see Rio Tinto Zinc

RUC
see Royal Ulster Constabulary

Ruchill Hospital
Hospital closures 188w

Ruddock, Mrs Joan
Debates etc.
Women, Health (10:06:88) 1132, 1158, 1171
Questions
Development aid, OECD countries 475w
Electroconvulsive therapy, Codes of practice 410w
Electroconvulsive therapy, Death 143w
Electroconvulsive therapy, Medical research 265w
Electroconvulsive therapy, Medical treatments 410w
Electroconvulsive therapy, Mental patients 142-3w
Food, Radioactivity 980
Immigration rules 640-1w
Mental illness, Surgery 143w
Mental patients, Electroconvulsive therapy 211-2w
Mental patients, Medical treatments 212w
NATO, Navy 158w
Water charges, Water meters 64w
Water meters, Costs 64-5w
Water pollution, Pesticides 63w
Water pollution, Pollution monitoring 63-4w
Water supply disconnections, Thames Water Authority 63w

Rugby
Radio engineering 555w
Radio frequencies 555w

Rumbold, Mrs Angela, Minister of State for Education and Science
Debates etc.
First aid, Health education (27:05:88) 679-82
Questions
City technology colleges 13w
City technology colleges, Dixons 13-4w
City technology colleges, Lincoln 236w
City technology colleges, School closures 433w
Civil servants' business appointments, Dept of Education & Science 13w
Equal opportunities, Dept of Education & Science 234w
Further education teachers, Pay 341-2w
GCE A level, Bolton 342w
Headteachers, Early retirement 689-90w
Headteachers, Recruitment 690w
Languages education 432w
Members' correspondence, Administrative delays 689w
Pre-school education, Community programme 433w
Teachers, Pay 625w

Rural areas
Housing standards 43w
Maternity services 186-7w

Rural Development Commission
78w

Rushmoor
Housing estates 477w

Ryan, Michael
Firearms certificates 378w

Sackville, Mr Tom
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 806-8
Questions
Church Commissioners, Official engagements 13
East West relations 839

Safety
Building industry 708-9

Safety measures
Armed forces storage depots 159w
London Underground 56-7w

Safety standards
Ferries 58-9w, 150w, 344w
Food additives 723-4w
Pens 370w

Sainsbury, Mr Tim, Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement
Questions
Ammunition, Expenditure 157w
Armed forces housing, Boscombe Down 551-2w
Artillery, Defence procurement 586w
ASR 1238, Defence procurement 543w
AWACS, Radar 545w
British merchant fleet, Defence 155w
Canberra aircraft, Arms trade 543w
Civil servants, Religion 552w
Defence contracts, British Geological Survey 546w
Defence contracts, Competition 552-3w
Defence contracts, North West region 37w
Defence contracts, Strategic defence initiative 553w
Defence equipment, Air force bases 547w
Defence equipment, Bradwell-on-Sea 322-3w
Defence equipment, North Sea 157w, 544w
Defence equipment, Parachuting 545w
Defence equipment, Western Europe 160w
Defence Export Services Organisation 152w
Defence Export Services Organisation, Civil servants' visits abroad 548w
Defence industries, Civil servants' business appointments 153w, 188
Defence industries, Former Ministers 188
Defence procurement, Defence expenditure 156w
Defence procurement, Defence industries 159w
Defence procurement, Helicopters 555w
Defence procurement, International cooperation 160w
Defence procurement, Levene, Peter 188
Defence procurement, Military vehicles 553w
Defence procurement, NATO 189
Defence procurement, Scotland 155-6w
Defence research, Privatisation 548-9w
Defence research, Small businesses 322w
Early warning systems, Boeing 189
European fighter aircraft, Aircraft engines 543w
F15 aircraft, British Aerospace 546w
Hawk jet trainer aircraft, Costs 543w
HI-CAMP programme, Defence research 548w
Jaguar aircraft, Defence equipment 707w
Military aircraft, Short Brothers 544w
Ministry of Defence, Civil service manpower 707w
Ministry of Defence, Educational institutions 39-40w
Ministry of Defence, Security industry 40-1w
Netway communication system 544-5w
Nuclear submarines, Radioactive waste disposal 160w, 547w

Sainsbury, Mr Tim—continued
Nuclear weapons tests, Exservicemen 708w
Polaris missiles, Testing 548w
Radio frequencies, Glen Garry 37w
Radioactive waste disposal, Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive 545w
RAF Waddington, Construction costs 544w
Strategic defence initiative, Defence contracts 154w
Tornado aircraft 707-8w
Tornado aircraft, Arms trade 542w
Tornado aircraft, Defence equipment 542w
Tornado aircraft, Defence procurement 542w
Trident, Costs 151w
Trident submarines, Communication engineering 38w, 151w
Tucano aircraft 37w
Tucano aircraft, Defence expenditure 322w
Type 23 frigates, Computer applications 155w
Type 23 frigates, Defence procurement 155w

St Christopher & Nevis
Parliamentary gifts (26:05:88) 535

St John's Church Maseru
Lesotho 118-9w

St Peter's Hospital, London
593-4w
Hospital closures 726w
Property transfer 726w

Salisbury plain
551w

Salmon
Agricultural research 263w

Salmond, Mr Alex
Debates etc.
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 479
Girobank, Privatisation (07:06:88) 727
Questions
Business statements 523
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 313-4
Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive, Official engagements 187w

Salmonella
Food poisoning 92w

Sandford, Roc
696w

Sanitation
Crumlin Road Prison 460w
Palace of Westminster 23w, 82w, 479w

Satellite broadcasting
Broadcasting controls 168-9w

Satellites
RAF Feltwell 540w

Sayeed, Mr Jonathan
Debates etc.
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (24:05:88) 264
Questions
Arms control, USSR 190

Schedule D income tax
Computers in Government departments 50w

Scheduled offences
333-8w, 460w, 623-4w
Prisoners 460w

School admission
Africa 467-73w

School attendance
Inner city school compacts 710

School buildings
Bradford (25:05:88) 382-4
Lothian Regional Council 250w

School buildings—continued
Palterton School 235w

School closures
City technology colleges 433w
Primary education 458-9w

School governors
Departmental leaflets 236w

School leaving
Income support 269w
Inner city school compacts 711
Wales 204-6w
Youth employment 709w

School leaving certificates
Welsh language 687w

School meals
Northern Ireland 328w

School milk
Leicestershire 234-5w

School population
Cumbria 10-2w

Schools
Ethnic groups 279w
Industrial health & safety (27:05:88) 677-82
London Docklands Development Corporation 225w
Northern Ireland 329w
Scotland 185-6w, 600w

Science & technology
Higher education 11w

Science & technology research
Research finance 369w

Science education
Primary education 237-8w
Teacher training 237w
Teachers 236-7w

Scope of debate
Speaker's rulings & statements (23:05:88) 85, 105, 106, (24:05:88) 239, 292, 293, (25:05:88) 412, (26:05:88) 572-3, 580-1, (09:06:88) 1004-8

Scotland
Agricultural workers 190-1w
AIDS 511w, 599w
Animal diseases 17w
Average earnings 314
Beaches 516w
Cervical cancer 515w
Class actions 188w
Coal 518w
Coal mining 321-2
Community charge 18w, 122w, 184w, 363-4w, 512-3w, 657w
Community charges register 184-5w, 250w, 311-2
Cost of living 314
Crime prevention panels 187w
Decriminalisation 363w
Defective housing 125-7w, (26:05:88) 600
Defence procurement 155-6w
Devolution 183w, 309
Domestic rates 18-9w
Drugs 16-7w
EC internal trade 309, 316-8
Educational finance 323
Electricity generation 184w
Electricity supply industry 182w, 185w, 312-3
Electronics industry 308
Employment opportunities 182-3w
Energy conservation 172w
Farmers 129w, 190w
Ferries 150w
Fishing quotas 514-5w
Forestry 19-20w
Forestry Commission 251w
Forestry grants 194-5w
Historic buildings 252w
Hospital waiting lists 191w, 516w
Hospitals 184w, 190w, 315, 511-2w, 516-7w
Housing 475w

Scotland—continued
Housing benefits 183w, 253w, 323-4
Housing standards 318-9
Languages education 247-9w
Legal aid 192w, 655-6w, 722w
Local government 187w
Local government expenditure 247w
Low incomes 413w, 726-7w
Medical profession 189w
Mental illness 246-8w
Nationalised industries 185w
New towns 192-4w, 250-1w
New towns development corporations 123-4w
NHS 346w
NHS finance 16w
Nurses 120-1w, 253w
Occupational pensions 17w
Paper industry 657w
Patients' transport 189-90w
Pay 361-2w
Poverty 193-5, 320
Prescriptions 128-9w
Prison sentences 249w
Prisoners' transfers 249w
Prisons 191w
Private health services 188w, 518w
Prosthetics 513w, 654w
Public sector housing 124-5w, 323-4, 518-20w
Public sector housing sales 125w
Pulses & seeds 15w
Pupil-teacher ratios 323
Rateable value 247-8w
Redundancy 309
Regional councils 17w
Rescue services 16w
Schools 185-6w, 600w
Seals 187w
Secondary education 322-3
Self-employed 314, 320
Student grants 253w
Submarines 180
Surgery 361w
Technical & vocational education initiative 364w
Terrorism 249-50w
Unemployment 188w, 319-20
Water pollution 363w
Woodworking 657w

Scott, Mr Nicholas, Minister of State for Social Security and the Disabled
Questions
Age addition, Old persons' pensions 216w, 576w
Attendance allowance, Administrative delays 593w
Attendance allowance, Death 593w
Attendance allowance, Social security benefits rules 592-3w
Child benefit 522-4w, 564-6w
Child benefit, EC countries 91w
Deaf, Handicapped children 95w
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Act 1986, Local authority associations 573w, 723w
Disposable income, Single people 580-4w
Family income, Children 578w
Handicap benefits 574w
Handicap benefits, Expenditure 559w
Handicapped 574-5w
Hearing aids, NHS 591-2w
Housing benefits, Civil service manpower 96w
Housing benefits, House of Commons questions 95w
Housing benefits, Managers 96w
Housing benefits, Social security appeals 96w
Housing benefits, Social security reform 96w
Income support, Capital rules 576w
Income support, Handicap benefits 575-6w
Income support, Social security benefits rules 670w
Income support, Young people 575w
Independent Living Fund 594w

Scott, Mr Nicholas—continued
Industrial diseases benefits, Pneumoconiosis 417-8w
Multiple sclerosis, Social security benefits rules 573w
Occupational pensions, Widowers' benefits 216w
Old persons' pensions, Costs 215w
Pensioners, Canada 595w
Pensioners, Higher pensioner premium 89w
Pensioners, Official engagements 562w
Prader-Willi syndrome, Handicap benefits 593w
Prosthetics, NHS 561w
Retirement pensions 562w
Retirement pensions, British residents abroad 87w
Severe disability premium, Medical certificates 563w
Social security benefits, Average earnings 216w
Social security benefits disqualification, Social security reform 147w
Social security recipients, Medical examinations 671-2w
Social security reform, Coventry 422-4w
Social security reform, Young offenders 573w

Scott Lithgow
(27:05:88) 631-40

Scottish & Newcastle Breweries
316-7, 321
Government assistance 321
Tenants 321

Scottish assembly
309-11
EC internal trade 317

Scottish Bus Group
Ministerial statements (24:05:88) 205-15
Privatisation (24:05:88) 205-15, 324-5

Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations
Government grants to voluntary organisations 601w

Scottish Development Agency
Official engagements 308

Scottish Development Agency (Oban South Pier) Order Confirmation Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
Royal assent (26:05:88) 501

Scottish Development Department
252w

Scottish Grand Committee
(08:06:88) 849

Scottish health boards
Expenditure 246-8w, 253w
Finance 186w
Managers 128w
NHS finance 307-8
Patients 522w
Population 420w
Rates & rating 17-8w

Scottish Information Office
Press releases 121w

Scottish islands
Ferries 124w

Scottish Legal Aid Board
655-6w
Complaints 656w
Expenditure 656w
Manpower 656w

Scottish Office
123-4w, 250w, 346w, 599w
Cash limits 251-2w
Civil service manpower 120w
Equal opportunities 249w
Nuclear accidents 520w

Scottish Special Housing Association
126w
Shetland 599-600w

Scottish Trades Union Congress
Official engagements 363w

Screening
Cervical cancer 271-2w
House of Lords 19
Palace of Westminster 19-20

SDA
see Scottish Development Agency

Sea Fish Industry Authority
Official engagements 682w

Sea King helicopters
Defence procurement 156w

Sea pollution
Fish conservation 681w
Pollution control 350w
Water treatment 299w

Sea rescue
153w
Air force bases 153w

Sea transport
EC action 58w

Seafreight Freeway
Fires 197-8

Sealink
197-8

Seals
Scotland 187w

Seas & oceans
Radioactive waste disposal 648w
Waste disposal 302w

Secondary education
Cost per pupil 322-3, 689w
Scotland 322-3
Welsh language 200w

Securities & Investments Board
243-4w

Security
Haverigg Prison 641-2w
Newtown Hamilton 461w
Northern Ireland 36w, 328w, 331w, 510-2

Security industry
Expenditure 27w
Ministry of Defence 40-1w

Self-employed
503w
Income tax assessment 50w
Scotland 314, 320
Tax collection 50w
Tax exemption certificates 50w

Self-regulatory system
243-4w

Self-sufficiency
Coal 348w

Sellafield
Nuclear accidents 45w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing 631w
Nuclear safety 321w
Radiation hazards 90w

Senile dementia
Research finance 342w

Serious Fraud Office
Cash limits 172w

SERPLAN
see London & South East Regional Planning Conference

Service industries
Expenditure 51w

Set-aside schemes
675w
Agricultural land 384w, 973-4
Cereals 974
Grazing land 675w, 973-4

Settle bypass
Road construction 729w

Settle-Carlisle railway
452w, (26:05:88) 601-20
Bus services 451w
J Jarvis & Sons 281w
Local government expenditure 282w, 451w
Official engagements 149w
Operating costs 451w
Private sector 57-8w
Railway closures 281-2w, 589w

Severe disability premium
Medical certificates 563w

Sewage
Agricultural land 115w
Pollution control 136w
Water pollution 479w, 587w

Sewers
Costs 66w

Sex discrimination
International Labour Organisation 313w

Sexual offences
Gleneyre & Burnside Children's Home 35-6w
Men 3w
Offences against children 3-4w

SF
see Sinn Fein

SHAPE
256w

Shared ownership schemes
(27:05:88) 621-30

Shareholders
ID Investment Development 356w

Shares
British Petroleum 375w
Building societies 51w
Water authorities 313w

Sharpeville six
613w

Shaw, Mr David
Questions
Business, Investment 528w
China, Overseas trade 834
Dover castle, Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission for England 310w
National Farmers' Union, Official engagements 677w
Self-employed 503w

Shaw, Sir Giles
Debates etc.
Rowntree (25:05:88) 497-8, (08:06:88) 889-90
Questions
Rowntree, Takeovers 330

Sheep
Animal breeding 683w
Cumbria 218w
Paint 489-90w
Radioactivity 981
Wales 8, 45w

Sheep meat
671-3w
Agricultural stabilisers 404w, 681-2w
New Zealand 492w
Radioactivity 136w
Wales 404w, 681-2w

Sheep premiums
139w
Wales 406w

Sheerman, Mr Barry
Debates etc.
Lorries, Spray suppression (08:06:88) 947, 949, 954-7
Questions
Job release scheme 314-5w

Sheerman, Mr Barry—continued
Questions
Job release scheme, Handicapped workers 393w
Residential care, Hotels 268-9w
Youth training scheme 705

Sheltered employment
Handicapped workers 394-6w

Shelton, Mr William
Questions
AIDS, Death 88w
Sexual offences, Men 3w
Sexual offences, Offences against children 3-4w

Shephard, Mrs Gillian
Debates etc.
Women, Health (10:06:88) 1157-60
Questions
Breast feeding, Government assistance 594w
Health, Women 672w
Infant foods, Child health 727-8w
Unemployment, East Anglia 499w

Shepherd, Mr Colin
Questions
Special Air Service, Disclosure of information 193

Shersby, Mr Michael
Questions
A40, Cost benefit analysis 60w
A40, Road construction 174w
Access to Parliament, Parking 106w
Air traffic control, Industrial disputes 729-30w
BAOR 181
Construction materials, EC action 225-6w
EC internal trade, Competition law 175-6w
Falkland Islands, Television programmes 716
National Museum of Wales, Public Accounts Committee 43w
Nutrition labelling 490-1w
Palace of Westminster, Screening 20
Sugar, Imports 979
Takeovers, Foreign companies in UK 110-2w

Shetland
Exceptional needs payments 592w
Scottish Special Housing Association 599-600w

Shetland Islands Council
599-600w

Shipbuilding
Merchant ships 185
River Clyde (27:05:88) 631-40

Shipping
Persian Gulf 613w

Shipping accidents
Fishing vessels 344-5w
Gee, Robert 590w

Shipping safety
Ferries 59w, 197-9, 280-1w
Fishing vessels 57w

Ships
Marchwood military port 387-8w

Shops
Palace of Westminster 17
"Spycatcher" 365w

Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Debates etc.
Housing (23:05:88) 37-8, 56
Immigrants, Standing Order No 20 applications (07:06:88) 732

Short, Ms Clare
Debates etc.
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (24:05:88) 275-8, 283-4, 285
Oral question time intervention (07:06:88) 694

Short, Ms Clare—continued
Questions
Availability for work, Handicapped 707-8
Employment training, Pay incentives 392w
Employment training, Social security benefits rules 497w
Equal opportunities, Northern Ireland 331w
Navy, Conventional weapons 162w
Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Employment discrimination 455-6w
Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Equal opportunities 619w
Occupied territories, Armed conflict 613-4w
Occupied territories, Palestine 831-2
Radio engineering, Rugby 555w
Radio frequencies, Health hazards 555w
Social security abuse, Glasgow 132w
Unemployment 706
Unemployment benefits, Social security benefits disqualification 130-1w

Short Brothers
Military aircraft 544w

Short time working
Textile industry 134w

Shorthold tenancies
Landlord & tenant (09:06:88) 1003-103

Shotgun certificates
(23:05:88) 80-170, (25:05:88) 392-492

"Shouldn't You Become a School Governor?"
236w

Sikhs
India 464w

Simplified planning zones
649-50w

Sims, Mr Roger
Questions
Concessionary television licences, Residential care 279w
Prime Minister, Church of Scotland 191
Residential care, Income support 565-6w
Tobacco 592w

Single people
Disposable income 580-4w

Sinn Fein
Gaelic language 120w

Sites of special scientific interest
Lough Neagh 380-1w
Somerset 304w

Skill shortages
496w

Skillcentres
Perivale 314w

Skinner, Mr Dennis
Debates etc.
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (24:05:88) 237-9, 243, 292-4
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 452, 453-4, 465-6, 474-5, 476
Girobank, Privatisation (07:06:88) 725, 729
Housing (23:05:88) 28
Opencast mining, Planning permission (08:06:88) 844
Property Services Agency (25:05:88) 345
Questions
Agricultural land, Set-aside schemes 974
Business statements 521, 1000
Developing countries, Debts 611w
Ferries, Shipping safety 198-9, 280-1w
Ferries Safety Steering Committee, Barrett, Tony 173w
Ferries Safety Steering Committee, Pay 173w
Merchant ships, Armed conflict 153w
Official engagements 103w, 230w, 475w, 685-6w
Palterton School, School buildings 235w

Skinner, Mr Dennis—continued
Radioactive waste disposal, Nuclear power stations 9w
Unemployment 500w

Skuse, Frank
277-8w

Slavery
Sudan 612w

Slimming
Food additives 723-4w
Food labelling 136-7w

Slums
Pensioners 100w
Wales 100w

Small businesses
Defence research 322w
EC internal trade 710
VAT 636-7w

Small Firms Service
503w

Smith, Mr Andrew
Debates etc.
Rover Group (08:06:88) 932-3
Questions
Cruise missiles, USA 160w
PAYE, Income tax repayment 53w

Smith, Mr Chris
Questions
Mortgage relief, Costs 701-2w
Pharmacists, Manpower 86w
Public expenditure 526w
Retail price index, Price increases 528-9w

Smith, Sir Dudley
Debates etc.
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Rep (23:05:88) 121
Questions
Airmisses, Air traffic control 729w
Airmisses, Birmingham Airport 729w
Members' conduct 18

Smith, Mr Tim
Debates etc.
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 490
Oral question time intervention (09:06:88) 967
Questions
Bread, Prices 976
Economic policy, Northern Ireland 513
Guinness, Company investigations 179w
House of Fraser, Company investigations 179w
Lonrho, Subsidiary companies 170w
Poland, Solidarity 606w

Smith Committee
see AIDS Monitoring & Surveillance Committee

Smyth, Rev Martin
Debates etc.
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 474
Questions
Business statements 524
European Charter of Local Self-Government, Northern Ireland 462w
Hard core unemployed, Northern Ireland 703
Health services, Northern Ireland 330w
Social security reform, Northern Ireland 504-5
Soldiers' & Airmen's Scripture Readers' Association, Official engagements 158w

Snape, Mr Peter
Questions
Air routes, Licensing 343w
British Railways Board, Public appointments 451w
Equal opportunities, Northern Ireland 340w

Soames, Mr Nicholas
Questions
Air routes, Greater London 55-6w
Defence procurement, Helicopters 555w
Immigration, EC action 643-4w
Small Firms Service 503w
South West Thames Regional Health Authority, Land acquisition 572-3w

Social class
Health 559-60w

Social Fund
Disclosure of information 725w
Northern Ireland 326w, 503-4
Publicity 576w

Social security abuse
671w
Expenditure 671w
Glasgow 132w
Tax evasion 711-2
West Midlands 711

Social security appeals
Attendance allowance 94-5w
Housing benefits 96w
Pensions 669-70w
War pensions 670w

Social security benefits
Administrative delays 215w
Average earnings 216w
Capital rules 272-3w
Married people 272-3w

Social security benefits disqualification
Social security reform 147w
Unemployment benefits 130-1w, 727w

Social security benefits overpayment
Occupational pensions 17w

Social security benefits rules
Attendance allowance 592-3w
Employment training 497w
Handicap benefits 574w
Income support 670w
Multiple sclerosis 573w

Social security claims
Supplementary benefits 141w

Social Security Commissioners
Departmental correspondence 698w
Greater London 626w
Northern Ireland 626w

Social security payments
Banks 578w

Social security recipients
Hospital visitor benefits 668-9w
Housing benefits 560w
Medical examinations 671-2w
Northern Ireland 328w
Supplementary benefits 726w

Social security reform
Child benefit 191-2
Clwyd 12
Coventry 422-4w
Employment schemes 506-7w
Housing benefits 96w, (25:05:88) 366-8, 560-1w
Immigration rules 640w
Northern Ireland 219w, 329w, 504-5
Social security benefits disqualification 147w
Training 217w
Wales 12
Young offenders 573w

Soldiers' & Airmen's Scripture Readers' Association
Official engagements 158w

Soley, Mr Clive
Debates etc.
Housing (23:05:88) 24-33, 36, 49-50
Housing Bill, Rep (09:06:88) 1003-74 passim
Questions
Gibraltar, IRA 346w

Soley, Mr Clive—continued
House renovation grants, Expenditure 732-4w
Housing, Milton Keynes 357w
Housing construction, National income 733-5w
Housing estates, Rushmoor 477w
Housing subsidies, Expenditure 733-4w
Mortgage relief, Costs 700-2w
Public expenditure, Housing 702-4w
Supplementary benefits, Mortgages 724w

Solicitor-General for Scotland
18

Solidarity
Poland 606w

Somerset
Sites of special scientific interest 304w
Wetlands 304w, 487w

South Africa
Armed forces training 324w
BBC 694w
Donnelly, Susan 27w, 465w
Foreign policy 618w
Human rights 825-6
Namibia 603w
Overseas aid 825
Overseas investment 243w
Political prisoners 613w, 825-6
Uranium 8w

South Africa house
Demonstrations (25:05:88) 362-6

South America
Employment 474w
Exercise Purple Venture 653w

South East Asia
Foreign tourists 696w

South East region
Hard core unemployed 702-3
Internal migration 60-2w
Rate support grants 115-6w

South East Thames Regional Health Authority
Population studies 420w

South Glamorgan
Road construction 10

South Glamorgan County Council
Road finance 10

South Hams
EC free food scheme 490w

South Korea
Voluntary restraint agreements 427w

South Manchester Health Authority
NHS finance 517

South of Scotland Electricity Board
8w, 184-5w, 518w
Coal 321-2
Electricity generation 722-3w

South Park School, Lincoln
236w

South Wales
4-6, 401-3w
Public expenditure 296w

South West region
Employment opportunities 701
Unemployment 498w

South West Thames Regional Health Authority
Land acquisition 572-3w

Southampton
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 418w

Southern Africa
Defence 464w
Foreign policy 463w

Southern Africa*—*continued
Overseas aid 6-8w
Peace negotiations 611w

Southern African Development Coordination Conference
6-8w, 464w

Southwark
Council house sales 115w
Employment 499w

Speaker and his deputies. *For rulings & statements see separate heading Speaker's rulings & statements*
Debates etc.
Amendments & new clauses (23:05:88) 24, 86, 100, 123, 161, 165, (24:05:88) 219-88 passim, (25:05:88) 417-8, 444, 449, 451-2, 461, 470, 491, (26:05:88) 530, (07:06:88) 743, (08:06:88) 850, 900
Disallowed questions (23:05:88) 19, (25:05:88) 317, (07:06:88) 705, (08:06:88) 817
Procedure (25:05:88) 435, 448, (07:06:88) 808, 810, 814, (08:06:88) 848, 885, 944, 947
Royal assent notified (26:05:88) 501
Standing Order No 20 applications, Darcy, Michael (07:06:88) 733
Standing Order No 20 applications, Departmental correspondence (07:06:88) 736-7
Standing Order No 20 applications, Immigrants (07:06:88) 732
Standing Order No 20 applications, National Engineering Laboratory (08:06:88) 843
Questions
Business statements 521
Defence, Opposition 713
Palace of Westminster, Members' facilities 19
Scottish & Newcastle Breweries 316-7
South Africa, Overseas aid 825

Speaker's chair
(26:05:88) 535

Speaker's rulings & statements
Adjournment debates (23:05:88) 17, (27:05:88) 665
Business motions (27:05:88) 690
Business questions (26:05:88) 521, 522, 525, 526, 530, (09:06:88) 989
Business statements (24:05:88) 203, 204
Calling of Members (24:05:88) 215, (25:05:88) 338, 371, (26:05:88) 574
Deposited papers (07:06:88) 728
House of Commons division of time (07:06:88) 735
House of Commons divisions (25:05:88) 461-3, 474-9, 480, 481, (07:06:88) 743, 747
House of Commons procedure (07:06:88) 731
House of Commons questions (23:05:88) 21-2
House of Lords debates (24:05:88) 225
Lords amendments (24:05:88) 219
Members' conduct (23:05:88) 126, 135, 140, (25:05:88) 445, 452, 481-2, (08:06:88) 846, 847
Members' interests (08:06:88) 844
Members' interventions (23:05:88) 36, 49, 70, 145, (24:05:88) 212, 231, (25:05:88) 452, 459, (26:05:88) 584, (27:05:88) 665, (07:06:88) 707, 784, 810
Members' speeches (23:05:88) 44, 60, 98, 158, (25:05:88) 375, 403, (26:05:88) 592, (08:06:88) 921, 923, 924, (10:06:88) 1154
Ministerial speeches (23:05:88) 98
Ministerial statements (25:05:88) 343, 346, 348, (07:06:88) 736, (08:06:88) 836
New clauses (07:06:88) 742, 743, 747
Oral questions (25:05:88) 313, (07:06:88) 727, 799
Parliamentary privilege (08:06:88) 844
Points of order (25:05:88) 490, (26:05:88) 528, 618, (08:06:88) 889
Prime Minister's questions (24:05:88) 190
Private notice questions (24:05:88) 199, (07:06:88) 710

Speaker's rulings & statements*—*continued
Recommittal of Bills (23:05:88) 80
Report stage (07:06:88) 742, (09:06:88) 1004-8
Scope of debate (23:05:88) 85, 105, 106, (24:05:88) 239, 292, 293, (25:05:88) 412, (26:05:88) 572-3, 580-1, (09:06:88) 1004-8
Standing Order No 20 applications (23:05:88) 21, 22-3
Supplementary questions (07:06:88) 726, (08:06:88) 827
Ten minute rule Bills (07:06:88) 740
Unparliamentary expressions (24:05:88) 239, (25:05:88) 386

Spearing, Mr Nigel
Debates etc.
Business motions (27:05:88) 690
Housing Bill, Rep (09:06:88) 1006-7, 1015-6, 1052-3, 1083-5
Questions
Air safety, Greater London 282w
Business statements 996
Ferries, Merchant seamen 199
London Docklands Development Corporation, Company accounts 307-8w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Consultants 358w
Satellite broadcasting, Broadcasting controls 168-9w
Sugar, Subsidies 979-80

Special Air Service
187
Disclosure of information 193
Europe 186
Gibraltar 985

Special education
Handicapped pupils 201w
Mentally handicapped 203-4w
Research finance 13w
Wales 201w, 203-4w
Welsh language 687w

Special protection areas
306w
Lough Neagh 380w

Speech therapists
Wales 294w

Speed, Mr Keith
Questions
Housing, Planning appeals 356w
Population studies, South East Thames Regional Health Authority 420w
Road construction, Kent 343-4w

Speller, Mr Tony
Debates etc.
Lorries, Spray suppression (08:06:88) 957
RAF Chivenor, Public petitions (08:06:88) 960-1
Questions
Business statements 993
Employment, Economic growth 507w
Sheep meat 671-3w

Spicer, Sir Jim
Questions
Ethiopia, Independence movements 829

Spicer, Mr Michael, *Under-Secretary of State for Energy*
Questions
Advanced gas-cooled reactors, Electricity generation 8w
Central Electricity Generating Board, Energy conservation 346-7w
Coal, Self-sufficiency 348w
Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation, Privatisation 8-9w
Coal mine closures, Nottinghamshire 349w
Coal mining, Subsidence 349w
"Coal Mining Subsidence Compensation Consultation Paper" 349w
Electricity supply industry, External financing limits 230w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 101w, 231w, 454w, 585w, 693w

Spicer, Mr Michael*—*continued
Magnox reactors 694w
Mersey Barrage Company, Official engagements 8w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing, Sellafield 631w
Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive 173w
Nuclear power, Trades Union Congress 7w
Nuclear safety, Sellafield 321w
Plutonium, Transport of radioactive materials 102w, 631w
Power stations, Competition 693-4w
Uranium, Namibia 7-8w

Spirit of Enniskillen bursaries
Travel grants 505

Sports
Official engagements 358-60w
Public order policing 477w

Sports facilities
Palace of Westminster 477w

"Spotlight"
331w

Spray suppression
Lorries (08:06:88) 944-60

Sprinter trains
Design 454w
Noise 454w

"Spycatcher"
Expenditure 627w, 697w
Shops 365w

Squire, Mr Robin
Debates etc.
Housing (23:05:88) 29, 43, 61-3 passim
Housing Bill, Rep (09:06:88) 1041, 1074
Questions
Block grant, Local government expenditure 71-6w
Council tenants, Departmental publications 651w
Local government expenditure, Scotland 247w
Local government expenditure, Wales 287-8w
Means tested benefits, Publicity 723w
Palace of Westminster, Access to Parliament 18
Rate support grants, South East region 115-6w
Rateable value, Scotland 247-8w

SSEB
see South of Scotland Electricity Board

SSHA
see Scottish Special Housing Association

Staffordshire
Derelict land grants 66w
Police 377w

Stallite Batteries
Factory Inspectorate 319-20w

Stanbrook, Mr Ivor
Debates etc.
House purchase, Young people (27:05:88) 623
Questions
Race relations 985

Standard of living
Coventry 422-4w

Standards enforcement
Air pollution control 301w

Standards specifications
Pollution control 300-1w

Standing Order No 20 applications
Darcy, Michael (07:06:88) 733
Departmental correspondence (07:06:88) 736-7
Immigrants (07:06:88) 732
National Engineering Laboratory (08:06:88) 843

Standing Order No 20 applications*—*continued
Speaker's rulings & statements (23:05:88) 21, 22-3

Standing Order No 39
(25:05:88) 461-3, 474-9, 481

Stanley, Rt Hon John, Minister of State for Northern Ireland
Debates etc.
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Rep (23:05:88) 100-2, 113-6
Questions
Army in Northern Ireland, Firearms 222w
Army in Northern Ireland, Kidnapping 36w
Army in Northern Ireland, Motor vehicle theft 338w
Army in Northern Ireland, Prisoners' transfers 339w
Army in Northern Ireland, Psychology 36w
Army in Northern Ireland, Violence 222w
Arrests, Northern Ireland 334w
Assaults on police, Northern Ireland 339w
Bail, Northern Ireland 333-4w
Baton rounds, Northern Ireland 337-8w
Criminal investigation, Northern Ireland 36-7w
Crumlin Road Prison, Sanitation 460w
Demonstrations, Orange Order 457w
Equal opportunities, Northern Ireland Office 381w
Firearms, Northern Ireland 338-40w, 624w
Glencyre & Burnside Children's Home, Sexual offences 35-6w
Holroyd, Fred, Photographs 36w
Information services, Northern Ireland 36w
Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Acts, Arrests 334w
Parking offences, Newry 461w
Police informers, Northern Ireland 333w
Prison population, Northern Ireland 335-7w
Prison sentences, Northern Ireland 337w
Prisoners, Scheduled offences 460w
Prisoners, Women 460w
Remand in custody, Northern Ireland 333-5w, 337w
Royal Ulster Constabulary, Manpower 338w
Security, Newtown Hamilton 461w
Terrorism, Appeals 332w
Trials, Northern Ireland 623-4w
Written questions, Administrative delays 219w

START talks
118w

"Statement on the Defence Estimates 1988"
708w

Steel, Rt Hon David
Questions
Apartheid, EC action 826-7
Community charges register, Disclosure of information 479w
Consumer credit 713
Local government, Scotland 187w
Poverty, Scotland 194-5
Scottish & Newcastle Breweries 316-7
Southern Africa, Defence 464w

Steen, Mr Anthony
Debates etc.
Vacant land, Land use (27:05:88) 662-4, 665
Questions
East London river crossing, Planning permission 150w
EC free food scheme, South Hams 490w
Firing ranges, Dartmoor National Park 180
Members' correspondence, Administrative delays 689w
Vacant land, Government departments 102w

Steinberg, Mr Gerry
Questions
Durham County Council, Educational finance 108w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 101w
Free school meals, Durham 165w
Pigs, Animal breeding 684w
Vacancies, Durham 131w

Sterling
Exchange rates 524w
Industries 524w

Stern, Mr Michael
Questions
Defence research, Small businesses 322w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 585w
Employment agencies, Licensing 662w
Motorways, Road construction 628w
Nature Conservancy Council, Ramsar Convention 306w
Official engagements 229-30w, 475w, 685-6w
Romania, Human rights 464w

Stevens, Mr Lewis
Questions
Food exports, UK trade with EC 684w
Western European Union 617w

Stewart, Mr Allan
Questions
Cash limits, Scottish Office 251-2w
Prisons, Scotland 191w

Stewart, Mr Andy
Questions
Cash limits, Dept of Energy 233w
Scottish & Newcastle Breweries 321

Stewart, Mr Ian, Minister of State for Defence
Questions
Agusta Helicopters 708w
Air force, US bases 547w
Armed conflict, Merchant ships 191
Armed forces pay 545w
Armed forces training, Bangladesh 37w
Armed forces training, Nuclear accidents 553w
Army, Armed forces recruitment 552w
Army, Gibraltar 661w
Army, Ireland 552w
Army in Northern Ireland, Armed forces strength 323-4w
Artillery 546-7w
BAOR 181
BAOR, Defence equipment 182
BAOR, National Audit Office 182
Bombs, Northern Ireland 221-2w
British merchant fleet, Defence 155w
Canberra aircraft, Air force 543w
Chemical Defence Establishment, USSR 153-4w
Chemical weapons, USSR 157w
Cruise missiles, Nuclear weapons deployment 40w
Cruise missiles, USA 160w
Defence equipment, Air force bases 547w
Defence expenditure, National income 162w
Exercise Ocean Venture 88, Armed forces deployment 553w
F15 aircraft, Armed forces deployment 546w
Falkland Islands, Armed forces deployment 182w
51 Squadron 708w
Gibraltar, Bomb disposal 162-4w
HMS Hermione, Inquiries 708w
Jaguar aircraft 707w
Joint strategic target planning staff, Armed forces deployment 544w
Merchant ships, Armed conflict 153w
Military aircraft, Polaris submarines 37w
Military exercises, Gatwick Airport 708-9w
NATO, Armed forces deployment 548w
NATO, Navy 158w

Stewart, Mr Ian*—*continued
NATO ministerial meetings, Official engagements 162w
NATO Nuclear Planning Group 161-2w
Navy, Conventional weapons 162w
Navy, Nuclear weapons 161w
Nuclear weapons, NATO 152-3w
Nuclear weapons, USSR 160w
Nuclear weapons deployment, USA 161w
Official secrets, Firth of Forth 549w
Offshore structures, North Sea 545w
RAF Brawdy, USA 544w
RAF Fylingdales, Early warning systems 38w
RAF Greenham Common 549w
Royal Irish Rangers, Army in Northern Ireland 552w
Special Air Service 187
Special Air Service, Europe 186
Submarines, Communication engineering 38w
Tornado aircraft, RAF St Athan 161w
Ulster Defence Regiment 324w
Ulster Defence Regiment, Armed forces strength 324w
US bases, Construction 658-60w

Stokes, Mr John
Questions
Business statements 526
Defence procurement, NATO 189
Nurses' training, Project 2000 90w

Storms
Tree planting 491-2w

Stott, Mr Roger
Questions
Defence, Merchant ships 185

Strang, Mr Gavin
Debates etc.
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (24:05:88) 219-25, 243-5, 252, 253-8, 262, 264, 274, 289-91
Questions
Coal, Imports 518w
Community charges register, Scotland 184w
Health & Safety Executive, Government assistance 709
Magnox reactors 694w
NATO Nuclear Planning Group 155w
P & O, Industrial training 391w
Tenosynovitis, Poultry 664w

Strategic defence initiative
Defence contracts 154w, 553w

Straw, Mr Jack
Questions
Burnage School, Manchester, Inquiries 625w
City technology colleges, Expenditure 109w
Primary education, Mathematics education 237-8w
Teacher training, Mathematics education 237w
Teachers, Mathematics education 236-7w

Street lighting
Newry 622-3w

Structure plans
Clwyd 6

STUC
see Scottish Trades Union Congress

Student grants
727w
Medical research 12w
Scotland 253w

Student unions
Trade union membership 688-9w

Styal Prison
2w

Sub post offices
589w

Submarines
Communication engineering 38w
Fishing vessels 984

Submarines—continued
Scotland 180

Subsidence
Coal mining 349w

Subsidiary companies
Lesotho 170w

Subsidies
Sugar 979-80
Sugar beet 971

Suchard
697-8w

Sudan
Armed conflict 831
Slavery 612w

Suffolk
Employment 498w

Sugar
Imports 979
Subsidies 979-80

Sugar beet
Norfolk 971
Subsidies 971

Sugar refineries
EC action 675-6w

Sumberg, Mr David
Questions
East West relations 614w
Mental health services, Property transfer 562w
Official engagements 475w
USSR, Human rights 25w
Vacancies, Bury 502-3w

Summerson, Mr Hugo
Debates etc.
House purchase, Young people (27:05:88) 621-5
Questions
Council of Europe, Official engagements 611w
Further education teachers, Pay 341-2w
Mortgage relief 540w
Tenant Farmers' Association, Official engagements 682w

Supplementary benefits
Farmers 622w
Mental patients 413w
Mortgages 724w
Nursing homes 622w
Residential care 419w
Social security claims 141w
Social security recipients 726w
Young people 95-6w

Supplementary questions
Speaker's rulings & statements (07:06:88) 726, (08:06:88) 827

Surgery
Death 361w
Mental illness 143w
Scotland 361w

Surrey docks
Land values 225w

Surveillance
Radio 588w
Radio broadcasting licences 588w

Sutton bridge
A17 56w

Swansea City Football Club
355w

Swinerton-Dyer, Peter
238w

Switzerland
Dept of Trade & Industry 242w
Law reports 24w
Takeovers 242w, 327-8

Synthetic fibres
Turkey 134w

Synthetic index
Regional planning & development 45-6w
Wales 45-6w, 101w

Syrian Arab Republic
Foreign policy 196w

Tachographs
Repairs & maintenance 345w

Tactical Aid Unit
106w

Takeovers
British Waterways Board 356w
Confectionery 334-5
Employment 706
Foreign companies in UK 110-2w
Rowntree 327-36, (25:05:88) 493-500, 514-5, (08:06:88) 850-99
Switzerland 242w, 327-8

Tanks
Defence procurement 387w

Tape recorders
Police interrogation 171-2w

Task Group on Assessment & Testing
Examinations 434-6w

Tate Gallery
Manpower 376w

Tax burden
Personal income 52w

Tax collection
Self-employed 50w

Tax evasion
Road tax 197-8w
Social security abuse 711-2

Tax exemption certificates
Self-employed 50w

Tax rates & bands
Employment 705w
Income tax 52-4w, 374w
Taxpayers 54w

Tax yields
52w
Advance corporation tax 700w
Child benefit 521w
Corporation tax 700w
Debts 197-8w
Personal tax allowances 255-6w
Personal taxation 698w
Regional selective assistance 197w

Taxable benefits
Child benefit 197w

Taxation
Budget 699w

Taxpayers
Personal income 699w
Tax rates & bands 54w

Taylor, Mrs Ann
Questions
Haverigg Prison, Prison escapes 720
Prisoners, Mother & baby units 1w, 645w

Taylor, Mr Ian
Debates etc.
"Developments in the European Community Six Monthly Report" (26:05:88) 591
Questions
Arms control negotiations, Verification 118w
Employment opportunities, Channel tunnel 504w
Navy, Trident 186
UN disarmament 616w

Taylor, Rt Hon John David
Questions
Army, Armed forces recruitment 552w
Army, Ireland 552w
Artificial insemination of animals, Northern Ireland 462w, 623w

Taylor, Rt Hon John David—continued
Cyprus 694w
Eastern Health & Social Services Board 509
Employment, Northern Ireland 619-20w
Further education teachers, Employment discrimination 458w
Health services, Portavogie 30w
Manufacturing industries, Northern Ireland 619-20w
Milk, Production quotas 263w, 463w
Parking, Newtownards 621w
Primary education, Ballyharry School 458w
Primary education, School closures 458-9w
Property development, Newtownards 619-20w
Road works, Comber 31-2w

Taylor, Mr John M
Questions
Agricultural land, Conservation 598w
Airmisses, Birmingham Airport 59-60w
Bermuda, Ministers' visits abroad 605w
IRA, Northern Ireland 330-1w
Unemployment, West Midlands 498w

Taylor, Mr Matthew
Debates etc.
Girobank, Privatisation (07:06:88) 725
Rover Group (08:06:88) 919-23
Questions
Butter, New Zealand 385w
Equal pay 495w
Inland Revenue, Postal services 700w
Kampuchea, Foreign policy 615w
NHS, Cornwall 591w
Occupational pensions, Widowers' benefits 216w
Police, Republic of Ireland 331w
Public appointments, Women 135w
Unemployment, Economic regions 597-8w
Women, Domestic violence 216w
Youth training scheme, Women 28w

Taylor, Mr Teddy
Debates etc.
"Developments in the European Community Six Monthly Report" (26:05:88) 542, 543, 550, 564-70, 577, 589-90, 591
Questions
Airbuses, Government assistance to industry 429w
Business statements 520
Food, EC external trade 680-2w
Passports, Administrative delays 643w
Private Members' Bills 23w
Pulses & seeds, EC action 492w

Tayside
Regional aid 130w

Teacher training
Gaelic language 30-1w
Mathematics education 237w
Science education 237w

Teachers
Conditions of employment 234w
Mathematics education 236-7w
Pay 625w
Professional qualifications 109-10w
Science education 236-7w
Wales 203w

Teaching hospitals
Hospital patients 146w

Technical & vocational education initiative
Orkney 393w
Scotland 364w

Teignmouth Quay Company Bill 1985/86
Debates etc.
2R order read (26:05:88) 501, (09:06:88) 969

Telecommunications technology
Civil defence 167-8w

Telephones
Palace of Westminster 23w

Television
House of Commons broadcasting 367w

Television advertising
Central Office of Information 51w
Dept of Employment 130w

Television programmes
Falkland Islands 716
Gibraltar 331w

Temple-Morris, Mr Peter
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 799-800
Questions
Chile, Referenda 830
USSR, Persian Gulf 611w

Temporary staff
NHS 212-4w
NHS administration 214w

10 Downing Street
(07:06:88) 736-7

Ten minute rule Bills
713-21w
Speaker's rulings & statements (07:06:88) 740

Tenancy agreements
Abercrombie house 735w

Tenant Farmers' Association
Official engagements 682w

Tenants
Scottish & Newcastle Breweries 321

"Tenants' Choice"
651w

Tenosynovitis
Poultry 664w

Terrorism
Acquittals 274w
Appeals 332w
Bail 274w
Convictions 274w
Death 249-50w
EC action 643-4w
Prison sentences 275w
Remand in custody 274-5w
Scotland 249-50w

Testing
Polaris missiles 548w

Textile industry
Redundancy 699-700
Short time working 134w

Textiles
Turkey 113-4w

Thain, Ian Richard
Prison sentences 505-6

Thames Valley Police
378w

Thames Water Authority
Water supply disconnections 63w

Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret, Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury and Minister for the Civil Service
Questions
Alcohol & crime, Police 714
Angola, Armed forces deployment 984
Arms control negotiations 515, 712, 715
Arms control negotiations, Chemical weapons 986
Arms control negotiations, East West relations 714-5
Blandford fly, Departmental coordination 475-6w

Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret—continued
Chemical weapons 192
Child benefit, Social security reform 191-2
Community charge, Legislative process 193-4
Consumer credit 713
Debts, Africa 983
Defence 984
Economic situation, USA 514
Employment training 516
Falkland Islands, Television programmes 716
Football, Hooliganism 193
France, Foreign policy 685w
GCE A level 713-4
Gibraltar, IRA 346w
Gibraltar, Special Air Service 985
Government departments, Disclosure of information 686w
Homelessness 194
Homelessness, Greater London 712-3
Homelessness, Young people 982
House of Lords, Parliamentary reform 192
Housing, Poverty 475w
Human rights, USA 715-6
Keeni Meeni Services, Official engagements 3w
Lie detectors, Government Communications Headquarters 195-6
Low pay, Wealth distribution 983
Ministerial duties, Common sheep meat regime 229w
Ministerial duties, Community care 229w
Ministers, Advertising 686w
NHS 194
NHS, Scotland 346w
Official engagements 103w, 229-30w, 475w, 685-6w
Official engagements, Avon 103w
Official engagements, Basingstoke 102w
Official engagements, Canary Wharf 229w
Official engagements, Denmark 102w
Official engagements, Northern region 102-3w
Official engagements, Rogerstone 229w
Poverty, Scotland 193-5
Prime Minister, Church of Scotland 191, 194, 515-6, 518
Race relations 985
Radiation hazards, Leukaemia 986
Richmond house 714
Rover Group, Vacancies 517-8
Rowntree, Takeovers 514-5
Special Air Service, Disclosure of information 193
Submarines, Fishing vessels 984
Top Salaries Review Body 166w
Turkey, Official visits 476w
Unemployment 516-7
Unemployment, Beverley 985
Vacant land, Government departments 102w
Wealth distribution 516
Wealth distribution, City of London 514
Welsh language 984-5
Withington Hospital, Hospital closures 517
Year 2000, Anniversaries 346w

Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Questions
Cancer hazards, Medical research 90w
Chemical weapons, Arms control 195-6w
EC action, Transport of radioactive materials 26w
Falkland Islands, Armed forces deployment 182w
Farmers, Trade unions 43w
Gwynedd Health Authority 9-10
Low flying, Military aircraft 156w, 158w
Nuclear power, Trades Union Congress 7w
Official engagements 475w, 685-6w
Open University, Educational finance 11w
Radioisotopes, Transport of radioactive materials 360-1w
Unemployment, Economic regions 131w
Uranium, Namibia 7-8w
Valleys initiative 5
West Germany, Nuclear safeguards 26w

Thompson, Mr Donald, Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture
Questions
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service, Fees & charges 261w
Agricultural marketing, Management 263w
Agricultural products, Radioactivity 488-9w
Agricultural workers, Economic regions 485-8w
Agriculture, Departmental publications 262-3w
Agriculture, Manpower 493-6w
Animal diseases, Research 219w
Animal feed, Hazardous materials 683w
Badgers, Bovine tuberculosis 264w, 489w
Badgers, Nature conservation 678w
Beef 677w
Beef, Hormone treatments 137w
Beef, Republic of Ireland 137w
Bovine somatotropin 683-4w
Bread, Prices 976
British Wool Marketing Board, Official engagements 674w
Butter, Intervention stocks 674w
Butter, New Zealand 385w
Carbadox, Animal feed 384w, 488w
Cattle diseases, Newham 684w
Cereals, Bread 976
Cereals, Co-responsibility levy 261-2w
Civil servants' business appointments, Ministry of Agriculture 139w
Dairy products, Milk Marketing Board 973
Equal opportunities, Ministry of Agriculture 262w
Farm incomes 386w
Farmers, Economic regions 484-6w
Food Act 1984, Law reform 218w
Food contamination, Emergency planning 139w
Food exports, UK trade with EC 482-3w, 684w
Food labelling, Slimming 136-7w
Horticulture, Dumping 982
Irradiated food, Food labelling 137w
Land pollution, Radioactivity 385w
Livestock, Genetic engineering 218w, 681w
Meat & Livestock Commission, Official engagements 674w
Milk, Bovine somatotropin 218w
Milk, Production quotas 263w
Milk Marketing Board, Official engagements 482w, 674-5w, 972-3
Mink, Farms 683w
Monetary compensatory amounts, Pigmeat 493w
Nuclear accidents, Ministry of Agriculture 490w
Nutrition labelling 490-1w
Pigmeat 684w
Pigs, Animal breeding 684w
Pigs, Cheshire 978
Plants, Certification testing 138-9w
Potato Marketing Board, Official engagements 674w
Pulses & seeds, EC action 492w
Sheep, Animal breeding 683w
Sheep, Cumbria 218w
Sheep, Paint 489-90w
Sheep meat, New Zealand 492w
Sheep meat, Radioactivity 136w
Sheep meat, Wales 681-2w
Sheep premiums 139w
Sugar, Imports 979
Sugar, Subsidies 979-80
Sugar refineries, EC action 675-6w
UK membership of EC 973

Thompson, Mr Patrick
Debates etc.
Housing (23:05:88) 57-9
Questions
Business statements 528
Employment, EC countries 705
Handicap benefits, Expenditure 559w

Thorne, Mr Neil
Debates etc.
First aid, Health education (27:05:88) 677-9

Three Rivers
Electorate 144-5w

Thurnham, Mr Peter
Questions
Alcoholic drinks, Greater Manchester 379w
Common agricultural policy, EC reform 384-5w
Companies Registration Office (England & Wales) 428w
Companies Registration Office (England & Wales), Information services 636w
Defence contracts, North West region 37w
EC Foreign Affairs Council, Official engagements 618-9w
Foetal tissue, Medical ethics 557-8w
GCE A level, Bolton 342w
Manufacturing industries, Industrial production 530w
Religious education, Church schools 14w

Tighe, Michael
327w

Time limits
(09:06:88) 1003-103

Tin
Cornwall 635-6w

Tipping of waste
Environmental health 736w
Gases 736w
Pollution monitoring 647-8w, 736w
Warwickshire 736w

Tobacco
592w

Tobacco advertising
Health warnings 411-2w

Togo
Official visits 617w

Top Salaries Review Body
166w
Members' pensions 103-4w

Tor Bay Harbour (Oxen Cove & Coastal Footpath Brixham) Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
Rep* (24:05:88) 179
3R* (07:06:88) 699

Torfaen Borough Council
Judgments 365w
Rate support grants 403-4w

Tornado aircraft
540-1w, 707-8w
Air accidents 323w, 542w
Arms trade 542w
Defence equipment 542w
Defence procurement 542w
RAF St Athan 161w, 390w

Torquay United Football Club
355w

Torry research station
975-6

Total allowable catches
Herring 653w

Tourism
Government grants 131w
North West region 495w
Rhyl 43w

Tourist industry
Exchange rates 244w
Youth training scheme 704-5

Tourist taxes
European Commission 705w

Tourists
Ambulance services 294w

Tower Hamlets
Immigrants (07:06:88) 732

Town & country planning
Opencast mining 586-7w

Townend, Mr John
Questions
Rowntree, Takeovers 335

Trade formalities
Customs & Excise 372w

Trade union membership
Student unions 688-9w

Trade unions
(24:05:88) 219-98
EC internal trade 712w
Farmers 43w
Unfair dismissal 509w

Trades Union Congress
516
Employment training 497w
Nuclear power 7w
Official engagements 662w

Trading accounts
532-8w

Trading standards departments
Manpower 111w

Traffic lights
A49 173w

Training
(24:05:88) 219-98
Aircrew 661w
Government grants 504w
Mines & Quarries Inspectorate 315-6w
Social security reform 217w

Training allowances
Employment training 497w

Training Commission
504w
Inner city areas 317w

Translation services
120w, 465-6w, 603w

Transplant surgery
Foetal tissue 555-8w

Transport costs
District health authorities 294w

Transport of hazardous materials
Explosives 149w
Hazardous wastes 480w

Transport of radioactive materials
EC action 26w
Plutonium 102w, 631w
Radioisotopes 360-1w

Travel grants
Spirit of Enniskillen bursaries 505

Treasury
528w
Equal opportunities 254w
Languages education 603w
Welsh language 55w

Tredinnick, Mr David
Questions
Social security abuse, West Midlands 711
Youth employment, International Labour Organisation 313w

Tree conservation
Wood 633-4w

Tree planting
Farm woodland scheme 683w
Storms 491-2w

Trials
Costs 286w
Northern Ireland 623-4w

Trident
Costs 151w
Navy 186

Trident submarines
Communication engineering 38w, 151w

Trippier, Mr David, Under-Secretary of State for the Environment
Debates etc.
Vacant land, Land use (27:05:88) 665, 666-9
Questions
Construction materials, EC action 225-6w
Derelict land grants, Staffordshire 66w
Housing associations, London Docklands 649w
Housing construction, National income 733-5w
Land values, Surrey docks 225w
Leisure facilities, Newcastle-under-Lyme 648w
London Docklands, Employment opportunities 225w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Company accounts 307-8w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Consultants 358w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Contracts 307w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Schools 225w
Planning inquiries, Opencast mining 80-1w
Planning permission, Opencast mining 117w
Population, London Docklands 650-1w
Private rented housing, London Docklands 650w
Private sector housing, London Docklands 649w
Town & country planning, Opencast mining 586-7w
Walker Park, Newcastle, Government grants 76-7w
Young people, Kensington & Chelsea 308-9w

Trotter, Mr Neville
Questions
Walker Park, Newcastle, Government grants 76-7w

TUC
see Trades Union Congress

Tucano aircraft
37w, 661w
Defence expenditure 322w

"Tumbledown"
716
Lawrence, Robert 325-6w

Tunnels
Road tankers 453w

Turkey
EC accession 836-7
Human rights 836-7
Official engagements 608w
Official visits 476w
Prisoners' transfers 466w
Synthetic fibres 134w
Textiles 113-4w

Turner, Mr Dennis
Questions
British merchant fleet, Defence 155w

Turnley, John
36-7w

Twinn, Dr Ian
Questions
European Commission, Finance 602w

Type 23 frigates
Computer applications 155w
Defence procurement 155w

UDR
see Ulster Defence Regiment

UFC
see Universities Funding Council

UGC
see University Grants Committee

UKAEA
see United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority

UKWMO
see United Kingdom Warning & Monitoring Organisation

Ulcerative colitis
Prescription charges exemptions 269w

Ulster Defence Regiment
324w, 624w, (07:06:88) 733
Armed forces strength 323-4w
Departmental correspondence 40w

UN
see United Nations

UN disarmament
616w
Arms control 368-9w, 607w

UN finances
833

UN resolutions
Middle East 832

Unemployed workers centres
Employment training 506w

Unemployment
499-500w, 516-7, 706
Beverley 985
Blackpool 500w
Cynon valley 11-2
Derbyshire 699
East Anglia 499w
East Midlands 699
Economic regions 131w, 597-8w
Economic situation 601w
Hampshire 498w
Handicapped workers 506w
Leicester 499-500w
Liverpool 499w
Newport 11
North West region 500w
Northern Ireland 327w
Paisley 15w
Rowntree 330-f, 333
Scotland 188w, 319-20
South West region 498w
Vacancies 131w
Wales 11, 49w
West Midlands 498w
Yorkshire & Humberside 498w

Unemployment benefits
Social security benefits disqualification 130-1w, 727w
Voluntary work 502w

Unfair competition
Energy prices 349w

Unfair dismissal
Trade unions 509w

Uniform business rate
354w
Community charge 353-4w

Uniforms
106w

United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority
7-8w

United Kingdom Warning & Monitoring Organisation
273w

United Nations
24-5w, 368-9w, 611w, 616w, 833
Official engagements 831

Universities Funding Council
Public appointments 238w
Zoological Society of London 235w

University finance
165w

University Grants Committee
108-9w

Unmarried fathers
Parents' rights 698w

Unparliamentary expressions
Speaker's rulings & statements (24:05:88) 239, (25:05:88) 386

Uranium
Namibia 7-8w
South Africa 8w

Urban areas
Road traffic 630w

Urban development grants
Northern Ireland 621-2w

US bases
Air force 547w
Construction 658-60w

USA
Cruise missiles 160w, 179-80
Domestic wastes 652w
Economic situation 514
Foreign companies in UK 619-20w
Human rights 715-6
Nuclear weapons deployment 161w
Official engagements 606w, 616w, 837-8
Palestine Liberation Organisation 838
Panama 614w
Presidential elections 838
RAF Brawdy 544w
Warships 180

USSR
Arms control 190
Balance of trade 113w
Chemical Defence Establishment 153-4w
Chemical weapons 157w
Emigration 605-6w
Export credit 178w
Foreign policy 607w
Human rights 25w, 609w
Joint ventures 177-8w
Nuclear accidents 430-1w, 490w, 520w, 693w
Nuclear weapons 160w
Overseas investment 178w
Persian Gulf 611w
Visas 840-2

Vacancies
499w, 501w
Bury 502-3w
Dundee 657w
Durham 131w
Medical research 12w
Rover Group 517-8
Unemployment 131w

Vacant land
Government departments 102w
Land use (27:05:88) 662-9

Vaccine Damage (Compensation Arrangements) Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
1R (24:05:88) 216-8

Vaccine damaged children
Compensation (24:05:88) 216-8

Valleys initiative
4-6, 401-3w
Publicity 403w

Value Added Tax (Annual Accounting) Regulations 1988
Questions
52w

VAT
Accounting 52w
Administrative costs 528w

VAT—continued
Hearing aids 373w
Hospital radio 527w
Small businesses 636-7w

VAT registration
Companies 528w

VAT threshold
EC action 371w

Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Questions
Petroleum production licences 347w
Petroleum production licences, Land ownership & tenure 347-8w
Petroleum (Production) Regulations 1976 348w

Vaz, Mr Keith
Debates etc.
Rowntree (08:06:88) 875, 885
Questions
AIDS, Leicestershire Health Authority 411w
Business statements 522
Cervical cancer, Leicestershire Health Authority 271w
Fiji, Overseas aid 196w
Free school meals, Leicestershire 165-6w
Grenada, Human rights 196w
Habitual offenders, Leicester Prison 278w
Immigration controls, Genetics 278w
Police civilians 277-8w
Redundancy, Textile industry 699-700

Vera Institute of Justice
171w

Verification
Arms control negotiations 118w
Nuclear disarmament 24-5w

Verne Prison
444w

Veterinary services
Higher education administration 108-9w

Victoria School, Ballyhalbert
458w

Vietnamese refugees
Hong Kong 643w, 652-3w

Viggers, Mr Peter, Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
Debates etc.
Harland & Wolff (27:05:88) 646-50
Questions
Artificial insemination of animals, Northern Ireland 462w, 623w
Belfast Telegraph, Recruitment 35w
Business, Northern Ireland 510
De Lorean, Debts 460-1w
Employment, Northern Ireland 619-20w
Employment discrimination, Appeals 32-4w
Employment discrimination, Compensation 34w
Employment discrimination, Northern Ireland 32w, 35w, 220-1w, 456-7w
Employment discrimination, Religious discrimination 646w
Employment opportunities, Local Enterprise Development Unit 457w
Equal opportunities, Northern Ireland 331w, 340w
Firearms, Northern Ireland 35w
Foreign investment in UK, Northern Ireland 219w
Further education teachers, Employment discrimination 458w
Harland & Wolff 502-3
Harland & Wolff, Government assistance 503
Harland & Wolff, Official engagements 330w
Industry, Northern Ireland 454-5w
Job centres, Northern Ireland 327w
Local Enterprise Development Unit, Northern Ireland 510
Manufacturing industries, Northern Ireland 619-20w

Viggers, Mr Peter—continued
Milk, Production quotas 461w, 463w
North Eastern Library & Education Board, Employment discrimination 463w
Nuclear accidents, Northern Ireland Office 693w
Unemployment, Northern Ireland 327w

Violence
Army in Northern Ireland 222w
Football 355w

Visas
USSR 840-2

Vocational guidance
Inner city school compacts 710-1

Vocational training
Community care 269w

Voluntary restraint agreements
426-8w
Japan 427w
South Korea 427w

Voluntary Services Unit
437-8w

Voluntary social work
Community charge 735w

Voluntary work
Community charge 305w
Unemployment benefits 502w

Vote bundle
Administrative delays 665w

Wadden Sea
Pollution monitoring 303w

Waite, Terry
618w

***Wakeham, Rt Hon John**, Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons*
Debates etc.
Business statements (24:05:88) 201-4
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 392-5
Parliamentary gifts, St Christopher & Nevis (26:05:88) 535
Recess motions, Spring (25:05:88) 357, 387-91
Questions
Abortion (Amendment) Bill 1987/88, House of Commons division of time 23w
Access to Parliament 23w
Access to Parliament, Weather 477w
Business statements 519-34, 987-1002
Government Bills 712-3w
Government Bills, Commons amendments 166w
House of Commons accommodation, Cannon Row police station 18
House of Commons broadcasting, Television 367w
House of Commons catering 23w
House of Commons catering, Food hygiene 24w
House of Commons catering, Members' facilities 24w
House of Commons times of sittings 712w
Members' conduct 18
Members' pensions, Top Salaries Review Body 103-4w
Opposition parties, Finance 104-5w
Palace of Westminster, Access to Parliament 18, 664w
Palace of Westminster, Accidents 664w
Palace of Westminster, Cash dispensing 22w
Palace of Westminster, Gun sports 476w
Palace of Westminster, Manpower 664w
Palace of Westminster, Members' facilities 17, 19
Palace of Westminster, Press conferences 22w
Palace of Westminster, Sanitation 23w
Palace of Westminster, Screening 19-20

Wakeham, Rt Hon John—continued
Palace of Westminster, Sports facilities 477w
Palace of Westminster, Telephones 23w
Parliamentary parking, Parliamentary security 366w
Prime Minister's questions 20
Private Members' Bills 23w, 713-21w
Procedure Select Committee, House of Commons debates 103w
Public Bills, House of Commons division of time 721w
Solicitor-General for Scotland 18
Vote bundle, Administrative delays 665w

***Waldegrave, Mr William**, Minister for Housing and Planning*
Debates etc.
Housing (23:05:88) 29, 33-40, 42, 43, 47
Housing Bill, Rep (09:06:88) 1016-102 passim
Questions
Council house sales 651w
Council tenants, Departmental publications 651w
Defective housing, Reinstatement grants 358w
Enforcement notices 311-2w
Homelessness 735w
House renovation grants, Expenditure 732-4w
Housing, Planning appeals 356w
Housing & handicapped 303w
Housing associations, Local government finance 68-9w
Housing construction, Ealing 648w
Housing construction, Greater London 731w
Housing estates, Rushmoor 477w
Housing standards, Housing compensation 60w
Housing subsidies, Expenditure 733-4w
Internal migration, South East region 60-2w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Public expenditure 650w
Planning permission, Dartford 730-1w
Planning permission, Farms 67w, 650w
Property Services Agency, Land ownership & tenure 62w
Ramsgate harbour, Roads 479w

Wales
A44 2
Agricultural land 588-9w
Agricultural research 405w
Agricultural workers 398w
AIDS 399-400w
Aids for handicapped 13
Ambulance services 294-5w
Armed forces deployment 38w
Blood transfusion services 10-1
Building repairs 297w
Building workers 403-4w
Community charge 2-3, 48-9w, 406w
Compulsorily detained mental patients 294-5w
Consumer advisory committees 589w
Council house sales 6-7
Council house waiting lists 44w
Council housing 7
Dairy farming 407w
Death rate 407w
Defence procurement 155-6w
District health authorities 289-92w, 294w
Domestic rates 48-9w
Drugs 400w
EC grants & loans 404w
EC internal trade 295-6w
Electorate 396-7w
Employment training 44w
Enterprise initiative 49w
Farm incomes 406w
Farmers 43w, 397-8w, 405w
Farms 407w
Forestry 431w
Garages & petrol stations 439w
Green pound 405w
Handicapped pupils 200w
Handicapped students 200w, 202w

Wales—continued
Health services finance 9, 431w
Homelessness 99w
Hospital admissions 47w
Hospital waiting lists 9
Houses 409w
Housing 7-8
Housing amenities 100w
Housing benefits 44w
Housing construction 46w, 99-100w
Housing standards 43w, 45w
Housing starts 44w
Job training scheme 286-7w
Languages education 398-9w
Leukaemia 45w
Local education authorities 633w
Local government expenditure 287-8w
Mental hospitals 400-2w
National Rivers Authority 4, 408-9w
NHS 200w
NHS finance 295w, 407w
Nurses 47w
Office of Water Regulation 200w
Pay 401w
Pay beds 291-4w
Planning appeals 46w
Private health services 291w
Private hospitals 287-8w
Public expenditure 296w
Rate rebates 44w
Rateable value 288w
Regional aid 4-6, 401-3w
Rivers 199w
Roads 1-2
School leaving 204-6w
Sheep 8, 45w
Sheep meat 404w, 581-2w
Sheep premiums 406w
Slums 100w
Social security reform 12
Special education 201w, 203-4w
Speech therapists 294w
Synthetic index 45-6w, 101w
Teachers 203w
Unemployment 11, 49w
Water charges 199w
Water pollution 4, 296w, 405-6w

Walker, Mr Bill
Debates etc.
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 456-7
Rescue services, RAF Leuchars (23:05:88) 171-3
Scottish Bus Group, Privatisation (24:05:88) 208
Questions
Business statements 529
Community charges register, Scotland 312
Crime prevention panels, Scotland 187w
Historic buildings, Direct labour departments 252w
Leukaemia, Dounreay 600-1w
Middle East, Peace negotiations 838-9
Military aircraft, Aircraft noise 158-9w
Prescriptions, Scotland 128-9w
Prime Minister, Church of Scotland 194
Scottish assembly 309-10
Submarines, Scotland 180
Youth training scheme, Tourist industry 704-5

Walker, David
3w

***Walker, Rt Hon Peter**, Secretary of State for Wales*
Questions
Agricultural land, Wales 588-9w
Agricultural research, Wales 405w
Agricultural workers, Wales 398w
Building workers, Wales 403-4w
Cash limits, Welsh Office 297w
Central Electricity Generating Board, Official engagements 45-6w
Civil servants' business appointments, Welsh Office 297w
Consumer advisory committees, Wales 589w
Dairy farming, Processed food 407w

Walker, Rt Hon Peter—continued
Drugs, Animal feed 400w
EC grants & loans, Wales 404w
EC internal trade, Wales 295-6w
Electorate, Wales 396-7w
Employment training, Wales 44w
Enterprise initiative, Wales 49w
Equal opportunities, Welsh Office 397w
Farm incomes, Wales 406w
Farmers, Compensation 405w
Farmers, Trade unions 43w
Farmers, Wales 397-8w
Farms, Forestry 431w
Farms, Wales 407w
Green pound, Wales 405w
Housing benefits, Wales 44w
Housing standards, Rural areas 43w
Integrated development operations, Dyfed 46w
Newspaper press, Disclosure of information 401w
Nuclear accidents, Welsh Office 430-1w
Official engagements 407-8w
Pay, Wales 401w
Public expenditure, South Wales 296w
Public expenditure, Wales 296w
School leaving, Wales 204-6w
Sheep, Wales 45w
Sheep meat, Agricultural stabilisers 404w
Sheep meat, Wales 404w
Sheep premiums, Wales 406w
Social security reform, Clwyd 12
Synthetic index, Regional planning & development 45-6w
Synthetic index, Wales 101w
Unemployment, Cynon Valley 11-2
Unemployment, Newport 11
Unemployment, Wales 11, 49w
Valleys initiative 4-6, 401-3w
Valleys initiative, Publicity 403w
Water pollution, Farms 405-6w
Welsh Development Agency, Expenditure 204w
Welsh Development Agency, Factories 201w
Welsh Development Agency, Foreign investment in UK 12
Welsh Development Agency, Manpower 202-4w
Welsh Office, Civil service 8
Welsh Office, House of Commons questions 8-9
Written questions, Welsh Office 47w

Walker Park, Newcastle
Government grants 76-7w

Wall, Mr Pat
Debates etc.
"Developments in the European Community Six Monthly Report" (26:05:88) 562-4
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Rep (23:05:88) 95, 148-9
Woollen industry, West Yorkshire (27:05:88) 651-4, 658
Questions
Homelessness, Young people 982
Rowntree, Takeovers 336
Sea Fish Industry Authority, Official engagements 682w

Wallace, Colin
40w

Wallace, Mr James
Debates etc.
Business statements (24:05:88) 202
Property Services Agency (25:05:88) 342
Questions
Business statements 520-1, 990
Cyprus, Official engagements 610w
Departmental correspondence, Disclosure of information 599w
Electricity supply industry, Scotland 312-3
Exceptional needs payments, Shetland 592w
Fishing vessels, Government grants 684w
Nuclear weapons, Modernisation 183-4
Poverty, Scotland 320

Wallace, Mr James—continued
Procedure Select Committee, House of Commons debates 103w
Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, Government grants to voluntary organisations 601w
Scottish Special Housing Association, Shetland 599-600w
Solicitor-General for Scotland 18
Technical & vocational education initiative, Orkney 393w
Technical & vocational education initiative, Scotland 364w

Walley, Ms Joan
Debates etc.
Women, Health (10:06:88) 1137-42
Questions
Carpets, Opposition Whips' Office 81w
Ceramic industries, Manpower 317w
Ceramic industries, Official engagements 243w
Cervical cancer, Lasers 670w
Chlorofluorocarbons, Air pollution control 634-5w, 648-9w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 231w
Employment training, Leisure 663w
Food standards 665w
Hazardous wastes, Transport of hazardous materials 480w
House of Commons catering 23w
House of Commons catering, Food hygiene 24w
House of Commons catering, Members' facilities 24w
Lead free petrol, Garages & petrol stations 82w
Leisure facilities, Newcastle-under-Lyme 648w
NATO, Nuclear weapons 152w
NHS complaints, Government assistance 578w
North Staffordshire Health Authority, Finance 671w
Nurses, Birmingham Children's Hospital 148-9w
Nurses' training, Recruitment 84w
Official cars, Lead free petrol 78w
Palace of Westminster, Access to Parliament 664w
Palace of Westminster, Accidents 664w
Palace of Westminster, Contract cleaning 117w
Palace of Westminster, Manpower 664w
Palace of Westminster, Sanitation 23w, 82w, 479w
Palace of Westminster, Telephones 23w
Palace of Westminster, Water supply 736-8w
Remploy, Pay 313-4w
Salmonella, Food poisoning 92w
Tipping of waste, Pollution monitoring 647-8w
Waste disposal 646w
Waste disposal, Law reform 646w
Wood, Tree conservation 633-4w

Walters, Mr Dennis
Questions
Children & Young Persons (Amendment) Act 1986, Members' correspondence 574w
Middle East, Peace negotiations 618w

Waltham Forest Health Authority
Finance (27:05:88) 683-90
Hospital beds 410w

Wandsworth Prison
Industrial disputes 167w

War crimes
Wormhoudt (25:05:88) 356-62

War pensions
Renfrew 418w
Social security appeals 670w

Wardell, Mr Gareth
Questions
AIDS, Abortion 400w, 511w
AIDS, Babies 400w, 561w, 599w
AIDS, Mothers 400w

Wardell, Mr Gareth—continued
AIDS, Scotland 511w
AIDS, Wales 399w
Carbadox 370w
Carbadox, Animal feed 384w, 488w
Carbadox, Carcinogens 413-4w
Carbadox, Genetics 414-5w
Chemical weapons, USSR 157w
Driving instruction, Licensing 627-8w
Drugs, Animal feed 400w
EC action, Council of Ministers 367w
EC law, Council of Ministers 385w
Environment, EC action 306w
Farm woodland scheme, Broadleaved woodlands 383w
Farm woodland scheme, Tree planting 683w
Football, Violence 355w

Wardle, Mr Charles
Questions
Employment discrimination, Northern Ireland 219-20w
Employment training 497w

Wareing, Mr Robert N
Questions
Benzodiazepines, Drug industry 728w
Chile, Almeyda, Clodomiro 607w
Chile, Referenda 830
Community care, Mentally handicapped 725w
Cruise missiles, Nuclear weapons deployment 40w
Employment training, Aids for handicapped 711w
Mersey Barrage Company, Official engagements 8w
NATO, Nuclear weapons 152w
Nurses, Merseyside 724-6w

Warning signs
Escalators 316-7w

Warren, Mr Kenneth
Debates etc.
BBC (25:05:88) 368-9
Property Services Agency (25:05:88) 344
Questions
Dual carriageways, Road traffic 451-2w
Export licensing, Computers 691-3w

Warrington
Waste disposal 652w

Warsaw Pact
25w
Conventional weapons 605w
Nuclear test ban 195w

Warships
Navy 185
USA 180

Warwickshire
Tipping of waste 736w

Waste disposal
646-7w
Air pollution control 478w
Basildon 710w
Convictions 639w
Health hazards 652w
Irish Sea 136w
Judgments 355-6w
Law reform 646w
Litter 480w
Manpower 710w
Pollution control 736w
Seas & oceans 302w
Warrington 652w
Water pollution 647w

Water authorities
Capital investment 351-4w
Debts 352w
Expenditure 67w
Finance 351-2w
Financial targets 66w
Income 66-7w
Official engagements 223w
Privatisation 298w, 307w, 310-1w, 313w

Water authorities—continued
Public sector assets 66w
Rivers 67-8w
Shares 313w
Water charges 81w

Water Authorities' Association
Official engagements 224-5w

Water charges
Wales 199w
Water authorities 81w
Water meters 64w

Water distribution
Corrosion 67w

Water meters
Costs 64-5w
Water charges 64w

Water pollution
Beaches 355w, 363w
EC action 310-1w
Farms 405-6w
Fixed penalties 478w
Pesticides 63w
Pollution control 307w, 311w
Pollution monitoring 63-4w
Prosecutions 296w, 309w
Scotland 363w
Sewage 479w, 587w
Wales 4, 296w, 405-6w
Waste disposal 647w

Water supply
67w
Hospitals 144w
Malaysia 105w
Nigeria 112w
Palace of Westminster 736-8w

Water supply disconnections
Thames Water Authority 63w

Water supply industry
Bye laws 482w
Official engagements 223w
Orders & regulations 226w
Privatisation 65-6w, 353w

Water treatment
Sea pollution 299w

Waterloo station
537w

Watts, Mr John
Questions
Examinations, Northern Ireland 508
Southern Africa, Foreign policy 463w
Top Salaries Review Body 166w
Trades Union Congress, Official engagements 662w

"Way Forward"
586w

WDA
see Welsh Development Agency

Wealth distribution
516
City of London 514
Low pay 983

Weapons
Northern Irelahd 327-8w

Weather
Access to Parliament 477w

Wells, Mr Bowen
Questions
Business statements 997
Sugar, Subsidies 980

Welsh, Mr Andrew
Debates etc.
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (24:05:88) 240
Rescue services, RAF Leuchars (23:05:88) 174
Questions

Welsh, Mr Andrew—continued
Armed forces, Community charge 162w
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, Official engagements 188w
EC internal trade, Scotland 309

Welsh, Mr Michael
Questions
Armed forces, Ethnic monitoring 154w

Welsh Development Agency
Expenditure 204w
Factories 201w
Foreign investment in UK 12
Manpower 202-4w

Welsh Joint Education Committee
687w

Welsh language
984-5
Dept of Trade & Industry 5-6w
Departmental circulars 202w
Departmental leaflets 91w
Departmental publications 341w
Educational advisers 687w
Health service staff 294w
School leaving certificates 687w
Secondary education 200w
Special education 687w
Treasury 55w

Welsh Office
47w, 229w, 401w, 431w
Cash limits 297w
Civil servants' business appointments 297w
Civil service 8
Equal opportunities 397w
House of Commons questions 8-9
Nuclear accidents 430-1w
Written questions 47w

Welsh Water Authority
Expenditure 199-200w
Manpower 200w

Welwyn Hatfield
Local government constituencies 378w

West Essex Health Authority
418w

West Germany
Nuclear safeguards 26w

West Ham
Local government expenditure 80w

West Midlands
Police 170w
Social security abuse 711
Unemployment 498w

West Midlands Regional Health Authority
671w

West Yorkshire
Police 277w
Rent increases 77w
Rents 77-8w
Woollen industry (27:05:88) 651-61

Western Europe
Defence equipment 160w

Western European Union
617w
Ministers' visits abroad 610w

Western Isles Health Board
Patients' transport 189w

Western Mail
401w

Westland Helicopters
(25:05:88) 379-81

Westminster bridge
Parking 439w

Wetlands
Somerset 304w, 487w

WEU
see Western European Union

Wheeler, Mr John
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 798
Questions
Cash limits, Home Office 379w

White fish
Fish conservation 654w
Lowestoft 138w

Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Questions
Balance of payments, Alcoholic drinks 690w
Balance of payments, Driving licences 690w
Business statements 531
Nuclear weapons, Modernisation 183
Women's Farmers' Union, Official engagements 676w
Youth training scheme 505w

Widdicombe Committee
see Local Government Practices & Procedures Inquiry

Widowers' benefits
Occupational pensions 216w

Widows
Income support 149w

Wiggin, Mr Jerry
Debates etc.
Business statements (24:05:88) 201-2
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Rep (23:05:88) 80-1, 89-91
Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Allocation of time motion, Rep & 3R (25:05:88) 393, 406
Questions
Tree planting, Storms 491-2w

Wigley, Mr Dafydd
Questions
Ambulance services, Wales 294-5w
Building workers, Wales 403-4w
Child benefit, EC countries 91w
Community nurses, Psychiatric nurses 92w
Compulsorily detained mental patients, Wales 294-5w
Council housing, Wales 7
Defence procurement, Scotland 155-6w
Departmental leaflets, Welsh language 91w
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Act 1986, Local authority associations 723w
District health authorities, Transport costs 294w
District health authorities, Wales 289-92w
EC budget contributions, EC countries 539-40w
EC grants & loans, Wales 404w
Family doctors, Psychiatry 91w
Food, Radioactivity 980-1
Foreign tourists 131w
Handicapped pupils, Physiotherapy 200w
Handicapped pupils, Special education 201w
Handicapped students, Access to buildings 200w, 202w
Health services finance, Wales 431w
Home Office, Handicapped workers 169w

Wigley, Mr Dafydd—continued
Hospital visitor benefits, Social security recipients 668-9w
Housing starts, Wales 44w
Integrated development operations, Dyfed 46w
Medical research, Postgraduate education 12w
Medical research, Student grants 12w
Medical research, Vacancies 12w
Mental hospitals, Hostels 91w
Mentally handicapped, Special education 203-4w
Mentally ill, Mental health community care 91w
NHS finance, Wales 295w
Official engagements 475w
Pay beds, Wales 291-4w
Private health services, Wales 291w
School leaving, Wales 204-6w
Speech therapists, Wales 294w
Synthetic index, Regional planning & development 45-6w
Synthetic index, Wales 101w
Teachers, Wales 203w
Welsh Development Agency, Expenditure 204w
Welsh Development Agency, Factories 201w
Welsh Development Agency, Manpower 202-4w
Welsh language, Dept of Trade & Industry 5-6w
Welsh language, Departmental circulars 202w
Welsh language, Departmental publications 341w
Welsh language, Educational advisers 687w
Welsh language, School leaving certificates 687w
Welsh language, Secondary education 200w
Welsh language, Special education 687w
Welsh language, Treasury 55w

Wilkinson, Mr John
Questions
Airbuses, Government assistance to industry 370-1w
BAOR, National Audit Office 182

Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Questions
Newspaper press, Disclosure of information 401w
Nurses, Pay settlements 47w, 407w
Official engagements 407-8w
Public expenditure, South Wales 296w
Public expenditure, Wales 296w
Unemployment, Wales 49w
Valleys initiative 5-6, 401-3w
Valleys initiative, Publicity 403w
Welsh Office, House of Commons questions 8-9

Williams, Mr Alan W
Questions
Central Electricity Generating Board, Energy conservation 346-7w
Council house waiting lists, Wales 44w
Garages & petrol stations, Alcoholic drinks 439w
Gibraltar, Special Air Service 985
Set-aside schemes 675w

Wilshire, Mr David
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 808-9

Wilson, Mr Brian
Questions
Belize, Ministers' visits abroad 605w
Fishing quotas, Scotland 514-5w
Helicopters, Dalmally 391w
Helicopters, Low flying 390-1w
Laos, Diplomatic relations 24w
Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive 173w
Social security payments, Banks 578w
Television advertising, Dept of Employment 130w

Wilson, Mr Brian—continued
Tornado aircraft, Arms trade 542w
Tornado aircraft, RAF St Athan 161w, 390w
Young people, Advisory services 504w

Winnick, Mr David
Debates etc.
Business questions point of order (26:05:88) 534
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 752-3
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (24:05:88) 223, 228, 235-7, 269, 291-2
Girobank, Privatisation (07:06:88) 730-1
Housing benefits, Social security reform (25:05:88) 366-8
Housing Bill, Rep (09:06:88) 1026-8, 1049-50, 1060-1, 1078, 1097-8
Recess motions, Spring (25:05:88) 385-6, 389
Questions
Business statements 528-9
Downing Street, Members 445-6w
Economic League, Industrial relations 132w
Government departments, Disclosure of information 686w
Housing benefits, Civil service manpower 96w
Housing benefits, House of Commons questions 95w
Housing benefits, Managers 96w
Housing benefits, Social security appeals 96w
Housing benefits, Social security reform 96w
Lebanon, Kidnapping 238w
Prime Minister's questions 20
South Africa, Human rights 825-6
"Spycatcher", Legal costs 627w

Winterton, Mrs Ann
Questions
Hearing aids, NHS 591-2w
Social security benefits, Capital rules 272-3w
Women's Farmers' Union, Official engagements 676w

Winterton, Mr Nicholas
Questions
Business statements 527
Furniture, Fire prevention 179-80w
Furniture, Fire regulations 180-2w, 244-5w
Furniture, Fires 179-80w
Hospices, Nurses 416-7w

Wise, Mrs Audrey
Debates etc.
Women, Health (10:06:88) 1136-7, 1152, 1165, 1166-71
Questions
Armed forces training, Bangladesh 37w
Liverpool Prison, Opticians 171w
Prisoners, Eye tests 171w
Prisoners, Opticians 171w

Withington Hospital
Hospital closures 517

Women
Doctors 579w
Domestic violence 216w
Employment training 702
Health 672w, (10:06:88) 1111-76
Occupational pensions 396w
Prison sentences 249w, 275w
Prisoners 460w
Public appointments 135w
Remand in custody 275-6w, 695-6w
Youth training scheme 28w

Women's Farmers' Union
Official engagements 676w

Wood
Tree conservation 633-4w

Wood, Mr Timothy
Questions
Western European Union, Ministers' visits abroad 610w

Woodworking
Scotland 657w

Woollen industry
West Yorkshire (27:05:88) 651-61

Woolwich
445w

Woolwich Arsenal
Quality Assurance Directorate 41-2w

Working hours
Junior hospital doctors 579-80w

World Bank
475w

World Heritage Convention
Cairngorms 121w

Wormhoudt
War crimes (25:05:88) 356-62

Worthington, Mr Tony
Debates etc.
Criminal Justice Bill (HL), Rep (07:06:88) 781-3
Questions
Chile, Referenda 829
Community charges register, Scotland 185w
Housing revenue accounts, Housing finance 225w
Museums & galleries, Admission charges 260w
Museums & galleries, Income 259-62w
Public bodies, Accounting 532-8w
Public expenditure, Fees & charges 374-6w
Road tolls 173-4w
University finance 165w

Wray, Mr Jimmy
Questions
Low flying, Compensation 156w
Military aircraft, Air accidents 39w
Military exercises, Glasgow Airport 326w
Scottish assembly 309

Wrecks
Departmental publications 150w

Wright, Peter
627w

Written questions
Administrative delays 219w
New towns 250w
Welsh Office 47w

Wyebrow, John
Official Receiver 426w

Year 2000
Anniversaries 346w

Yeo, Mr Tim
Questions
Business statements 990
Employment, Suffolk 498w
Employment, Takeovers 706
Public Accounts Commission, Costs 16

York City Council Bill (HL) 1985/86
Debates etc.
2R order read (26:05:88) 501, (09:06:88) 969

Yorkshire & Humberside
Unemployment 498w

Yorkshire Ripper Case Inquiry
277w

Young, Mr David
Questions
Ferries, Compensation 198

Young, Sir George
Questions
Housing associations, Local government finance 68-9w
Nuclear weapons, NATO 152-3w

Young offenders
Social security reform 573w

Young people
Advisory services 504w
Alcoholic drinks 166-7w
Hard core unemployed 702-3
Homelessness 982
House purchase (27:05:88) 621-30
Income support 575w
Kensington & Chelsea 308-9w

Young people—continued
Supplementary benefits 95-6w

Younger, Rt Hon George, Secretary of State for Defence
Questions
Arms control, USSR 190
Conventional weapons, Arms control 190-1
Conventional weapons, NATO 190
Cruise missiles, USA 179-80
Defence 186
Defence, Merchant seamen 186
Defence, Merchant ships 185
Merchant ships, Shipbuilding 185
Military aircraft, NATO Nuclear Planning Group 182-3
NATO, Conventional weapons 160-1w, 190
NATO, Nuclear weapons 152w
NATO Nuclear Planning Group, Military aircraft 154-5w
NATO Nuclear Planning Group, 155w, 182
Navy 151w
Navy, Trident 186
Navy, Warships 185

Younger, Rt Hon George—continued
Nuclear weapons, Modernisation 183-4
Submarines, Scotland 180
Warships, USA 180

Youth employment
International Labour Organisation 313w
School leaving 709w

Youth training scheme
505w, 705
Government assistance 704
Kensington & Chelsea 317-9w
Monklands 15w
Take-up of employment 662w
Tourist industry 704-5
Women 28w

Youth unemployment
Greater London 503w
Kensington & Chelsea 318w
Renfrew 363-4w

Zeus
40-1w

Zoological Society of London
Universities Funding Council 235w